



Rethinking social accountability in Africa:

Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

Fletcher Tembo



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**Fletcher Tembo
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Women share their concerns at a meeting in Ada, Ghana. Nyani/PDA

Executive summary

“ **There is no substitute for public scrutiny in developing effective and equitable policies.... We therefore call on African governments to set out a bold national agenda for strengthening transparency and accountability to their citizens** ”

Kofi Annan, Chair, Africa Progress Panel Meeting, Cape Town, 10 May 2013

Phenomenal economic growth is emerging in many African countries. At the same time, a substantial number of African countries have had several rounds of multi-party elections, which we could assume represents a deepening of democracy. Yet inequality is also increasing, threatening to undermine that economic growth and to erode the achievements already made in delivering the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Just as remarkable is the growth in investment in initiatives to improve accountability and transparency, aiming to improve governance, enhance development, and empower citizens. But more needs to be done on social-accountability projects, to promote grassroots political governance, and to ensure these investments significantly change the practice of accountability in Africa.

The Mwananchi programme, backed by DFID's Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF), ran for five years across six very different African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra

Leone, Uganda and Zambia. Three lessons emerge from our deep engagement with social accountability:

- a) we must improve our understanding and analysis of conflicting incentives
- b) we must embrace and utilise contextual dynamics
- c) we must use a framework that identifies and involves game-changing actors, or 'interlocutors'

Collective-action theory shows that citizens faced with a common problem will not act in common as a matter of course, even when other actors agree. Each actor is embedded in a complex web of interests and incentives, arising from their closest relationships through to their furthest external influence. In a given context – such as a social-accountability project – these incentives will suddenly spur the actor to action, often in ways we might not expect: to recruit others, to withdraw their involvement, to myriad ways of acting and interacting, which can lead to less than desirable results.



Women work harvesting salt in Ada, Ghana. Nyani/PDA

'Interlocution' is the process of addressing this complex web of incentives and actions through actors selected for their game-changing abilities.

Those with the most to lose from these interactions are the powerless and the marginalised, defined both in terms of the way they engage as citizens, and the authority that surrounds them, including that of the state. It is unrealistic to expect ordinary citizens to hold public-office holders to account immediately after voting them into power or mandating them to deliver services to the poor. Current social-accountability programmes largely fail to acknowledge the dynamic nature of these incentive-driven power plays, pursuing instead a technical process which is removed from the contextual reality in which the citizens and state actors operate. And so the notion of citizen empowerment quickly loses its strength.

It is important to explore these crucial contextual dynamics in a particular way, using this understanding to inform how interventions should be designed and implemented – evolving theories of change, rather than fixing them from the beginning. With this key point in mind, the Mwananchi programme developed a tool that helps to locate the project

results chain within the dynamics of the wider environment, using insights from political-economy analysis and outcome mapping (OM).

When we explore the contextual dynamics of a given collective-action situation, it becomes apparent that each situation demands particular change processes, and that these processes can go beyond resolving the problem itself to addressing the incentive structures, rules and structural influences from the wider environment such as government policies or the allocation of aid. This should be the focus of social-accountability interventions.

This new focus starts with the cultivation of trust-based relationships among the actors involved; then the recruitment of contributions to help the process (such as ideas, resources and other kinds of influence), always bearing in mind that the contributors will also have self-serving incentives and interests. This point – the need to focus the intervention on context-specific interlocution processes – by extension shows us the crucial need to find and support the right interlocutors of change in order to enhance citizen engagement as a mechanism for strengthening citizen-state accountability relationships. And so

we must move away from a preoccupation with actors and actor categories, towards a focus on defining the relationships that can enable actors to facilitate, or even enforce, change. Accountability grows out of these relationships; it is cultivated through both the informal and the procedural rules of the game, and their enforcement. This in turn helps to deliver sustainability, in time leading to the 'answerability' of public-office holders: the legal or political obligation of the state to justify decisions to the public.

Our work on the Mwananchi programme leads us to conclude that to achieve effective citizen engagement that transforms citizen-state relationships in favour of the poor, we need to understand and support 'interlocution processes', then 'interlocutors', which work to find solutions to the problems of collective action.

Adopting this approach will have implications on how social-accountability projects are designed and implemented in various contexts. It means a new way of thinking:

- » treating social-accountability projects as policy experiments: showing what a good policy would look like and how it

could be implemented effectively; also investing in this process

- » social accountability as learning to build trust-based relationships: allowing local realities and relationships, rather than imported social-accountability tools, to be the primary drivers of change
- » a level playing-field for marginalised citizens: promoting rules that provide political leverage either directly to the poor or to elite interests in such a way that there is benefit for both them and the poor
- » gradual movement from 'accountability as responsiveness' to 'accountability as answerability': the application of sanctions formed together by actors in a relationship of trust during the process of solving the collective-action problem, with appropriate measures for mitigating risks.

Africa's future lies in finding the key ingredients to build relationships based on trust. The social-accountability framework launched in this paper gives those building that future a new thought process to help deliver effective social accountability.



Workers in Kampala, Uganda. Arne Hoel/World Bank

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Abbreviations

ATCWAR	Advocates and Trainers for Women's Welfare, Advancement and Rights (Ghana)	GBP	Great British Pound
APPP	Africa Politics and Power Programme	GDA	Guraghe Development Association (Ethiopia)
BADEA	Arab bank for Economic Development in Africa	GIS	Geographic information system
BEWDA	Belim Wusa Development Agency (Ghana)	GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
BN	Basic Needs	GTF	Governance and Transparency Fund
CAR	Capability, accountability, responsiveness	HE	Health Extension
CCYA	Centre for the Coordination of Youth Activities	ICT	Information communications technology
CDF	Community-development fund	IDS	Institute of Development Studies
CF	Citizens Forum	KACSOA	Kapchorwa Civil Society Alliance (Uganda)
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance (Sierra Leone)	KADINGO	Kalangala District NGO Forum (Uganda)
CIN	Christian Information Network	KEEP	Kenya Essential Education Programme
CODI	Community Development and Child Welfare Initiatives (Uganda)	Kenya DAP	Kenya Drivers of Accountability Programme
CORD-SL	Counterparts in Rehabilitation and Development, Sierra Leone	LDF	Local Development Fund
CSO	Civil-society organisation	MADEN	Masindi District Education Network
CTCC	Community town hall coordinating committees	MAJAP	Mwananchi Justice Agenda Project
CV&A	citizen voice and accountability	MBC-TV	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation Television
DCT	Development Communications Trust	MDG	Millennium Development Goal
DFID	Department for International Development	MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
DRT	Development Research and Training	MK	Malawian Kwacha
DSL	Democracy Sierra Leone	MNF	Masindi NGO Forum (Uganda)
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front	MP	Member of Parliament
FoN	Friends of Nation (Ghana)	MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy (Uganda)	NCOM	National Coalition on Mining (Ghana)
		OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OM	Outcome mapping
ON	Omidayr Network
PDA	Participatory Development Associates (Ghana)
PEA	Political-economy analysis
RLC	Radio listening club
SGACA	Strategic Governance and Corruption Analysis, UK - United Kingdom
STAR Ghana	Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana
TOYACE	Tongu Youth and Childrens Evangel (Ghana)
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDR	World Development Report
WFMR	Wolkite 89.2 FM Radio
WGA	World Governance Assessment
WVU	World Voices Uganda
ZGF	Zambia Governance Foundation



Women wait for a check up in Jinja, Uganda. Laura Elizabeth Pohl/Bread for the World

1. Introduction

1.1 Some surprises

Development practice is paved with good intentions, but when the rubber meets the road, many surprises can emerge. The real difference between success and failure in programming lies in how intervening agencies design for, and deal with, these surprises - if they choose to do so that is! Here are some of the surprises I encountered whilst Director of the Mwananchi Governance and Transparency Programme over the past five years.

- *In an area where citizens feel excluded from the benefits of the mining taking place in their backyard, a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) works hard for two years on linking Members of Parliament (MPs) with citizens to hear their needs: yet all these MPs lose their seats at the next general election. Those who win do not base their campaign on mining issues.*
- *A local civil-society organisation (CSO) working with a radio station unearths corrupt practices involving the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). When traditional leaders stop the CSO from actively engaging with the responsible MP - because he is in the ruling party and they might upset him - why do the CSO and the local club remain silent?*
- *The concept of citizens demanding good governance is easily understood in all Mwananchi countries but one, Ethiopia.*

If you arrive in a community in Uganda, Malawi or Zambia, people talk openly about what they want from their government, what it fails to do and the behaviour of political parties and politicians. If you arrive in a community in Ethiopia, you might actually be the only one talking about 'demand for good governance'. Otherwise, dead silence.

It is the process of closely examining actions at the various citizen-state interfaces (in order to establish the emergence or strengthening of accountability relationships) that produces surprises. There are surprises in the way the various actors involved (including intervening agencies) behave in everyday interactions, 'the governance of daily life' (Blundo and Le Meur, 2008). Most often, those actors behaving in a different way to how we expected are entangled in a complex web of positive, and perverse, incentives¹. These incentives are encouraged in two ways: from within the state-society relations, and by the external environment - the way aid is given in the global aid world for example.

This report describes an approach to supporting citizen engagement in different citizen-state relationships that puts these incentive structures at the core of the analysis of and search for solutions, in the form of designing and implementing social-accountability projects.

Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

We use a learning-process approach to focus on actions that are useful for building specific accountability relationships within the various incentive-entanglement situations; then we use evidence of what works to identify and support individuals or organisations that have the characteristics to create change.

It is envisaged that the approach discussed in this report will be relevant to researchers, donors and programme designers and implementers in the area of social accountability².

The report is a product of the analysis and synthesis of a wide range of action research-based case studies from implementing the five-year Mwananchi Governance and Transparency programme³. The programme was implemented in six African countries with diverse governance contexts: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia and Malawi. This report draws on this analysis to suggest that in order to achieve effective citizen

engagement that leads to the transformation of citizen-state relationships in favour of the poor, we need to understand and support 'interlocution processes', then 'interlocutors', which work to find solutions to the problems of collective action.

This point of departure is important: despite repeated definitions of accountability as a relational issue (and not just a deliverable), many interventions are still based on the 'cargo image'⁴ of what makes 'good accountability' and how to get it. The support for strengthening accountability is also based on an unduly mechanical approach, in terms of which organisations and/or individuals can help 'citizens hold governments to account', especially when they are supported with aid resources. This approach leaves much to chance, rather than using a rigorous understanding of what is happening at the various citizen-state relational interfaces to inform decisions, and hence addressing the question of 'how change happens'.



Lawmakers meet in a session in Accra, Ghana. Jonathan Ernst/World Bank

Box 1: Accountability defined

Accountability refers to the relationship between two parties, those who set or control the application/implementation of the rules which govern society and development, and those who are subject to those rules. The relationship which is of most interest in the context of the voice and accountability evaluations is that between the state (at both national and local levels) and its people. This relationship can be based on both formal and informal rules and it can include forms of 'consensus building' which sometimes underpin the relationship between citizens and state. The key elements of this relationship are:

(a) transparency of decision-making, allowing the public and other agents of the state to oversee compliance with policies and rules. This includes use of written judgements, access to parliamentary-committee sessions, invited participation in budgetary and policy processes, as well as media scrutiny.

(b) answerability, i.e. the legal and political obligation of the state to justify decisions to the general public or other state entities to ensure decisions remain within their administrative or constitutional mandate. Forms of answerability include written and/or verbal responses, and changes in personnel, policy and practice.

(c) the ability to sanction state institutions for failure to provide adequate explanation for actions and decisions otherwise deemed contrary to legal and political mandates. This may include judicial sanctions, or public naming and shaming.

Source: Foresti et al, 2007, p7

Some authors split 'transparency of decision-making' into two elements: 'standard-setting', which pertains to setting out the behaviour expected of the 'accountee', and thus the criteria by which they might validly be judged; and 'investigation', which explores whether or not 'accountees' have met the standards expected of them (see Moore and Teskey, 2006, p3).

In the context of a myriad of different actors⁵ interests and incentives already at play, and yet not well understood before intervening, if we fail to address the 'how' question, we risk eroding even the few problem-solving methods that existed before external interveners came in (Bano, 2012). Furthermore, in their seminal work, John Gaventa and Gregory Barret (2011) go to great depth in addressing the 'so what' difference does citizen engagement make' question, which helps to tackle the lack of clarity about the impacts of transparency and accountability initiatives that put emphasis on citizen engagement.

However, the problem with using this emphasis alone without equally exploring the 'how' question in a systematic way, is that no one really knows if indeed it is social-accountability initiatives that are bringing these results or impacts of some other initiatives occurring at the same time in the environment. This challenge was acknowledged in a review of

transparency and accountability initiatives by McGee and Gaventa (2011) and is also central to the justification for the recent introduction of Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) in governance projects. This paper takes the 'how' question further, exploring the argument that often the question of which external actions, and by implication, which organisations, need to be supported in order to get accountability outcomes, is never systematically addressed.

The paper provides the critical missing angle to the 'how' question through systematic interrogation of interlocution processes, using some case studies from projects implemented in the Mwananchi GTF programme for illustration. This adds value by defining which actions (or actor characteristics) are necessary, by which actors, and in which circumstances. There is an interesting convergence between these ideas and some of the critical issues that O'Meally (2013) raises in the argument for social accountability initiatives to go beyond



Family reads Citizen Charters in Malawi.
Saukira Chikagunda Banda/MEJN

the generalities of understanding context to unearthing “what aspects of the context matter and how they matter”; and also going beyond the ‘tools-based approach’ that carries the risk of concealing “the underlying social and political processes that really explain why a given initiative is or is not effective” (p.3).

Overall, the report provides clarity to the debate about the value that citizen engagement and government accountability to citizens brings to the well-recognised process of deepening democracy and achieving development outcomes in Africa, now seen as the characteristic feature of the ‘democratic developmental state’ (UNECA, 2013)⁶.

The approach promoted in this paper departs from putting emphasis on actor categories, for instance assuming that all actions of civil society and their organisations bring about these changes. As Fowler and Biekart (2011) point out in articulating the ‘Civic Driven Change’, the problem with focusing on sectors or actors is that the true drivers of change are ignored. They are ignored because ‘civil society is often seen as unambiguously “good”, always seeking justice, fairness and an understanding of collective good and collaborative problem-solving that are all conducive to (re)establishing social order’ (ibid, 2012, p183). The fact that civil society is heterogeneous and can also be ‘uncivil’ is not considered in this formulation.

1.2 The problem of assumptions underlying social accountability

“Democratic decentralization, client power, and social accountability... rest on assumptions about citizen “demand” that are empirically and theoretically questionable. They assume implicitly that ordinary citizens stand in a principal-agent relationship to governments and service providers, whereas the research evidence suggests that citizens face collective action problems, as do politicians and providers, and that the solutions that are sometimes found are highly interactive and highly political” (Booth, 2012, 72)

Since the World Bank published the 2004 World Development Report (WDR) on Making Services Work for Poor People (World Bank, 2003), there has been a growing consensus that direct citizen engagement is essential for the formulation and implementation of better public policies, deepening democracy, and achieving better development outcomes⁷. In fact, the past three decades have witnessed a phenomenal rise in support for participatory governance and social-accountability programmes. These approaches are deemed an essential means for improving citizen participation and for ‘holding government to account’, which are in turn needed to improve governance and eradicate poverty. More recently, new initiatives, such as the Open Government Initiative⁸ and the International Budget Partnership’s Open Budget Initiative, have emerged, working towards the same end of opening up space for greater citizen engagement through greater transparency and access to information⁹.

The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) launched the Governance

and Transparency Fund (GTF) in February 2007 as a mechanism for supporting public demands for accountability in working with civil society, media, parliamentarians, trade unions and other non-state actors that work to improve transparency and accountability between citizens and the state. DFID has since also supported many similar initiatives, especially in Africa and Asia¹⁰, and more recently set up the US\$30–35 million ‘Making All Voices Count: A Grand Challenge for Development’ (MAVC) initiative, together with other donors such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Omidyar Network (ON). MAVC is aimed at supporting innovation, scaling up and research in the use of technology to support open government and citizen engagement. The objective is ‘to amplify the voices of citizens and enable governments to listen and respond effectively, with the goal of creating more effective democratic governance and accountability’.

The World Bank is currently actively championing the identification, design and strengthening of initiatives that provide ordinary citizens with greater opportunities for giving their feedback on the public services than they receive in a direct and ‘real time’ manner. This feedback would then lead to corrective measures in terms of both policy and practice, and enhance the quality and quantity of service provision, mirroring to some degree how customer feedback is given top priority in the private sector. The argument is that when citizen feedback at the point of delivery is given room and attention, the impact of service provision on the poor is also most direct, because actions from the respective governments and the donors that support them will be quicker and more relevant. As the World Bank Group President, Jim Yong Kim, recently put it:

“ Citizen voice can be pivotal in providing the demand-side pressure on government, service providers, and organisations such as the World Bank that is needed to encourage full and swift response to citizen needs. Citizen voice is at the core of accountable actions ”

Jim Yong Kim, in a speech delivered at the opening of the ‘Citizen voices: global conference on citizen engagement for enhanced development results, 18 March 2013

In order to achieve this, the World Bank Institute is supporting lesson learning from new technology, the formation of various partnerships, and research on the private sector’s ability to make customer’s views paramount to improve its services. It has also set up the Global Partnership for Social



Girl addresses crowd in Malawi. Saukira Chikagunda Banda/MEJN



Ethiopian journalist Markos Yeshanew interviews women. Internews Network.

Accountability (GPSA)¹¹ with the aim of improving development results by supporting capacity-building for enhanced citizen feedback and participation.

In all of these initiatives, one of the main assumptions being made is that when citizens face a common problem (for example, failure to get water because of a broken water-pipe system) they will naturally work towards the common interest of 'holding government to account'. However, as Luigi Curini rightly notes, the mere presence of a common problem does not determine the behaviour of the actors involved. It only provides an opportunity for collective action to happen (Curini, 2007). It is therefore not unexpected that there are many surprises that arise along the way. In learning from the Mwananchi programme,

we find that **it is the process of identifying and increasing the chances of these collective-action opportunities turning into real action, and facilitating the finding of solutions from among the many actors that are both within and outside the actual situation, that makes change happen.**

Collective-action challenges occur whenever a desired joint outcome requires the input of several individuals, and yet they fail to provide the required inputs because of their different motivations and interests (often because of the perceived distribution of costs and benefits among them), resulting in under-production or poor-quality production of the public good or service. In these situations, even if some of the actors wanted to contribute at their maximum, it is difficult to deliver the required quality or

quantity of the good or service because actors working as individuals cannot produce it on their own. Therefore, these collective-action situations easily become collective-action problems¹² because actors in these situations tend to choose actions that produce outcomes that are less than they would have otherwise produced if they were not in this situation (Gibson et al, 2005). The primary intervention challenge is hence to facilitate the strengthening of collective action so that the maximum or 'best that each actor in their capability can afford' contributions can be made within the prevailing relationship with other actors, from which optimal outcomes can be obtained.

It is the process of changing the 'rules of the game' (involving the changing of incentive structures of various actors) towards maximising actor inputs, in order to address or find solutions to their collective-action challenge or problem, that we refer to as '**interlocution**'. By implication, '**Interlocution processes**' are the processes involved in identifying the collective-action problem(s) or challenge(s), the various actor interactions involved, and engaging the actions and actors that are working to find solutions to the specific collective-action problems in question. '**Interlocutors**' are the organisations or individuals with those necessary 'game-changing' characteristics for

Box 2: Explaining working definitions of 'interlocutor' and 'interlocution process' using an imaginary example

A group of families that have secured their livelihoods through fishing for decades suddenly finds its catch reduced by half. The best they can do is complain amongst themselves or engage with their local leaders while their families find it increasingly impossible to raise the requisite incomes to sustain the education of their children and to meet their food needs.

However, when the head of a local radio station broadcasts some of the community discussions on the radio, it forces an MP to return to his or her constituency, after a lengthy absence, to participate in a live 'question and answer' radio programme with the local community to discuss the issue. This participation leads to an open discussion with the government fisheries department that recently issued a licence to a foreign company to start fishing in the same catchment area, using modern equipment that gives the company an advantage over the local families. The licence was issued without consultation because the local-governance structures that government instituted through the donor-sponsored decentralisation programme (e.g. village committees linking to area committees and then to the district council) exist in name only. They have been overtaken by parallel party structures that have recently increased because of multi-party democracy.

Let us suppose that the MP's participation in the radio discussions results in a new law being introduced that forbids foreign companies from fishing in certain catchment areas, which restores the livelihoods of the families. Let us further say that it is the impartial nature of the medium of radio and the ability of this medium to facilitate the interaction with community members and MPs alike, that led to the discussions with different actors taking place, and that in turn gave them room to engage and present the different aspects of the solution, including the introduction of the new law.

The various actions described in this imaginary situation constitute the 'interlocution processes', and the specific qualities that the local radio station has and the actions it takes to suit the problem at hand, give it the 'game-changing' ability, and justify calling it an 'interlocutor'. The radio in this case provided a forum for the MP and constituency members to talk constructively to each other, and to agree on ways of working together to address community problems. It also provides the best chance for the community to hold their MP to account, and for the MP to perform in ways that helps change rules of the game.



Young men load a trolley with salt at the Ada Songor Salt Project. Nyani/PDA

addressing, or contributing to addressing, a specific collective-action problem. With this understanding, the kind of collective-action problem determines what can be called a 'game-changing' characteristic, and hence we cannot categorise any organisation as an interlocutor away from the action and context.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm associated with strengthening citizen engagement for government accountability may mean we miss taking the time to understand what the process of facilitating the finding and supporting of collective-action solutions actually involves. One example is information communication technology (ICT), currently lauded as a great mechanism for enhancing citizen engagement (and there are indeed good examples demonstrating that this is the case). However, some of the assumptions made about how this form of citizen engagement delivers development and governance outcomes remain unsubstantiated.¹³

1.3 Focus on interlocution for social accountability to work

In order to address the issues associated with promoting social accountability discussed above, this paper argues that there is a need to focus attention on finding interlocution processes that can best mediate the various actor interests and incentives at the different citizen-state relationship interfaces. The interlocution characteristics that organisations in civil society, media or others possess cannot be assumed based on prototype – they need to be identified with a specific collective-action problem at play, and encouraged in the course of programme or project implementation because they are dependent on the nature of the collective-action problem in question. The outcome of 'citizens holding governments to account' will be one of the emergent phenomena within the interlocution processes at play.



This analytical position emerged from implementing the Mwananchi programme in six differently governed African countries. A key lesson from the programme is that in order to achieve effective citizen engagement that transforms the rules of the game in favour of pro-poor policies and practices, we need to support interlocution processes: actions by interlocutors between citizens and the state which support increased participation and accountability. Social-accountability projects rely on various actors, including citizens, government, private sector, as individuals or groups addressing a particular collective-action problem¹⁴. When examining these processes, the focus should be on identifying what makes change happen (both in terms of the situation changing as well as higher-level change in the rules of the game associated with the situation), and then identifying and defining the specific actors and their attributes (in terms of incentives, organisational characteristics and behaviours). Emerging from this process will be a clearer understanding of the kinds of trends in actions, associated incentives, behaviour and

organisational attributes of the various actors involved in addressing the specific collective-action problem.

The argument is that **whereas civil society, media or any other actor in private sector or government can help solve the accountability failures in policy and practice, they can also be part of the problem**, and there will be no ex ante way of knowing unless an alternative analytical framework is developed. The Mwananchi lessons discussed in this paper attempt to start this thinking process.

This paper suggests an approach to develop an alternative framework for social accountability, and how to put it into practice through approaches that develop theories of change grounded in contextual dynamics. Chapter 2 explains the design and focus of the programme and the evolution of its theory of change. Chapter 3 discusses the concepts that formed the backbone of the programme: citizenship and marginality. In chapter 4, I build on these conceptual discussions to critique the competing frameworks in social-accountability programming so far, and offer an alternative framework. Chapter 5 uses direct evidence from the Mwananchi programme to explain how collective-action situations could inform the relevant interlocution processes and the actors that possess the features that relate to these interlocution processes. Finally, in chapter 6 I present an approach to developing theories of change for social-accountability interventions. Chapter 7 draws conclusions and suggests areas for future research.



Mwananchi Uganda coordinator
Andrew Kawooya Ssebunya
discusses project planning. DRT.

2. The Mwananchi programme in design and practice

The Mwananchi programme was set up in such a way that ongoing research could be conducted as part of the implementation of projects: an action research programme, aiming to achieve voice and accountability results within the GTF framework. The programme initially decided to work in seven African countries which represented a diverse range of governance contexts: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Zambia. After two years it withdrew from South Sudan, due to highly challenging operational conditions and in order to focus resources on the other countries.

The programme identified national coordinating organisations in each country, who then issued calls for proposals from local civil-society and media organisations to implement projects designed to find innovative ways to increase citizen ability to hold their governments to account. Each country identified specific thematic focuses for their projects (see Appendix 2 for a full list of national coordinating organisations and thematic focuses).

Mwananchi issued three funding rounds in each country¹⁵. The first round focused on exploring innovative approaches, with the second and third round focusing on finding relevant programme elements which could be scaled up, forming partnerships and identifying

sustainability strategies. The programme began with a focus on context analysis and progressed through implementation to a focus on drawing together lessons and identifying effective approaches to voice and accountability programming.¹⁶

Although the GTF was primarily designed as a fund for implementation, not research, ODI's bid sought to draw on its research expertise, designing a hybrid project that also engaged in action research. As a result Mwananchi has lessons both from a programmatic perspective, as a typical citizen voice and accountability project, and from a research perspective around what works and does not work for social accountability. It is hoped that both practitioners concerned with how to design and implement citizen voice and accountability programmes, and researchers looking to generate new ideas on social accountability, will find this report useful.

This chapter uses the underlying Mwananchi programme design logic, as well as issues that arose in the process, to draw attention to some of the key elements of designing citizen-engagement governance projects.

By design, the programme focused on implementing and learning from processes involved in supporting change around specific

governance issues, and encouraging actor coalition building in order to address the issues in question effectively. During the process of implementation, however, there were tensions between the focus on governance changes and achieving tangible sectoral results (especially around public goods, such as education), hence the need to adopt an evolving theory of change, based on action-reflection processes (praxis).

2.1 An issue-based programme

The Mwananchi GTF programme was designed with a focus on specific governance issues prioritised by country stakeholders including media organisations, CSOs, elected representatives, representatives from the private sector and government. In order to arrive at these country priorities, baseline context analyses were conducted in each country before the start of projects through three streams of enquiry:

- a) consultation with a wide and diverse range of country stakeholders involved in governance projects
- b) a World Governance Assessment (WGA) with 'well-informed' respondents from various sectors of the country population
- c) a stocktaking of all governance projects that were currently being implemented, coupled with an annotated bibliography of scholarly literature on governance projects and issues in the country.

ODI backed these processes with research design, methods and analysis¹⁷. In some cases, some of the products, especially the stocktaking reports, became a useful one-stop shop for other programmes that wanted to start similar projects in these countries. Box 3

describes one of these three analyses, the World Governance Assessments.

The multi-stakeholder country group synthesised the three data sets produced (the WGA results, secondary data and consultations) in order to identify the issues and potential entry points for the specific governance interventions during the lifetime of the country programme. Country planning teams ensured that country plans were based on this evidence from research.

As a means to ensure that the evidence trail was credible and informative, the project made use of a trusted 'neutral' facilitator, who understood governance processes and concepts well, to facilitate the synthesis process in each country. This process led to the generation of a list of governance issues in the country. Even though some of these data sets and reports were in the form of graphs and analysis of variance tables, which made understanding difficult for some of the stakeholders participating in the discussions, a lot was achieved in terms of having an open dialogue. This was important regardless of the fact that there was no straightforward consensus on most issues discussed – a result of their multi-dimensional nature. On reflection, this process was useful for starting to identify:

- » areas of institutional blockage
- » attitudes that people had towards other actors in various spheres of the society
- » who the game changers might be
- » entry points for looking at various issues.

The data might have been complex or even unimportant to some of the stakeholders, but the debate it generated was enriched with insights into what the collective-action situations were and into some of the interlocution processes that might be required

Box 3: World Governance Assessment (WGA) as a context analysis methodology

The aim of the WGAs, which were carried out in each Mwananchi focus country, was to achieve a better understanding of governance in terms of the rules of the game and the norms underlying what is deemed legitimate or not. WGA focuses on process rather than performance and on rules rather than results. Governance is treated as both activity and process, in the sense that it is viewed as reflective of human intention and agency, but is itself a process that sets the parameters for how policy is made and implemented. The political process is separated into six separate but inter-related arenas: civil society, political society, government, bureaucracy, economic society, and the judiciary.

The WGA also differs from most other instruments aimed at measuring governance in that it tries to avoid

assuming that 'good' governance means the standards adopted by liberal democracies in the West. Its purpose is not to rank countries in terms of how close they are to an ideal based on a particular model of governance. Instead, the assessment relies on six principles that are not specific to a country or region but that reflect more universal human values. These six theoretical principles, inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and drawn up after consultation with a number of academics and practitioners, are: (1) participation (2) fairness (3) decency (4) accountability (5) transparency and (6) efficiency. The first three of these refer to state-society relations, while the latter three refer to operational aspects of the state.

Source: See Hyden, et al (2008) <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/573-governance-assessments-local-stakeholders-world-governance-assessment-offers>

to change the situations.

In terms of programmatic thinking, the country discussions were based on a variety of criteria including¹⁸:

- a) determining concrete issues around which collaboration/coalition of actors was possible
- b) ensuring clear linkages to the institutional issues highlighted in the baseline context analysis
- c) focusing on simple issues that capture the interest of media, civil society and elected representatives (while noting that it may not be possible to get all of them interested at first)
- d) aiming to strengthen citizen–state engagement at the various levels of the government system
- e) identifying issues which poorer citizens will identify with, so that when institutional changes take place, these citizens can easily take advantage of them and actively engage.

Another key dimension to the design was that according to the Mwananchi theory of change (discussed in the next chapter), whichever issues were selected in the six countries, the projects had to be designed so that they included opportunities for activities of CSOs, media, elected representatives (parliament and local councillors) and traditional leaders. These were intended to be included in the 'coalitions for change', based on the idea of synergy through working together, as assumed in the theory of change.

One critical design lesson that emerged here, of relevance to understanding collective-action interventions, is that coalition building did not develop as smoothly as assumed in the design. For instance, most grantee organisations naturally went for those actors that were similar to them¹⁹ rather than engaging other actors based on maximising efforts from a diversity of skills and position in society in relation to the governance issue in question. Some of them brought in other actors that they perceived capable of providing the skills or

attributes that they were associated with, but then found themselves struggling to get the real value from their participation in the project because what the other actors were perceived to be capable of was not necessarily what they could deliver, especially when their interests and incentives were not anchoring well with the project.

Instead, effective coalition building emerged after a period of relationship-building activities, such as those encouraged in the processes of using outcome mapping (OM) as a planning tool, and also the end-of-year, multi-stakeholder programme-performance reviews.

There is certainly a political economy of coalition building among CSOs in the various countries, especially when 'coalition building' is interpreted as an approach to building solid networks that have to be managed together because of a project rather than as a loose issue-targeting way of working. This issue emerged as a key interlocution process lesson (see Chapter 5).

The lead grantees were provided with pilot grants of £4,000 (minimum) per organisation for the initial year, and then the amounts were increased during the second and third rounds (with each grant round lasting at least 12 months) based on performance. The projects were initially referred to as 'pilot projects'. However, the term 'pilot project' was dropped during the mid-term review because it unintentionally gave the grantees the impression that these projects would be scaled up with more funding from the GTF during the subsequent rounds.

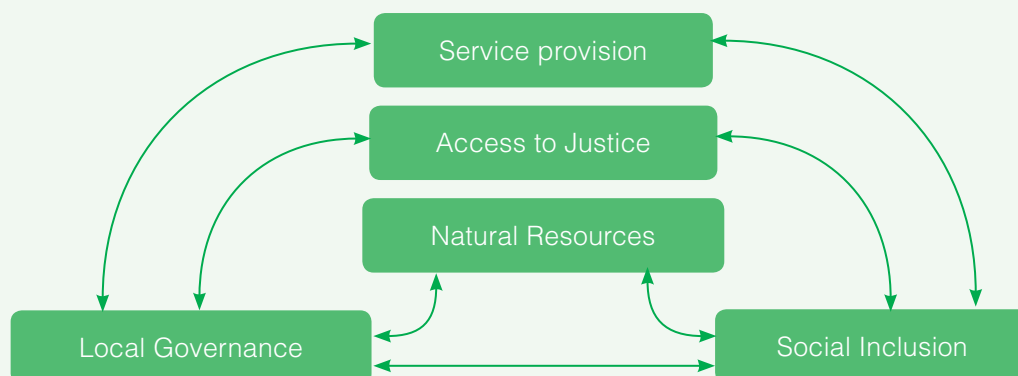
The actual meaning of pilot project in this instance (according to ODI) was that these would be intensively implemented small

projects (by way of action, reflection and documentation), generating lessons that would be available for use in each country beyond the grantees that the Mwananchi programme was working with. This too was a misplaced assumption in the theory of change because from the perspective of grantees (and hence incentive structure), nothing exists just for testing and expanding as part of an exit strategy. Furthermore, the prevalent political economy of relationships between grantees and non-grantees does not always work for mutual learning from a kind of 'tested intervention' where failure is exposed to others for lesson learning. These findings might be valuable for research evidence tracking methods such as RCT, and for building learning into interventions incrementally.

The participatory governance-issue selection process resulted in three main sectors around which grantees in all the six countries responded to call for proposals and have been working for the past three years, with variations in emphasis depending on context. The three sectors included **service provision** (mainly health, education and agricultural services), **access to justice** and **natural resource management**, as shown in Figure 1. These sectors were actually entry points for addressing local governance and social-inclusion issues identified during the country-baseline context analysis.

2.2 The focus dilemma: rules of the game or tangible impacts?

The main challenge of the design process, and hence of implementation, was to keep looking at both the sectoral issues (which produced the tangible changes in people's lives) and the

Figure 1: Sectoral coverage of grantee projects across six countries

governance issues (where the rules of the game were articulated and followed) simultaneously. The programme was looking for projects which aimed to change the rules of the game. In practice, however, any changes had to be embedded in service provision or other real-life issues that citizens and state actors could identify with.

This hybrid approach was found to be a good way of using research-informed evidence for policy advocacy: the practical evidence was in the hands of citizens themselves and so proved useful for political leverage in the context of high political sensitivity and dominant state-driven development ideology, such as in Ethiopia.

When there were clear entry points on local governance, issues had to be linked to improvement in service provision in order to find sustained traction with ordinary citizens. The Radio Listening Clubs (RLC) project of Development Communications Trust (DCT) in Malawi, for example, focused attention on improving the quality of decision-making in local-governance structures (an issue of local governance), so that the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Local Development Fund (LDF) could be properly implemented. However, the communities involved in the engagement process interpreted the purpose of these structures to be increasing access to education (an issue of service provision).

Box 4: An example of the hybrid approach: Democracy Sierra Leone

One good example of the hybrid approach is the grantee Democracy Sierra Leone (DSL)²⁰, an organisation that aims to increase youth employment through the establishment of a basket fund. They pursued their aim through engaging traditional leaders and MPs, addressing how traditional chiefs involve youth in their decisions around mining; and also critiquing the effectiveness of the government's decentralisation programme.

Through the employment issue, and as part of the evidence generated from research, they were

able to get young people to speak for themselves during meetings with traditional leaders and mining companies in the area. DSL was looking beyond the immediate benefits to changes in the mining policies and relationships between youth in the area and their traditional leaders, elected representatives and government.

The Mwananchi idea was to take this mindset of looking beyond the immediate benefits and applying it to citizen-state relations in projects, moving beyond the limitations of what CSOs or media can do.

Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

The evidence of failure or success of these structures was often easier to find in the tangible manifestation of the roles of the various actors, which was easy to demonstrate around services. This approach to improving the governance structures for service provision was working because communities needed these services and so they were not just experimenting or exploring what was working or not working in local-governance structures.

school), and then provides separate funds for achieving 'more accountable management of public education'. The new donor pressures have incentivised the drive to produce impact earlier on, as evidence to show that the programme delivers value for money²¹.

The hybrid approach²², aimed at combining improvements in the long-term and sustainable provision of services with short



A primary school in Kampala, Uganda. Arne Hoel/World Bank.

Ultimately, the discussion above exposes the tension between designing for governance outcomes as impacts in themselves, and achieving more tangible outcomes which reflect in results, such as an increase in the enrolment of children in schools.

In a similar vein, Kenya Drivers of Accountability Programme (Kenya DAP) is implementing the Kenya Essential Education Programme (KEEP) with several streams of parallel projects that focus on tangible deliverables (e.g. a reduction in the number of children who are out of

term improvements that engage people's interest, reflects what is successful when working with local communities on voice and accountability projects. Most social-accountability projects tend to focus on tracking physical/visible infrastructures, but fail to maintain a long term focus on the changing delivery of services when different actors enter the context, and the rules of the game change.

There is a fundamental risk in pushing for immediately tangible or 'countable' impact

results in the short term: it can undermine interlocution process that are necessary for building pro-poor rules of the game, which are necessary for long-term changes²³. The key design lesson from the Mwananchi programme is the need to evolve the theory of change from broad initial premises to a narrow and deep theory of change, which allows for flexibility at project level while justifying and measuring changes that could be expected during each of the phases of the interventions. This flexibility helps to deal with the inherent tensions between the often external expectations around social accountability and what it can practically achieve on the ground. The next section gives an example of how the Mwananchi theory of change evolved in this respect.

2.3 An evolving theory of change

The Mwananchi theory of change began with the assumption that working with civil society, media, elected representatives (councillors and members of parliament) and traditional leaders can strengthen citizen demand for good governance. The basic argument was that in neo-patrimonial contexts, citizen activism might not lead to significant changes in the prevailing rules of the game without support from these intermediary actors, whom we called interlocutors (see Box 2 for a definition of interlocutors and interlocution processes). It was thought that it is these organisations that mostly work on citizen empowerment, articulate citizen voices, provide channels into policy for these voices, mobilise identified citizen strategies, and work on exacting state accountability: they are the active institutions involved in ‘hammering out the terms of the social contract’ between the governors and the governed (Teskey, 2006).

It was noted that, although there are numerous interlocutors of citizen–state relationships, the programme chose CSOs, media, elected representatives (parliamentarians and local councillors) and traditional leaders to be the focus of the Mwananchi programme. This resulted in increased donor support to civil society, parliament and decentralisation processes²⁴, in order to promote actors outside government (Scanteam, 2008; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, 2012).

There were three major assumptions underlying this theory of change. Firstly, all the four interlocutors (media, CSOs, traditional leaders, and elected representatives) have very distinct institutional roles in working with both citizens and state actors. The issue however is that they often do not understand these roles well, which undermines their specific advantages and contribution to governance contexts. Secondly, given that they have specific advantages in different institutional areas in each given context, improving their relationships will significantly enhance role synergies and achieve more results. Thirdly, the use of evidence might enable these actors to be more effective in influencing representation, policy and accountability processes.

All three assumptions were based on evidence from research. The first assumption was based on ongoing research on actor roles e.g. DFID’s work on civil society and the media²⁵. The second was based on WGA data that clearly showed a lack of cooperation and collaboration between CSOs and parliament, parliament and the media, media and CSOs. The third assumption was based on several years of work by ODI on the use of research-based evidence in policy change.²⁶

The programme was designed based on a theory of change which argued that, for these interlocutors to provide effective political

leverage to citizens so that they can express their views and hold their governments to account, there was the need for three pre-conditional outcomes. These outcomes comprised:

- a) better clarity of their institutional roles (in this case, the role of civil society, media and elected representatives), which would be further strengthened through capacity-development support
- b) role synergies among the defined interlocutors in order to maximise their comparative advantages (e.g. MPs are legislators but can benefit from CSOs' social-inclusion strategies).
- c) enhanced policy influence through the increased use of research-based evidence.

The programme provided small grants to support role clarity and capacity development, build synergetic relationships, and use research-based evidence for policy influence. As part of the design, ODI undertook to study these project-implementation actions in three research phases, in order to keep testing assumptions informing this theory of change while local organisations in the six countries implemented their projects²⁷.

The first phase (from 2009 to 2011)²⁸ explored answers to the following research questions.

- » Is there evidence that poorer citizens are being empowered and enabled to engage with their government effectively at different levels through the work of interlocutors? Are there identifiable impacts of such engagements?
- » Are media, civil society, elected representatives (parliament and local councillors) and traditional leaders the most effective interlocutors of voice and accountability? Are there other interlocutors that are more effective? Does this vary according to context?

- » Does the formation of coalitions of interlocutors make a difference to the ability of interlocutors to enhance voice and accountability?
- » Are there tools, platforms or engagement strategies that citizens or interlocutors are using that show more effectiveness in achieving voice and accountability objectives than others? Under what conditions and for what sort of issues?
- » Does the use of evidence make a difference to the effectiveness of interlocutors, either on their own or in coalitions, in influencing government policies and engaging citizens? In other words, does evidence matter for effective citizen voice and government accountability?

A focus on process, not actors

The findings from this research phase, which were published in an ODI Working Paper (Tembo, 2012b) led to a critical review of the theory of change (also taking advantage of the mid-term review conducted by independent evaluators).

This process led to a refocusing of the theory of change from interlocutors as organisations to interlocation as a process²⁹ (see section 2.2 of Tembo, 2012b). This was because it was observed that the roles of the actors, and the results that were emerging (in terms of voice and accountability) from projects, were elevating the role or form of actors above their functions. In other words, success was often attributed to implementing organisations when in fact the important change-factor was the organisation's behaviour, or some other special ingredient that, when in action, helped change happen. The theory of change therefore needed to help clarify these specific features and make them more visible, beyond the name or category of the organisation. During this

process, it was often found that several other actors played a role in the change process.

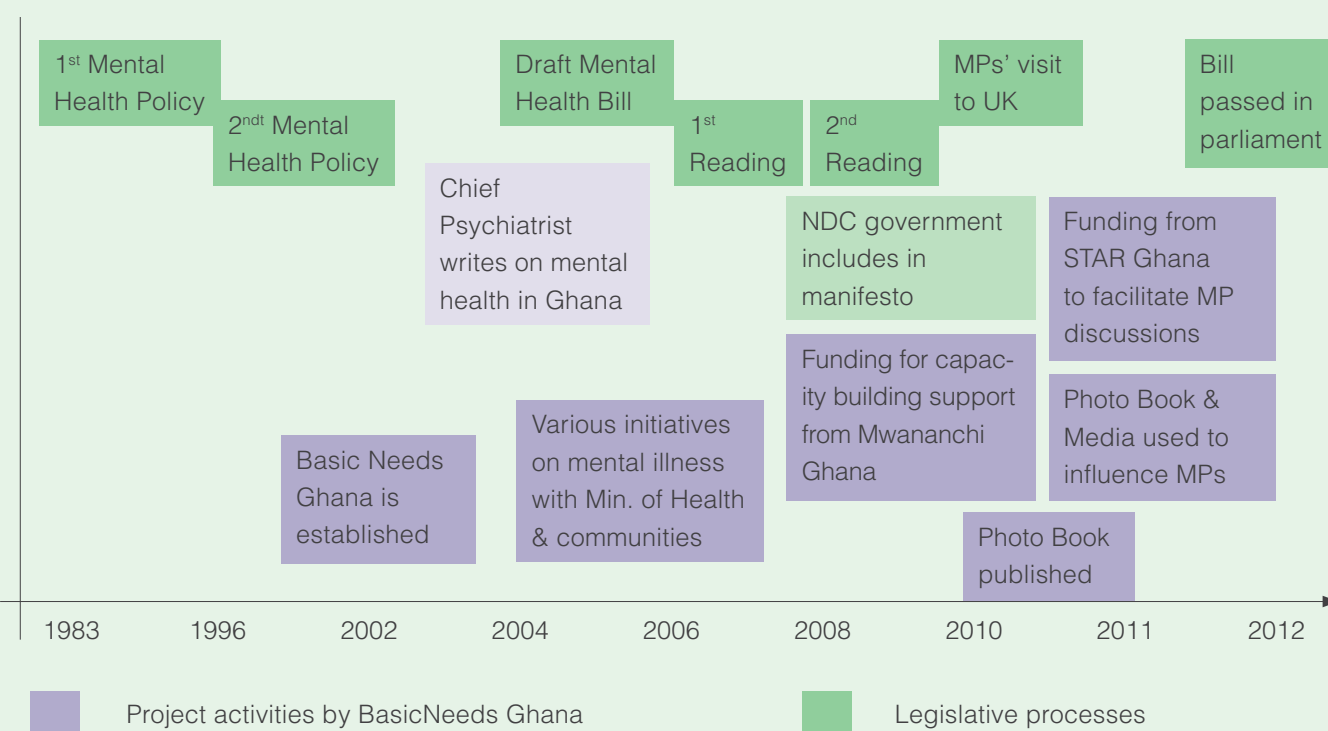
For example, Figure 2 shows a picture that I drew after hours of working with Basic Needs (BN), a Ghanaian grantee aiming to improve conditions for people with mental-health problems. In this particular project, Basic Needs focused on getting parliament to pass the Mental Health Bill, which had been kept on hold since 2004 despite two readings in parliament between 2006 and 2010. As shown, although it is Basic Needs that sustained the process and kept up the pressure, the passing of the bill in 2012 was also associated with several other dynamics, some of which were not fully triggered by Basic Needs (e.g. a parliamentary visit to the UK to examine mental-health policies).

As shown in Figure 2, the picture of the theory of change is clearer in hindsight than when Basic Needs was first funded by Mwananchi.

One example is the involvement of STAR-Ghana in funding MPs to hold their discussions on mental health. Mwananchi would not have been able to fund these MPs, due to the expensive allowance culture that has affected MP facilitation in most African countries. As noted earlier, this reflects the need to address the political economy of coalition building in social-accountability projects, in order to bring forward the actors that have the requisite ingredients to be part of the interlocution processes for resolving different governance issues. Coalitions are often informed by a logic of friends working together in a pack rather than this one.

In response to these issues, Mwananchi shifted attention to looking for these unique organisational features³⁰ rather than remaining preoccupation with the interlocutor categories. This allowed the programme to observe which other actors were best placed

Figure 2: Story of change for Basic Needs – mental health in Ghana



Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

to support change that enabled citizens to hold government to account. The theory of change was re-articulated, as shown in Figure 3 below, which shows the two desired outcomes: citizens becoming more able to express their views and interests, holding government to account; and government becoming more responsive and transparent to citizens.

To some degree, it is only with hindsight that we can identify and understand why particular interlocutor features emerged and triggered or supported change: why these organisations or individuals; why at that particular time. In order to do this effectively, however, we need to delve into the understanding of contexts in which social accountability is expected to happen. The idea is to propose how social-accountability

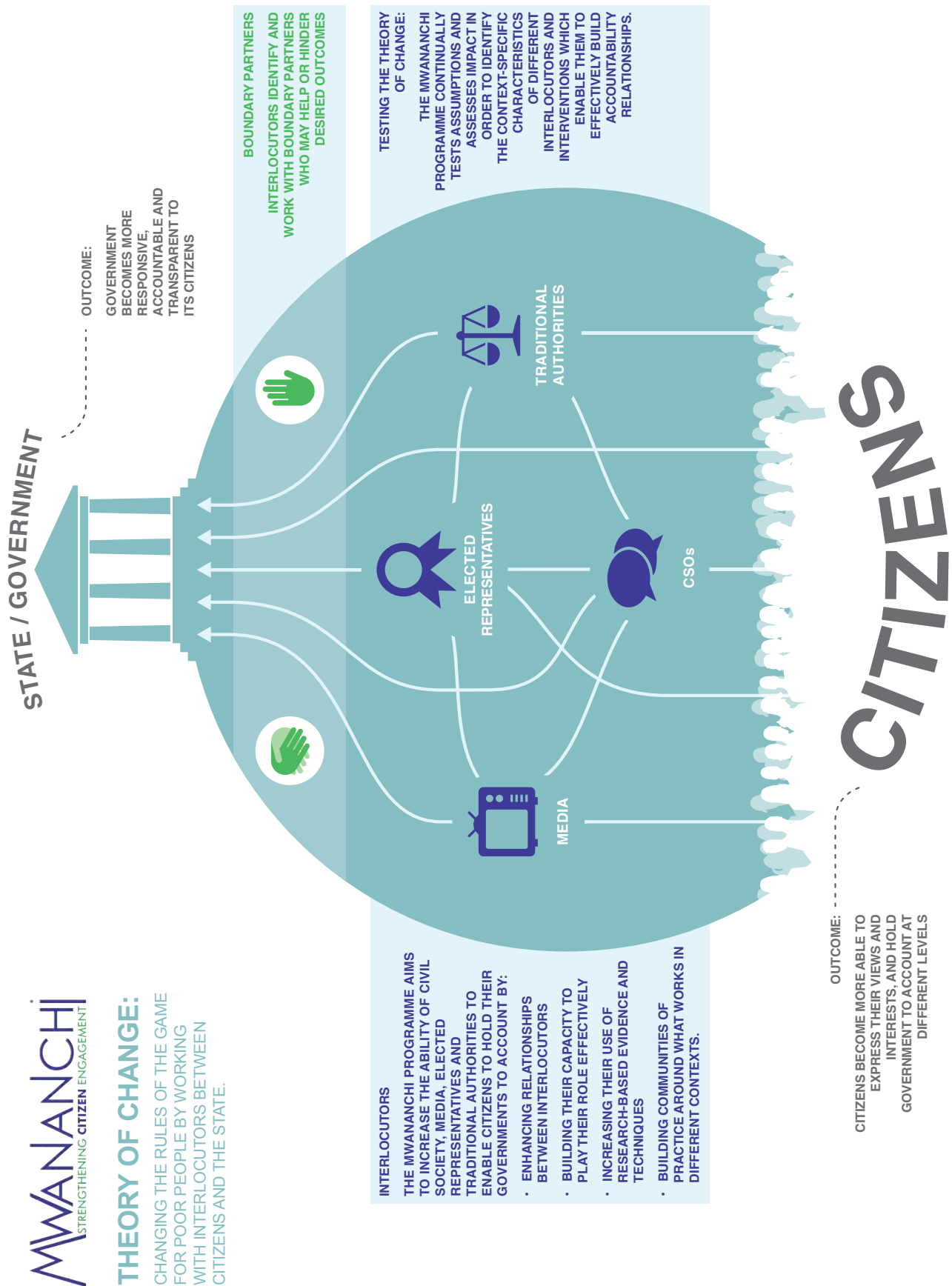
projects could be based on a more systematic analysis of the collective-action situations that they are part of.

For a start, the next chapter develops a conceptual framework that helps to define ongoing processes of state-society bargaining and contests, in different contexts within which interventions took place. We learn from the implementation of the Mwananchi programme that it is important to define accountability relationships within the understanding and expression of citizenship and marginality as experienced in various contexts in Africa. How this then informs theories of change for social-accountability projects in dynamic contexts is discussed in Chapter 5 of the paper.



A classroom in Uganda. Sarah Hunt/Mwananchi Programme.

Figure 3: Mwananchi theory of change





Mariatu Kamara, Sierra Leone.
Doune Porter/GAVI

3. Citizenship, marginality and accountability

'Mwananchi' (plural: wananchi) is a Kiswahili word meaning 'ordinary citizen', the key party to the programme and its theory of change. This chapter uses the conceptual background of the programme to explore the interpretations given to citizenship, marginality and accountability, in order to give a contextualised meaning to these terms. I argue that the starting point for interventions in social-accountability projects should be the nuancing of the diverse ways in which citizenship, marginality and accountability manifest themselves in different political contexts. It is these nuances – of political, economic and social interactions and bargaining processes – that also reveal the agency possibilities, identifying the interlocution processes and how they can be supported.

3.1 Citizenship: identities, power and expressions

What's in a name?

The programme name 'Mwananchi' was chosen by the country programme coordinators at the start of the programme in Uganda. It is a term that is well known in East Africa and beyond, and hence very easy for communities participating in projects to understand and identify with. In scholarly literature, the term 'ordinary citizen' refers to a responsible and engaged 'common man or woman', as a power

category. For instance, for Masolo (1986), the term 'mwananchi' stands for:

“the common man – popularly known in Swahili as *wananchi*, a term designating a class of people considered as “ordinary” because they do not have any outstanding (political and/or financial or administrative) powers and privileges in public or private sectors (p. 176).”

When the political dimensions of the term 'mwananchi' are illuminated, other meanings also emerge, as is the case when the term is used in Tanzania and Kenya. For example, in the immediate post-independence Tanzania, *mwananchi* also refers to 'child of the land', which signifies belonging to the nation (Kessler, 2006). According to this view, however, the term in this case highlights the paternalistic orientation of the post-independence government in Tanzania. The objective was for each member of society to be able to recognise easily his or her proper role in supporting the overall good of the national family. According to Kessler, this was a political strategy that the government was using in order to manage the power of the citizens³¹.

In neighbouring Kenya, the same *mwananchi* concept has fragmented into further meanings that also reflect on the socio-economic status of the citizens, as Kagwanja (2003) notes:

“The widening gap between the rich and the poor also found articulation in the social discourse on citizenship. The public discourse distinguished between *wananchi* (Kiswahili for the ordinary citizens) and *wenyanchi* (owners of the nation). With the endemic corruption, a new category was introduced, the *walanchi* ('eaters' of the nation). This distinction has been especially used to express popular disillusionment with the elite who continue to live luxuriously, in spite of the dire economic conditions of ordinary citizens. It is also a commentary on the scandalous and cynical corruption and crude accumulation by the elite, which has taken a toll on the lives of ordinary citizens (*wananchi*) (p. 29).”

The word 'mwananchi', therefore, describes a woman or man, but one who experiences and exercises different forms of citizenship in different contexts, depending on the nature of the state in terms of its political and economic orientations at a particular time. The title Mwananchi has emerged in the programme as a concept that allows exploration of the

different types of citizenship within which ordinary citizens are defined or otherwise find their identities and livelihoods, across the different African regime contexts. This view takes the discussion to issues of citizenship as understood within power relations, from the perspectives of both the state and citizens.

Powerful and powerless citizens

'Citizenship' cannot be taken as a given: within a state certain people may have the right to citizenship of a certain kind that is not available to others³² (Mamdani, 1996, 2007). According to Mamdani, both the colonial and post-colonial African state has the tendency to prescribe citizenship in policies and laws, within which, therefore, any form of citizen engagement is framed. In other words, a citizen is as given or ascribed by the state, on its terms. This pertains, for example, to how education policies can be set deliberately to give selective privileges to certain people within the country, as happens when establishing a quota system for achieving equitable education.



Child Rights Advocate and Community HIVAIDS Initiative project, Uganda. Arne Hoel, World Bank

It should be possible to observe different patterns of citizenship across the various regime types within the same country, if we take a historical perspective, or between different countries, if we take a geo-political perspective. This can be regarded as citizenship from the perspective of the state and its drive for cultivating political arrangements that tend to align citizen power in various ways that best serve its underlying interests.

From the perspective of the citizen, the concept of citizenship is about how people as individuals and in their groups of common identities experience and express their citizenship, as a form of agency³³ and politics. In this regard, Honwana (2007), citing Michel de Certeau, and learning from the experience of child soldiers in Mozambique, usefully posits the notions of 'strategic' and 'tactical' agency. This distinguishes citizen action by 'powerful citizens' from the citizen action by 'powerless citizens' as 'strategic' and 'tactical' agency respectively.

In this framework, 'strategic agency' refers to citizens with the ability to manipulate relationships from a position of 'autonomous' space, which gives them the political freedom to engage based on how they see things to be or how they would like them to be. This is the position where the actor has the ability to maximise possible engagement with both other citizens and state actors using the inherent advantages that the autonomous space provides.

'Tactical agency', on the other hand, is a feature of the powerless where the actor lacks this autonomy of space and seeks to seize any opportunity that arises, finding room for manoeuvre within the situation that he or she faces without exercising overt power to influence. Both 'strategic' and 'tactical' agency

are expressions of citizenship and hence lead to different forms of 'citizen engagement'.

The type of citizenship at play for the specific actor depends much more on the type of authority being faced than the inherent nature or attribute of an individual. For example, whereas an individual might be capable of exercising strategic agency in relation to his or her local chief, the same individual may well be exercising tactical agency when relating to their Member of Parliament or minister.

Some people have more room and opportunity to exercise strategic agency across many relationships, but this might change as they grow up, or with changes in the political environment. For example, most multi-party democratic competitions in Africa feature 'winner takes all' attitudes – the winners and their extended relations (e.g. a tribal collectivity) can suddenly (soon after winning a general election) find their room for exercise of strategic agency increase, while the losers switch to tactical agency, having very limited room to influence change.

Therefore, citizenship is a dynamic phenomenon, with its own characteristics and identity depending on a complex combination of intrinsic³⁴ and extrinsic factors at play for a particular individual or collective group of actors, and the character of the state regime in place. These characteristics are also dynamic in the sense that, in Africa for instance, the various rounds of multi-party elections have ushered in a different, and changing, character of regime incentives and interests; hence the way the state ascribes citizenship to various groups of people within its geo-political remit.

This is different from the orientations of the immediate post-colonial regimes, which

were largely single-party states. These regime orientations find their way into the practice of decentralisation and the various 'deepening democracy' projects, where citizen engagement is expected – resulting in different challenges of rhetoric and practice.

In terms of the citizen perspective of citizenship, it is important to underline the different ways citizenship might manifest itself, and the avenues that might be useful to particular citizens for this manifestation. These manifestations might take the form of activism both visible (in terms of strategic agency) and invisible (in terms of tactical agency), otherwise dubbed as 'social innovation' (Biekart and Fowler, 2012). These various constructions of citizenship and ways of manifesting that citizenship make possible the different methods of holding authorities to account ranging from covert (e.g. movements or street demonstrations) to overt types (e.g. refusing to attend a funeral of a relative of a public office holder until they learn to account or other forms of foot-dragging)

This approach to understanding citizenship, and hence citizen engagement, is more analytical than programmatic in that it does not ascribe generic categories of citizenship to people based on comparisons with others or on previously formed ideological positions rooted in popular development language (empowering young people, for example). This thinking emerged during the course of implementing the Mwananchi programme, especially in relation to marginality. This is because the concept of the 'wananchi' naturally led us to consider power relationships, and working with 'marginalised citizens' as the most appropriate group to engage in the citizen empowerment and government-accountability projects.

3.2 Marginality: beyond images of victimisation

In most of the discussions with grantees, especially as we came to the third and fourth year of implementing their projects, it was apparent even to the local organisations themselves that, even though projects were

Box 5: An example of an accountability project from a citizen perspective

The Centre for the Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA), Sierra Leone, supports a union for commercial motorbike riders, part of the informal economy offering taxi services around Sierra Leone's cities. At a meeting with boundary partners from the Sierra Leone Police, the Roads Authority, the media, the Mwananchi coordinator in Sierra Leone and the bike riders, it was clear that the relationships being cultivated, around which new rules were being formed, had come a long way since the beginning of the project: a whole new section of roads regulations, based on some of the lobbying by the union, was read at the meeting.

The discussion, however, centred on behaviours: how young people riding motor bikes behaved and how the police could counter the negative behaviour

and encourage the positive. The police themselves had refrained from introducing spikes on the roads to punish bike riders that were breaking the law, following lobbying from the Bike Riders' Union. However, there was still a great deal to do in terms of controlling and enforcing good behaviour among the youth riders. At this interface meeting, the Traffic Police Commissioner exhibited the kind of patience that is necessary for collective action to work, remarking: 'We are massaging the problem, giving you time to work with the youths who are breaking the law: we do not want to put them in prison just like that.'. Building citizenship relies on both citizen responsibilities and state accountability.

Source: Monitoring visit to Sierra Leone, November 2012

Box 6: A brief conceptual thought on ‘marginality’

‘If citizenship is about insiders or those who supposedly belong, legal or imagined, marginality is about outsiders, those who are excluded from basic rights and entitlements. If citizenship is about inclusion, marginality is about exclusion.

Marginality is an imagined state of being; a product of the structural construction inherent in concrete social relations that are constantly changing. Those who regard themselves as marginalised, often in categories such as women, workers, youth, people with disabilities etc., struggle to shed their marginality

to become part of the centre, rather than the “other”. This resistance to be regarded as “the other” is therefore central to understanding marginality because it is part of everyday life. On the other side are actors that consider themselves to be at the centre. They also struggle to include those that they consider the marginalised, or “the other”. This contestation between these arenas of actions tends to be political because it involves negotiations and struggle over decision-making processes and distribution of resources.’

Source: Professor Ibrahim Abdullah, Sierra Leone Stocktaking Report, April 2010 (unpublished)

formed within a log-frame that defined the ultimate results in terms of policy and practice changes, at the core of practice was the latent contestation of citizenship and marginality. In essence, social accountability was anchored within the manifestations or expressions of citizenship and marginality in a given context, as shown in Box 6.

As discussed above, citizenship from the perspective of the citizen is very much about how individuals or groups identify themselves with respect to authorities, including the state, rather than how they are categorised externally³⁵. For example, it is one thing to categorise a certain group of citizens as ‘youth’ and imagine how they would engage with other actors, designing interventions accordingly; but if young people do not see themselves in the same way, they will not engage in the manner anticipated. There is more to marginality than the often imagined categories tend to show.

Marginality is the premise from which the Mwananchi programme sought to understand the various manifestations of citizenship across the six countries and how social-accountability projects could work in such situations. When

in-country governance experts were asked to help projects interrogate the meanings and experiences of marginality, various forms of marginality came up. These included economic marginality (e.g. youth unemployment or employment in poor income-earning activities), traditional culture marginality (not being accepted as a normal citizen in society), policy marginality (problematic inclusion in policies, often due to a lack of implementation of international conventions or national laws), political marginalisation, and physical isolation.

Marginality can be doubled or even trebled: for example, being marginalised because you are a girl, and then because you come from a certain rural district of the country, which might be facing political marginalisation at the time, and then because you are disabled. Box 7 describes one case study of some of the complexities and effects of marginality.

A closer analysis of this view of marginality shows that it is largely a programmatic view, which tends towards representations of marginality as ‘victimisation’, with policies and projects aimed at alleviating the forms of victimisation described. However, when exploring the issue of agency and marginality,

Box 7: Experiences of marginality in Zambia

Challenges for children with hearing impairment in Zambia

Four citizen-voice and accountability (CV&A) projects implemented in Zambia by Radio Kasempa, Radio Maranatha, Christian Information Network (CIN) and Citizens Forum (CF) are focused on children with special education needs, in particular hearing impairment. The general understanding of marginality in the context of children with special-education needs is that the abilities and capacities of children with disabilities are often overlooked and underestimated, and their needs are accorded low priority in Zambia within communities and families and by government. This is demonstrated by inadequate special-education provision at all levels in the country and extremely low national budgetary allocation to the special-education sub-sector. Interviews with education authorities in

government, as well as with teachers in Kasempa and Kabwe districts where Radio Kasempa and Radio Maranatha projects are addressing the issue of education of children with special needs, have revealed that funding to the special-education units at Kasempa Basic School and Broadway Basic School has been grossly inadequate. Some estimated that perhaps only about five per cent of any amounts allocated to the schools were directed towards special-education units.

In both Kasempa and Kabwe, the special-education units cater for basic education only, and only a very few children will access higher education, which comes at a high cost in the distant provincial capitals; most will progress no further, reducing their chances of providing themselves with livelihoods.

Source: Discussions with in-country governance experts, Zambia.

from an analytical view, it is possible to find situations in which 'the marginalised' used very surprising tactics (or tactical agency, as described above) to cause significant transformation. Biekart and Fowler's definitions of 'power within' and 'power with' explain this exercise of civic agency (Biekart and Fowler, 2012).

Even supposedly 'powerless citizens' can find opportunistic solutions to their collective-action problems: as much as the marginalised are 'made and broken' by societies, they also are 'makers and breakers', often through untraditional routes to change (Honwana and de Boeck, 2005). These covert forms of citizen expression or activism can work for better or for worse, depending on the issue at hand. A positive example comes from the 'Rarray boys and Rarray gails' culture in urban Sierra Leone. Associated with petty crime, violence and sex work, this culture has also been highly influential in the development and modernisation of the Krio language and culture

in Sierra Leone (Abdullah, 2005) and now wields considerable, though informal, political clout. A political party cannot hope to win in Sierra Leone unless they can appeal to these youths who force non-traditional culture and economic activities into the mainstream.

3.3 The social construction of accountability

The discussion above shows that in order to comprehend social accountability in Africa the starting point has to be an understanding of how citizens express their citizenship when faced with different power-laden interactions, including with the various parts of the state and other authorities within their spheres of everyday life.

The notion of accountability is deeply embedded in these configurations of citizenship and power around societal and society-state interactions, some of which emerges when

looking at public-goods provision. As regards society-state bargaining processes, state and citizen actions can only be usefully categorised when anchored in the specific social, political, economic and cultural contexts in which they occur. As we have seen, even terms such as ‘the marginalised’, when applied to a certain group of people without due consideration, can be misleading – such a group may be using covert forms of power in bargaining for access to resources when faced with different sources of authority, including state power.

The current challenge of social accountability is that the international development community understands it as a sometimes standardised activity focused on using the right citizen-engagement tools (e.g. citizen report cards). As a result, the diversity of citizen experiences of marginality and accountability are not sufficiently, if at all, explored. The focus tends to be on the magic bullet embedded in the tools, rather than looking at the underlying identities and motivations for citizens to express their citizenship in one way and not another; with the character of the state as one

of the key sources of authority. In the wider understanding, accountability is only one part of a complex web of relationships, dependent on expressions of citizenship and power.

Accountability from the perspective of the citizen needs to be reformulated to mean the ‘ability to hold government to account’, which citizens draw from their experience of citizenship³⁶ in a given context, including in their interaction with the state of a certain character. In which case, it is just one expression of accountability within multiple and multi-directional forms of accountability that exist among actors involved within the specific state-society relations in view.

It is also important to move away from thinking of the state as monolithic. Recognising that governments, as well as the citizenry, are composed of individuals and shaped by particular institutional histories, we cannot always define a government ministry as one kind of action or actors. Exploring the different cultures and policy orientations of staff working in the Zambian health ministry, Leenstra (2012)



Residents of surrounding areas collect water from the dam at Savelugu in rural Ghana. Gates Foundation.

finds it is possible to see how some individuals can find room for manoeuvre while others occupying the same positions do not find these opportunities for influence. This means that the expression of citizenship and power also changes depending on who the citizen is and who the state is in a given context. The citizen is both in society and inside the state, and not just a residual concept that we activate only when talking about civil society (Fowler and Biekart, 2013). This introduces a fundamental dynamic in terms of interlocution processes that are necessary for achieving social accountability.

Separating ends from means for accountability

With this analytical view of what constitutes citizenship and statehood, interlocutors come into the mix not as neutral actors but as part of the body politic; their work being shaped around incentives and interests of their own as well as the character of the society and state. These incentives and interests of intervening agencies are rarely brought into the understanding of social accountability³⁷.



School room. Eskinder Debebe/UN Photo

According to Lindberg (2009), the basic technical description of accountability is that it exists when five conditions are met:

- 1 an agent or institution gives an account (A for agent);
- 2 an area, responsibilities or domain is subject to accountability (D for domain);
- 3 an agent or institution exists to whom A is to give account (P for principal);
- 4 P has the right to require A to inform and explain/justify decisions with regard to D;
- 5 P has the right to sanction A if A fails to inform and/or explain/justify decisions with regard to D.

Lindberg's characterisation of accountability above does not mean only one set of actors is principal while the other is the agent all the time. Our understanding of relationships, based on various identities and expressions of citizenship informing their incentives and interests, means that the emergence of accountability cannot ascribe principal-agent relationships independent of the context. **The desired end (in this case, citizens holding governments to account) should not be conflated nor confused with the means.** In most of the Mwananchi projects it was observed that what was often referred to as 'accountability' was in fact where a public-office holder just provided what communities were asking for, as if to silence their voices – in essence, 'accountability as responsiveness' and not 'accountability as answerability' (Hyden, 2010). 'Accountability as answerability' is being answerable for agreed performance as per set standards, which is the desired end in accountability formulations, such as Lindberg's above.

To arrive at the desired end we need an analysis of what different actors bring to these often highly political bargaining relationships, and also to the multiple, multi-directional and

multi-layered forms of accountabilities, and how they enhance and/or undermine each other. In the African context, this should include an understanding of the dialectical political relationships that citizens engage in between state and society, which have to be seen in terms of incentives and interests relating to both policy-making processes with regard to actions with the state; to the claiming of rights; and to the fulfilling of one's duties and obligations as a citizen (Ekeh, 1975). A one-sided pursuit of accountability will easily miss this important social and political reality of citizenship and politics in Africa; instead, we need a framework that can promote the twin process of building the quality of various forms of authority in society, as well as enabling the fulfilment of duties (by citizens who are also in a position to claim their rights).

Within this understanding of accountability, interlocution processes can bring the 'game-changing' element to ongoing incentive-informed actor relationships (the actors being within the state, private sector, individuals, civil society, media etc.). It is in these processes that the unique features³⁸ of interlocutors can enhance citizen engagement. The current 'tools-focused' form of social accountability is a misinterpretation of the nature of society-state bargains and the interlocution processes that are required to transform them.

The next chapter provides a reconstruction of social accountability, one that is more fit for purpose; while chapter 5 explains the approach using examples from some of the Mwananchi case studies.



4. Conceptualising social accountability in a way that is fit for purpose

“Governance and transparency initiatives are big business: we estimate that donors spent GBP 175 million last year on empowerment and accountability initiatives across Africa (Tembo and Nkonkolimba, 2012a). This reflects an increase in interest in supporting demand-side initiatives to achieve pro-development and pro-democracy outcomes, and a corresponding elaboration of the intellectual framework to demand-side accountability issues. This chapter critiques the programming and intellectual context that has framed social accountability so far, and then suggests an alternative framework, based on the discussion in chapter 3 above.”

This paper has so far argued that the main lesson from implementing the Mwananchi programme is that in order to achieve effective citizen engagement that leads to transformation of citizen-state relations, we need to understand and support interlocution processes, and the corresponding interlocutors, that work to find solutions to specific collective-action problems. The previous chapter discussed citizenship, power and marginality, how they are expressed by citizens, and the character of the state that defines the nature of relationships. It is in the context of these relationships, understood through an analytical lens rather than a techno-

programmatic lens, that social accountability (and hence the interlocution processes associated with it) has to be understood. This chapter provides the framework that could inform this analytical process. The starting point is how major actors in the field of governance frame citizen engagement and social accountability.

4.1 Social accountability as interpreted by two major funders

GTF was conceptualised as a mechanism for supporting social-accountability initiatives. According to DFID's White Paper (2006), it is politics that determines how a society makes choices about the way in which people live together, how competing interests are mediated and how available resources are allocated. Politics touches many aspects of people's lives, not only through government but also in areas of cooperation, collective action and the provision of public goods. This is just as relevant at the household level in relations between men and women, children and adults, disabled and able-bodied, as it is at the national level among politicians.

Figure 4: The DFID CAR framework



Source: Department for International Development (2007) Governance, Development and Democratic Politics, p. 14.

In order to frame an agenda for change that embraces government capability and citizen influence within the underlying politics, DFID developed the 'Capability, accountability and responsiveness' (CAR) tool as shown in Figure 4.

The CAR framework, was essentially developed to explain what DFID was promoting through its governance initiatives. As Moore and Teskey (2006) put it, the CAR framework provides a creative way of linking organisational attributes, relationships and behaviour, as corresponding to capability, accountability and responsiveness, respectively.

However, it is important to note that each of these elements were conceptualised with emphasis either on the state or the citizens, in terms of how each of these broad actor categories need to engage. In this case, capability and responsiveness is of the state, and accountability is of the citizens. In essence, this is privileging certain notions of

engagement that DFID believes make good governance. For instance, the definition of accountability as 'the ability of citizens to hold leaders, governments and public organisations to account' as shown above is a clear social-accountability construction of what accountability implies.

The construction of social accountability in the CAR framework dovetails quite closely with the World Bank's conceptualisation of the 'short-route' to accountability in the WDR 2004 model, as shown in Figure 5.

In the World Bank's model, shown citizens exercise their 'client power' to hold frontline service-providers to account and improve the delivery of public services. This client power was not interrogated for its reality within the role of politics in shaping relationships.

The World Bank has since revisited the triangle, and subsequently emphasised the link between

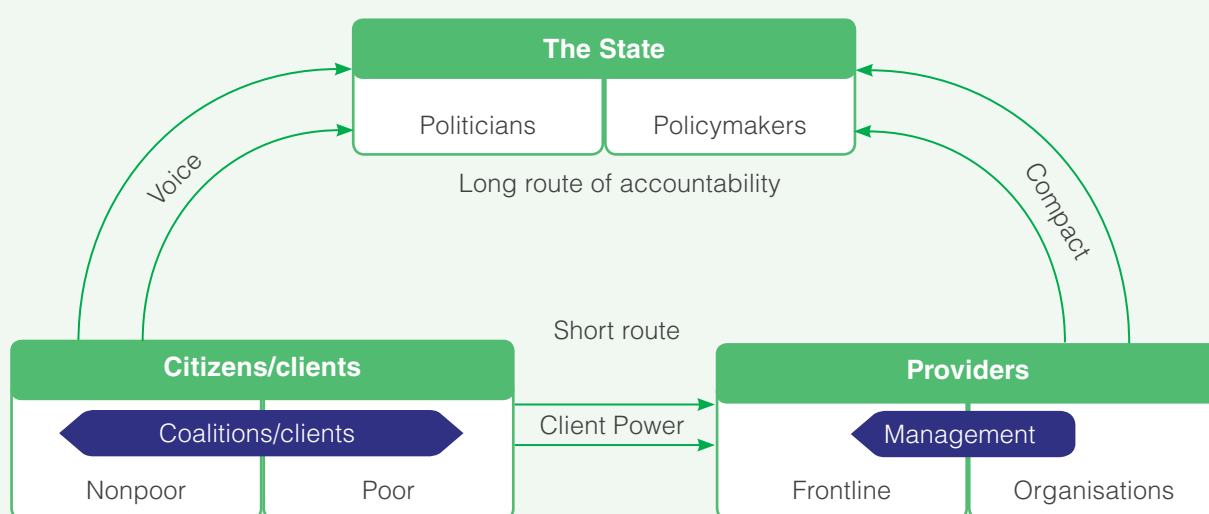
citizens and the politicians and policy-makers as through politics rather than 'voice' – see Figure 6 below (Devarajan et al, 2011). The emphasis is on how to work with citizens so that they influence the incentives on the long route to accountability in tandem with the short route to accountability.

However, there are still untested assumptions in this formulation regarding incentives that are at work among citizens themselves (including elites) as based on the different identities, power configurations and hence expressions of citizenship within which the expected citizen influence on incentives on the long route to accountability would emerge. The same can be said about the incentives at work within the state and among frontline providers. These will surely affect the characteristics of 'the compact' and what it can deliver, owing to the individual motivations and interests at play, as discussed in Chapter 3 above. These assumptions are made because at the heart of the WDR model and its later versions, and the DFID CAR framework³⁹, is a principal-agent

relationship model between citizens (herein perceived as principals) and the state (herein perceived as the agent) (Booth, 2012).

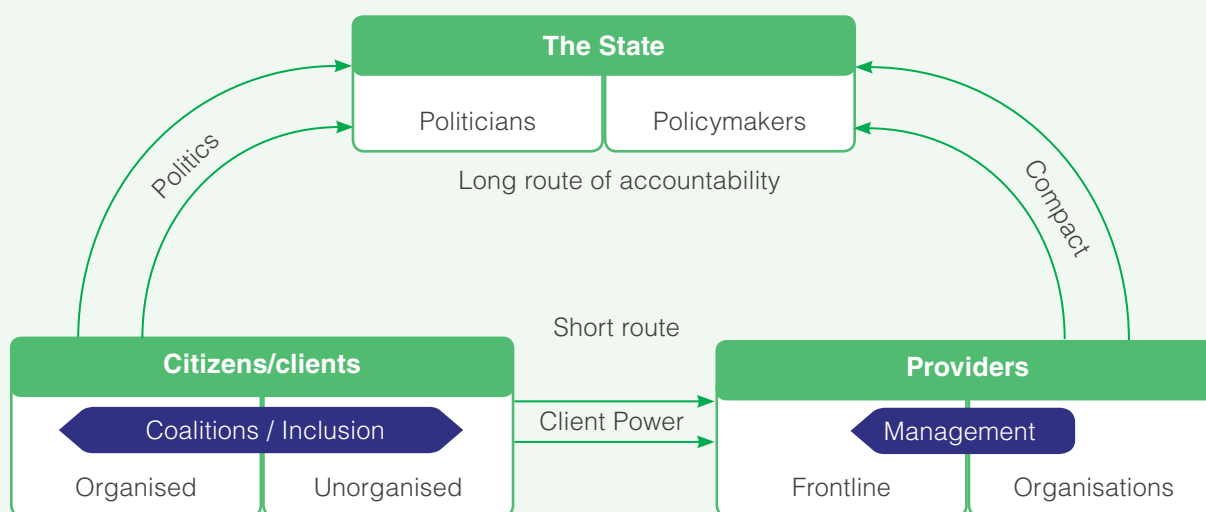
When detached from the social construction of accountability and taken technically, the principal-agent relationship model leads to another assumption: in order for the state to formulate pro-poor policies and deliver public services to the poor, all that is needed is to better equip the principals (citizens) who want the services but lack the ability to get the agent (the state) to comply with their demands (ibid, 2012). In order to get this compliance and improve service provision, social-accountability projects engage in transparency (mainly information transparency) and accountability initiatives. Here accountability is expected to occur when citizens participate, or even formulate, standards for the principals (the 'accountees'), 'investigate' the performance of the principals based on the set standards, demand answerability; and apply sanctions (rewards or punishment) against observable performance. On this issue Booth notes:

Figure 5: World Bank's WDR 2004 Social Accountability Model (a)



Source: World Bank, 2003

Figure 6: The revised World Bank Social Accountability Model (b)



Source: Devarajan et al, 2011.

“It is a serious mistake to treat citizens and service users as “principals”, with an uncomplicated interest in better governance and better public services. Non-state actors are often far more complicit in current patterns of bad governance than the principal-agent framework would imply. They are complicit despite the fact that they are victims. On the other hand, service providers are also, to a significant extent, victims. In both cases, the disjunction between current interests and real long-term interests happens because individuals and groups face collective-action problems” (pp. 70-71).

If the problem common to both the World Bank’s conceptualisation of the short and long route to accountability, and DFID’s CAR framework, is the narrow focus on incentives built into client power; how can this be addressed? The Centre for Future States (2010), arguing for the ‘upside down view of governance’, agrees with the Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP’s) suggestion of the need to move away from conceptualising the relationship between citizens and states through a ‘principal-agent’ framework, to

understanding citizen-state relations as faced with collective action problems. However, these suggestions, as Booth notes, do not necessarily provide an alternative panacea but rather a ‘middle-range theory’ that tries to reconcile the researchers’ recognition of complexity and the practitioners’ hunger for guidance.

The APPP research offers part of the answer to the challenge of reconciling research and practice in arguing that the provision of some public goods⁴⁰ will be improved when institutions are locally anchored. The argument is that this might work because it means that the providers are relevant to the context and are hybrids in that, while they are external intervenors, they also make use of local cultural repertoires. However, this approach does not tell us what to look for in the local cultural repertoires and how best to interrogate the way the local repertoires interact with the external interventions.

Given the discussion in chapter 3 above, the solution has to be found within the analytical

assessment of citizenship identities and expressions, power and the characteristics of the state, and the kinds of actor-bargaining process that are prevalent in a given context. From this perspective, as argued above, the focus should be on what different actors are bringing to these often highly political bargaining relationships, as well as the multiple, multi-directional and multi-layered forms of accountabilities and how they enhance and/or otherwise undermine each other.

It is these forms of analysis that would give programme-managers a working handle or framework for how they go about social-accountability projects in ways that can enable them to 'do no harm', build on what works in the various contexts, and achieve better results⁴¹. The framework also has to be practical because the majority of these programme-managers are implementing intervention projects that must follow a timeline to deliver results. This creates a significant difference

between how the same problem might be approached between those with pure research aims and those with practical results-oriented goals. The next subsection provides the alternative social-accountability conceptual framework that can provide guidance to research and practice.

4.2 Social accountability: an alternative framework

An alternative framework has to focus on actor incentives and interests and blur the 'state-citizen divide'. It needs to define the role of external interventions in existing local relations, bearing in mind that the actors involved include citizens (with various forms of authority and citizenship identities and expressions, marginality and power, expressed through local organisations, political-party representation, state bureaucracy, media, etc). In order to frame interlocution of



A farmer sorts tomatoes, Ethiopia. Stephan Bachenheimer, World Bank.

Box 8: Definitions of 'self-regarding' and 'other-regarding' groups

Self-regarding groups are groups that are made up of members that come together to produce goods that they use or consume collectively

Other-regarding groups are groups whose members come together or are recruited to serve the needs of others.

Source: Bano, 2012

accountability relationships, we should move away from preoccupation with actors and actor categories, and start with defining the prevailing relationships that can enable particular actors to facilitate, or even enforce, changes to the rules of the game.

Civic engagement: interpreting actor incentives

If the central interface challenge is based around citizenship and power because, based on the incentive structures that they create they inform the different actor engagements, it is on the interplay between these incentives and interests that a social-accountability interlocution process must focus. Given that the interlocution processes we are talking about are largely induced or enhanced through external actor interventions, it is important that the incentive structures created as a result of these interventions are brought to the core of understanding how interlocution for social-accountability works.

As Bano (2012) observes, most concepts of 'support for civic engagement' are informed by theories derived from the work of Tocqueville's (1835, 2000) *Democracy in America* and Putnam's (1993) *Making Democracy Work*. To this I can add Jurgen Habermas' theory on communicative action in the 'public sphere' (Habermas, 1981), which informs most of the participative democracy theories, but where there is often also the confusion between means and ends⁴². In Tocqueville's argument, it is voluntary organisations that are the building

blocks of US democracy because through them 'feelings and ideas are renewed, the heart enlarged, and the understanding developed only by the reciprocal action of men one upon another' (cited in Bano 2012, p10). Bano notes Putnam's argument that it is dense networks that build social capital and accounts for greater economic progress in Northern Italy, and that there is a positive correlation between civic engagement within these associations and networks and what can be called 'good governance' in this context.

Bano's fundamental argument, however, is that the current NGO and donor-support models do not produce the outcomes that Tocqueville and Putnam were seeing because the kinds of organisations being supported now are different from the ones these authors were referring to. In this respect, Bano argues that the two authors were studying and making conclusions based on 'self-regarding groups', while the current donor-supported NGOs or CSOs are primarily 'other-regarding groups' (Bano, 2012, p.11).

This means that the incentives at play are quite different between the two groups. Furthermore, neither Tocqueville nor Putnam account for individual motivations to cooperate in these voluntary associations, a critical problem to which cooperative-action theory offers a solution. In this regard, Bano rightly points out, 'in policy design (or intervention design) in order to predict the incentives that will make people act in the desired way, it is

critical to understand what motivates them to act' (ibid, p.11).

In discussing cooperative-action theory's relevance to development interventions, Bano shows how collective-action theory helps us delve into how incentives work. She does this by highlighting the centrality of the 'free-rider problem', which characterises the provision of public goods and associated theories such as 'the tragedy of the commons' and the prisoner's dilemma (explained in Gibson et al, 2005). Whereas Bano recognises the good work of Olson and Ostrom on collective-action theory, she argues that Olson and Ostrom's work deals much more with the 'self-regarding' group and not the 'other regarding' groups (Olson, 1965; Ostrom, 1990).

The social-accountability framework in this paper concerns itself much more with the 'other regarding groups'⁴³ (see chapter 5 below for more description of Mwananchi grantees and their characteristics). This is because although most of the organisations that were supported in the Mwananchi programme

were located in the communities (or near communities), and were comprised mostly of members that were recruited from the same communities, they were involved primarily to serve the needs of others. However, unlike the 'other regarding groups' that Bano was studying, they were largely using donor-funded resources to undertake their activities, either through direct or indirect sub-granting systems. These organisations had incentives and interests that were even more prone to compromise of the interlocution processes for change than the groups serving the interests of others with their own resources⁴⁴. This is because external funding would often bring outward accountabilities and frameworks⁴⁵, along with forms of incentives that might not fit with the collective-action situations in view. This is typical of the majority of organisations undertaking social-accountability projects in Africa, and is likely to continue to be the situation for a long time.

While there are certainly many 'self-regarding' groups in local settings pursuing their own interests in Africa, for the sake of clarity my



A community meeting in Ghana. Kapandokope/Waterdotorg

emphasis is on the 'other regarding' category, and how this group interacts with collective-action situations. The identification of 'other regarding groups' as primary source of interlocution processes, and the implications thereof, forms the first key dimension to the proposed social-accountability framework.

Defining interlocution processes for social accountability

The second key element of the proposed alternative social-accountability framework is the characterisation of the areas of the dynamic where interlocution processes are required, and then of the requisite interlocution processes and interlocutors. In order to do this, we need to define the collective-action problem and the prevailing relationships within it. This includes how the various actors are interacting, their expressions of citizenship as informed

from both the covert and overt forms of power, and the different sites of authority (including state authority).

The aim is to define what actions external actors, often from other-regarding groups of actors, can use to enhance the process of finding solutions to collective-action problems in these situations. This includes how best to support existing interlocutors or bring in others external to the situation who possess characteristics that are relevant to solving the problem. The goal will be to provide support in a way that builds, rather than erodes, collective action.

Drawing on collective-action literature especially Ostrom (2007), the underlying aim of these social-accountability interlocution processes is to strengthen accountability as part of 'core relationships' around a given project. These core relationships are in turn influencing, and being influenced by, the different incentives and interests of actors, the rules for governing relations (both formal and informal), and the linkages with the wider dynamics (e.g. national development strategies, regime orientations, donor policies, constitutions etc.). I suggest a layered analytical approach to inform the thinking around social accountability, as shown and explained below.

In Figure 7, the analytical layers can be explained as follows:

A) How the analysis of collective-action problems for social accountability might proceed

Pursuing this example to demonstrate how understanding these layers helps the choice and working of relevant interlocution processes, let us assume that in Songor Lagoon, citizen groups have adversarial

Figure 7: The analytical social-accountability framework

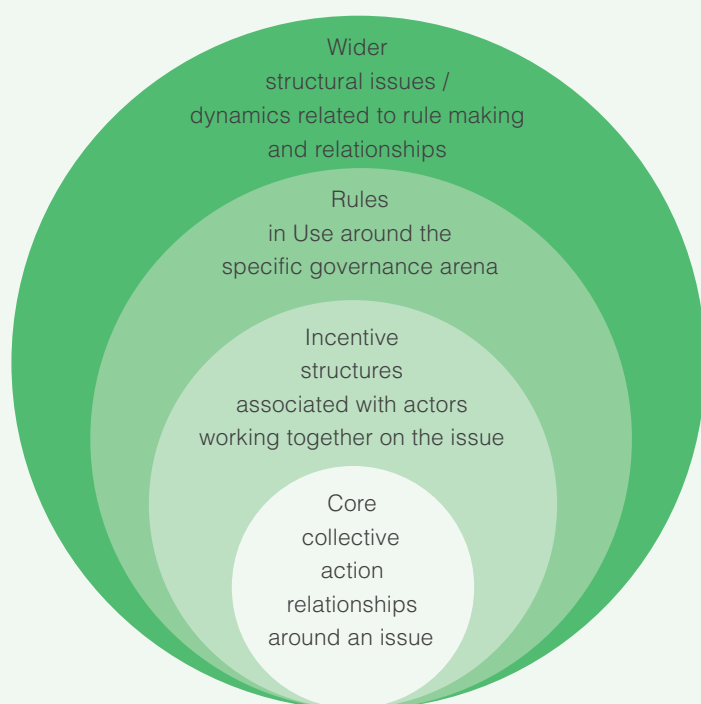


Table 1: The social accountability framework in action in Ghana

Layer	Example from Mwananchi grantee experience: Radio Ada, Ghana, working on improving inclusion and good governance of salt mining in Songor Lagoon.
Collective-action relationships around an issue: 'the kinds of collective-actions relationships around a governance issue'?	The nature of trust and conflicts in the mining of salt resources in Songor Lagoon. This also includes how various citizen groups interact with sources of authority.
Incentive structures associated with working together on the issue	The benefits accruing to traditional authorities in the management of salt resources, and how these are negotiated with the members of parliament and youth groups in Songor Lagoon. It also includes the incentives associated with citizen groups, elites, the private sector, government officials etc.
Rules in use around the specific governance arena	The informal and formal rules involved in salt mining in Songor Lagoon and mining more generally, that could be used to explain incentive structures defined above.
The wider structural issues	Issues associated with mining in Ghana, taking into account incentives and interests within Songor Lagoon region and the country, its historical orientation as regards natural resources, policies, and how they generally get made and enforced

relationships with their traditional authorities over salt mining in part because of royalties that salt-mining companies are giving to traditional authorities. The immediate question would be: why is the government not intervening? Let us assume that the reason government is not intervening is because the MP of the area is receiving kickbacks from companies. If this is the situation, the MP will not make a good interlocutor of change even though on paper s/he represents the citizens in parliament, which is mandated to pass new laws and support their enforcement. An effective interlocution process would have to avoid involving MPs from the start, until the process is at such a stage that it is difficult to undermine. The process would also need to provide alternative incentives to the MP to bring his or her 'law-making' interlocution to the collective-action solution. Ideally, a win-win solution would have to be found, rather than a zero-sum game.

B) Evolving interlocution processes fit for the collective-action situation

One critical collective-action point here is that, when we say that the relationships between citizen groups and their traditional authorities in Sangor Lagoon are adversarial, or that the MP in the area is receiving kickbacks from companies, it does not mean that all other forms of these relationships are adversarial. In African societies, these individuals and citizen groups are socially, politically and culturally linked in many ways, and ties of trust, kinship or mutual obligations might in general be working positively. These other networks of relationships might be the avenues that the citizens are using to try to hold their traditional authorities to account, albeit using tactical rather than strategic agency, or covert rather than overt forms of power.

However, the fact is that the net effect on most of the citizens is still a loss of livelihood:



Workshop in Hoima, Uganda. Anton Eitzinger/CIAT.

and by establishing evidence of this, citizen groups can work with an external actor, such as the Mwananchi grantee Radio Ada, to begin a transformation process⁴⁶. For instance, through this process the groups can introduce processes of mobilisation (often using drama before taking issues to community radio), re-articulation of the nature of the problem, and re-organisation of forms of engagement with traditional leaders and MPs. This is possible because Radio Ada has been working in the community for several years before this project, establishing mutual trust with various sectors of the community, which is an important feature of what Bano (2012) refers to as 'following', and crucial to an effective interlocution process.

The Mwananchi programme has numerous examples of interlocution processes of this type that were more effective than 'tools-based' social-accountability projects.

- » The Mwananchi Justice Agenda Project (MAJAP), implemented by World Voices Uganda, has increased access to justice through informal community-justice systems (known as Bataka courts), part of a strategy to empower the ordinary

citizens in the setting of their own justice agenda. It further enhances the ordinary citizens' capacity to engage their elected leaders, duty-bearers, media and civil society through dialogues and community fora debates. In linking justice to community relationships and conflict-resolution mechanisms, this approach might also reduce re-offending; something that the formal mechanisms often fail to achieve.

- » The Blendan-Bo project in Ghana reactivated the cultural role of 'Queen Mothers' (tribal leaders), to strengthen engagement with chiefs, councillors and government officers (the Presiding Member and Planning Officer), and to establish a dialogue platform that addresses school attendance. Rather than addressing just one aspect of this issue, such as teacher absenteeism, the project looks comprehensively at the problem, in the context of children with their siblings, mothers, chiefs, and also at how the teachers work in the community. With this approach, the role of other external actors also becomes better defined.

Building social accountability systematically

If we take a methodological approach, it is possible to explore systematically each of the layers above and identify the interlocution processes involved in the project through interlinking strategies for working on each layer. The objective is then to emphasise and support these interlocution processes, and the corresponding interlocutors that are making them happen. In a practical sense there will be different types of interlocutor characteristics/qualities required: some interlocutors will catalyse processes among citizens or with state actors and then draw in other interlocutors who bring expert technical or trust-building dimensions etc.

This catalysing ability is crucial to collective-action situations, even if it might not be visible to the external actors who might be associating results with interlocutors involved in more conspicuous activities (trainers or lawyers for example).

In essence, this interlocutor quality is about 'political entrepreneurship' skills⁴⁷. I would argue that with a good 'political entrepreneur' interlocutor role, most of the external engagements will be done by the actors directly involved in the collective-action problem, who will engage external actors sparingly, strategically and a lot more from choice rather than from externally driven role impositions. The understanding of this catalytic interlocutor function, however, has to be seen in the light of the incentives that these interlocutors themselves benefit from as 'other-regarding' actors. This paper does not dig much into the nature of these incentives, but acknowledges their importance.

When we turn to conceptualising interlocution processes so that the catalysing interlocutor

can effectively engage other interlocutors, the method would work through the layers in Figure 7, while also always analysing the incentive structures involved. For instance, in terms of enhancing core relationships, the objective of interlocution might be to incentivise some individuals to initiate cooperation which, through repeated behaviour, will cause others in the situation to learn to trust them and be more willing to adopt reciprocity themselves. This will eventually lead to higher levels of cooperation in the group (Ostrom, 2007). Furthermore, Ostrom observes, as more individuals act on trust, a reputation for being trustworthy becomes a good investment as well as something of intrinsic. In this way, 'reputations for being trustworthy, levels of trust, and reciprocity are positively re-enforcing' (ibid, 2007, p. 18).

This is also a way of building positive incentives because, as the value or premium placed on being trustworthy and having a good reputation grows, relationships are also more likely to become transparent and accountable.

In this situation, individuals and groups will begin to protect and pursue vigorously their newly established values and expected behaviour, thereby raising the stakes for performing better as well as investing in long-term gains. The increase in transparency will reduce freeriding, and also increase the emergence of sanctions that are more appropriate and effective because they are drawn from value-based performance standards or expectations e.g. sanctions coming about because keeping them is seen as important by those involved in the situation. In this case, sanctions are taking place within a relationship of trust and not just as an outside demand. In other words, if public-office holders perceive being trusted as important, they

will be accountable in order to be counted as trustworthy. The cost of doing something that is not expected increases because expectations have become a social norm that everyone expects: people are in effect policing each other, feeding into rules of the game, albeit in an informal way. All these are part of the informal incentive structure (second layer) and rules in use (third layer).

However, these localised and informal forms of accountability might not always work for the poor often because they are embedded in complex webs of external/or wider relationships and hence incentives and interests. The process of building accountability relationships might have to be intertwined with the more procedural and legally based institutional accountability. These pertain to the formal disciplines and legal instruments that might be relevant and the building of incentives to enforce them⁴⁸. Given the incentive-structure challenges associated with formal institutions (see numerous examples in Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2003), the evolution of these informal-formal rule linkages as a form of social accountability might also bring significant improvements to policy reforms. It is this incremental making and institutionalisation of informal rules which, when reinforced with the more formalised procedural accountability, can build accountability relationships that work.



Maima Bayou, new councillor in Kono, Sierra Leone. Jessica Sinclair Taylor/Mwananchi Programme.

Raising the stakes for social accountability

The issue of building and maintaining the stakes of social accountability through addressing the incentive structures (second layer) and the associated rules of the game (third layer) is of critical importance to effective interlocution. In this regard, it is interesting to see Hyden (2006) writing on Africa, and Fukuyama (2012), writing on the necessary basics for institutional building in the UK, points to the power of property or economic elites in protecting their interests, that in turn helped to construct rules that tamed the power of political elites. In this case, those with property (e.g. right to land or production process) wanted rules that would not undercut this production or their ownership of land, and so they not only voted into power those political actors that would advance and protect their cause, but also kept a daily watch on what these politicians were doing to check it was not hurting their interests. These were very specific interests and needed to be protected at all cost, hence the taming of political elites, mainly through the rule of law rather than direct engagement and personalised bargaining processes. In the current environment in Africa, multi-party democracy is also supported by various interests e.g. through the funding of political parties by those with business interests. However, transparency and the rule of law are weak, and there is still an ongoing process of incremental institutional building. It is therefore difficult to tame political elites using the same methods as in the UK.

In my view, in the context of the interest-based politics of the kind that Africa faces, the making, pursuing and enforcing of rules emerging from social-accountability projects provides a key route to accountability that works for poor people. However, the layered

interlocution processes described above need to raise the stakes for growing or developing pro-poor rules. In other words, we need to find how the various citizen expressions are accommodated in the core relationships being enhanced, how these reflect the incentives of various actors (including political and economic elites) and the kinds of rules that are being formed and transformed, both formally and informally, at the local, national and global levels. In these social-accountability spheres political elites might want to take advantage of collective action to win cheap votes for their interests and the solution might be in enabling elites to find incentives that also benefit the poor, often in a win-win way. The other way is where disincentives are created by raising the possibility of people losing trust in the elites in question, assuming trust and reputation are seen to be important in the prevailing relationship.

Within the Mwananchi programme, we tried to approach the issue of raising the stakes for social accountability through selecting some of the projects in productive sectors (e.g. the Farmer Cooperative Unions in Ethiopia and the Bike Riders' Union in Sierra Leone). The majority of the projects, however, were still around services such as education, health and water. In these situations, the approach to raising stakes was through civic awareness using a rights-based approach. The discussion above, however, suggests that we need to look at elites more strategically as actors with particular stakes working in the same spaces, who can also be effective interlocutors of change, leading to rules that benefit them as well as the poor.

There is the need for further research and debate on how best to mobilise and sustain the stakes for pro-poor policies and practices

Box 9: Challenges for the Lifani Radio Listening Club in monitoring community development fund projects in Zomba, Malawi

The Lifani Radio Listening Club had the area's CDF financial report of how funds have been used for particular projects. The report indicated that 16 bridge- and culvert-renovation projects were identified and by August 2012, the total cost reported for the projects was Malawian Kwacha (MK) 3,175,179.00. The MP of the area was at the helm of the project.

However, an analysis of the realisation of these projects shows that only one bridge at Songani has been completed and none of the other bridges have been completed, yet the funds have been depleted. These projects began in September 2011 and by June 2012, which marked the end of the 2010/2011 financial year, the projects had still not been completed.

The Lifani RLC has been monitoring and gathering detailed information on the progress of the CDF projects. What has emerged so far is that it is doubtful these projects will ever be completed with the 2010/2011 CDF allocation.

What is even more troubling is that when the RLC visited group village chiefs Chopi, Makanjira and Kasonga to discuss the way forward on the projects, the chiefs remarked that there was no need to take up the matter or to follow up on the projects, mentioning that the MP of the area is in the Ruling Party. What the chiefs implied was that they could not probe into the management of CDF funds for the area because the MP had joined the ruling party, but that if the MP had been in the opposition party they would have allowed the probe to be conducted.

The RLC was then uncertain as to how to proceed as they did not have support from their own chiefs. To go ahead with the plans would mean going against the feelings and decision of their chiefs and questioning the probity of their MP and government. This meant that they could not achieve the whole purpose of the DCT accountability and transparency project in the use of CDF and LDF funds.

Source: Ng'ambi, Francis (2013) report of third phase Liu Lathu projects analysis in Malawi.

among citizens, while incentivising political elites to make decisions that will not undermine the growth of institutions that increase the provision of public services. The politics of service provision can easily work against the efforts of civil societies and communities if managed from only the demand side, as demonstrated in the example of the use of CDFs in Malawi, illustrated in Box 9.

The example in Box 9 shows that local relationships may be heavily reflective of the national politics so that further analysis is required in order to choose the right interlocution process. Even the tactical-agency routes that citizens were adopting were not progressive enough to cause change. In the case of Malawi, at the time of these projects, multi-party democracy was too competitive, and chiefs were paid for loyalty. In this case, it can be

argued that the DCT might also not have been the right interlocutors to work all by themselves, especially as 'other-regarding' interlocutors⁴⁹, as discussed above. Another actor might have been well placed to bring skills to help transform the rules of the game at the sub-national and national levels. The other issue here is that the stakes among the RLCs for really getting the MP accountable might not have been high in relation to the risk involved. The social-accountability analytical framework, therefore, directly informs the kind of interlocution actions that are required in different contexts, and hence informs decisions as to which actors are able to provide the necessary interlocution features for change to happen.

Ultimately, social-accountability relationships are a component of the expression of citizenship: in programmes which leverage

the transformation of power relationships, it is expected that direct citizen demand will increase. This will be facilitated by increasing state accommodation and encouragement of citizen demands as a way to consolidate its authority. It is in these rules emerging from dialogue among actors involved in social accountability, that some of the formal procedural rules can be introduced.

In my view, CDFs in Africa should be introduced and managed as social-accountability projects with a view to learning how to link vertical and horizontal accountability at grassroots level, while governments undergo reforms towards devolution as part of the process. A wholesale, 'one size fits all' decentralisation approach has largely failed to increase service provision to poor people (see Booth, 2012). The continued use of CDF as a parallel mechanism to deliver services directly to local communities is in essence an admission of the failure of governments to innovate and build accountability within, and to deliver services through, the bureaucracy. The problem with a lack of investment in improving discipline and accountability within the bureaucracy, relying instead on parallel systems and projects, is that it breeds more corruption because it is the same civil servants that end up working in these parallel projects anyway – they are often the only ones with access to resources. The parallel projects have not created an interlocution process with incentives to strengthen the role of government in working with citizens, the private sector and civil society, as is often claimed in official policy documents. The trust-based forms of accountability, as discussed in the framework above might offer the solution.

4.3 Summary

In summary, the proposed social-accountability framework:

- » locates individual projects as policy experiments (e.g. improving quality of education through monitoring teacher absenteeism in a school in Northern Uganda), which can be scaled up to wholesale policy change where possible
- » explores the collective-action problem dynamics at various levels using a layered approach
- » identifies and supports relevant interlocutors from within the project dynamic and from civil society, media, individuals (the other-regarding type) etc., depending on the nature of the problem and existing interactions
- » builds core relationships around finding solutions
- » helps with the review of the rules of the game (or institutions) as well as understanding the structural variables at project, policy and the wider environment/governance levels.
- » evolves accountability relationships as part of incremental learning processes for both communities and state institutions.



A community meeting in Ghana.
Nyan/PDA.

5. Characterising social accountability in practice

More surprises:

“ In 2007/2008 the government of Malawi allocated MK3.5 billion to construct a new hospital in Phalombe District. Although the national budget process sets aside finances towards the construction every year, no hospital has appeared. To date, only MK55,587 has actually been released towards the construction of the hospital and no one has information as to what has been happening to subsequent budget allocations. By 2012 the cost of constructing the hospital had increased by over MK700m and the government procured a MK734 million loan from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) Bank. Following a recent documentary by Mwananchi partner Malawi Economic Justice Network, the President has personally promised the hospital will be constructed: it remains to be seen when construction work will begin.⁵⁰ ”

This chapter draws on the analysis in Chapter 4 to look at examples of specific collective-action situations found in Mwananchi projects, to demonstrate how exploring social accountability via an approach based on interlocution processes makes a real difference. The chapter focuses on the interlocutor categories identified by the Mwananchi theory of change (civil society, media, traditional leaders and elected representatives), though

other categories also exist and can be effective e.g. actors from the government, private sector, donors and individuals in the society. In hindsight, this broader range would have been introduced much earlier had the research revealed the characterisation of interlocution processes as we understand them now.

This chapter starts with a brief presentation and discussion of the results that were achieved, both quantitative and qualitative, and of how these results need to be placed into the country contexts in which they were produced in order to allow us to say something significant about them in relation to interlocution processes.

In line with our emphasis on addressing the ‘how’ question, the discussion progresses to a demonstration of how to unpack social accountability from the perspective of the framework proposed in Chapter 4.

5.1 What difference do these initiatives make and in which contexts?

Barrett and Gaventa (2010), in their meta-analysis of the outcomes of citizen engagement



Mothers and pregnant women attend a health education session in Mukono. Arne Hoel/World Bank.

over 10 years and more than 100 projects across the world, provide an interesting range of outcomes that are possible from social-accountability projects. They identify four types of democratic and developmental outcomes:

- » construction of citizenship: citizens acquire a greater awareness of rights and these serve as important foundations for participation
- » strengthened practices and participation: knowledge translated to action, and action extended beyond a specific project and in other arenas; new issues faced with new capabilities, including through creation of new networks and alliances with others
- » strengthened responsive and accountable states: emergence of cultures and practices of accountability and responsiveness from citizen-

engagement initiatives e.g. increased citizen access to development resources such as education and health services; achievement of greater transparency and accountability of the state e.g. increased transparency as a result of successful advocacy on access to information law, which brings with it new practices from state actors for the benefit of citizens

» development of inclusive and cohesive societies: achievement of a greater sense of inclusion of marginalised groups and the growth in social cohesion across different groups; especially occurring in fragile states or contexts of high inequalities.

Taking the approach used by Barrett and Gaventa in their study of the impact of over 100 accountability projects 'So what difference does it make?' (2010), the Mwananchi programme used OM⁵¹ data generated over the project implementation in six countries over five years, to analyse results. The analysis produced seven categories of outcomes, which related to the more systematically synthesised categories designed by Barrett and Gaventa⁵². The seven categories that emerged are described in Table 2.

One interesting issue, of significance to the re-thinking of social accountability from an interlocution process perspective, was raised when the local organisation grantees were asked to use a simple rubric to assess the results achieved on a scale of 1-5. This was a scale showing the extent to which they thought the outcomes matched what they would have liked to have seen as results. Using this neutral rubric matrix, it was easy to observe that results from Sierra Leone, for instance, appeared less impressive than those from Ghana and Ethiopia. However, when these results were overlaid with WGA results and other governance data (e.g. the Afrobarometer⁵³), the significance of

the achievements in Sierra Leone within the context in which they are working would be much higher than in Ghana. It was also possible to generate patterns when comparing the different countries according to the level at which they pegged their 'love to see' indicators, showing different country perceptions of what would be ideal behaviour.

Two case studies illustrate how different contexts determine the accountability ambitions of the actors that work in them:

- » Grantees in Malawi were most likely to rate service provision as a result of citizen-engagement projects very low because the prevailing political environment meant that even if the media reported under-performance (such as the

Phalombe Hospital case cited above), the political environment did not provide incentives for serious follow-up action by top-level government officials. Media sanctions were generally ignored or linked to smear campaigns by the opposition.

- » In Ethiopia, however, media exposure would provoke serious follow-up action by the Zonal government to prove state delivery under the ideology of state-led 'democratic developmentalism' (Zenawi, 2012). For example, the Wolkite radio station in Guraghe Zone produced evidence of under-performance by frontline health staff in a certain region of Guraghe, which attracted immediate attention by the Zonal officials to whom the frontline staff were reporting. In the end, the officials accepted that

Table 2: Seven outcome categories for the Mwananchi Programme

	Mwananchi outcome category	Barrett and Gaventa category
Outcome area 1	Interlocutors forming and developing constituencies: building capacity of local leadership, institutions, constituencies; gaining skills and knowledge; relationship building between community groups; constituency building around key issues; awareness on key issues	construction of citizenship
Outcome area 2	Citizen engagement in policy influence: active citizen participation in decision-making processes; actively trying to influence local issues; advocacy and lobbying	strengthening practices
Outcome area 3	Transparency, responsiveness and accountability of authorities and representatives to citizen interests	strengthening of responsive and accountable states
Outcome area 4	Effective policy influencing (inclusive of actor behavioural change); changes in policy narratives	strengthening practices and participation
Outcome area 5	Resource allocation: citizen influence on use of public taxes / funds / local resources in ways that are equitable, empower and inclusive	strengthening practices and participation/ development of inclusive and cohesive societies
Outcome area 6	Media interlocution - media enabling/brokering interactions for development initiatives	strengthening practices and participation
Outcome area 7	Access to services, resources and infrastructure for social and economic development and social justice	development of inclusive and cohesive societies

poor performance was due to under-resourcing. This does not necessarily mean that the Ethiopian context always works for citizen engagement: in some cases, reports are shut down because they are seen as embarrassing to the bureaucracy.

This illustration shows that the context in which the results are being seen to be achieved is as significant as the indicators of results or difference being made. In terms of context, it is the configurations of citizen-state relations that are crucial for understanding what is possible in which context. These nuances of results are important for making sure that country or grantee comparisons are not just made in a generic manner, which would lead to research missing out on the key dimensions around 'what makes change happen'. This analysis therefore is a methodological lesson for programmes and projects of this type, in terms of the charting of evidence of results, and the interlocution processes from which they emerge.

5.2 Which interlocutors are best suited to which accountability challenges?

The traditional way to involve interlocutors of change is to assess intuitively what they are thought to deliver, either from their own description of their work or from comments written about them in a project proposal. These assumptions make it difficult to draw the real game-changers into the collective-action situation. To illustrate this, I will use an example of an exercise that was conducted at the Mwananchi Africa region event in Johannesburg. I then explain how to think about it differently, using the framework in Chapter 4, drawing actors into the defined collective-action situations through their actions and incentive structures.

At an end-of-project regional meeting in Johannesburg in May 2013, bringing

Table 3: Citizen expressions of power and the interlocutor characteristics that could bring them about

Interlocutor characteristics	Expressions of power			
	Power within	Power with	Power to	Power over
Socio-psychological control	Empowering acculturation and socialisation	Associating for public action	Select and live a self-determined identity	Assertion in society as a personal and joint political project
Control over language	Applying critical interpretations	Creating a shared vocabulary	Impose or challenge discourses	Diversifying and gaining access to information
Controlling rules	Knowing and asserting rights and interests	Negotiating collective outcomes	Impose or challenge exclusion	(Co-)determining conventions, laws and policies
Applying coercion	Questioning expectations of self-compliance	Adopting protective collaboration	Oppose unaccountable authority	Just use of public instruments of physical force

Source: Alan Fowler, discussant presentation at Mwananchi/CIVICUS event 'Holding government to account: what works in Africa?', May 2013.

together representatives from each of the interlocutor categories and the national programmes, participants came up with what they thought CSOs, media, traditional leaders and elected representatives brought to various interlocution processes. Professor Alan Fowler, author of extensive research into civic driven change⁵⁴, facilitated an exercise in which participants mapped how the different interlocutors could strengthen expressions of citizen power. The type of power available to citizens was broken down into the four classic categories of 'power within' (an individual empowerment and responsibility), 'power with' (the ability to undertake collective action), 'power to' (the competence and ability to carry out actions) and 'power over' (the ability to control others). Within these four types, power could be expressed in different ways. The four categories we looked at were socio-

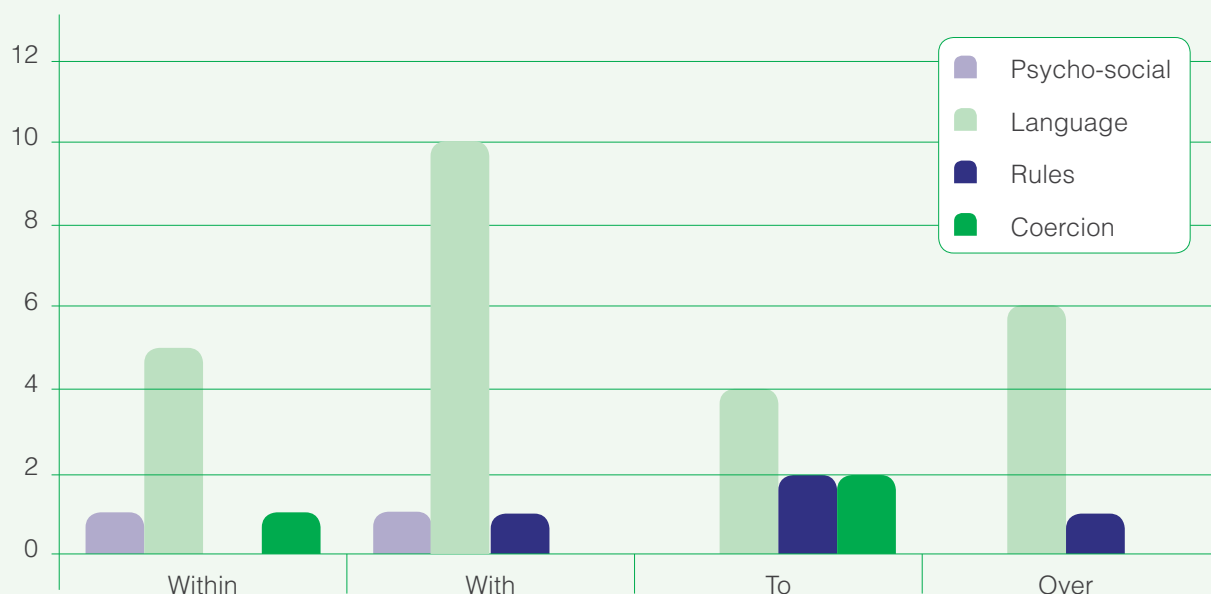
psychological control (the ability to shape someone's upbringing/world view); control over language (the ability to share what words mean and therefore cultural values and what is possible); control over rules (the ability to set and change formal and informal rules which govern society); and coercion (the ability to enforce compliance, often associated with the state). Table 3 demonstrates how the different citizen-power expressions, defined around the four well-known dimensions of power, could be enhanced by drawing on the various required interlocutor characteristics or actions.

Participants were then invited to indicate which interlocutors were most suited to change or enable different types of power for social accountability. For example, to seek changes to formal rules, an elected representative would be more suited than a traditional leader, but

Figure 8a: Civil-society organisations



Figure 8b: Media organisations



to promote cultural change that empowers women through reducing dowry demands, a traditional leader would be the better choice. Graphs 1-4 show the results of these intuitive analyses, based on interlocutor characteristics.

Examining the results of the discussion, we found that CSOs are thought of as better placed to bring to the interlocation process knowledge

of rules of the game at a 'power within' level than a 'power over' level. They would have much more influence on developing 'power with' and 'power to' through coercion than through language, for example by enforcing community sanctions on non-performing government.

When we look at the media, the picture is different, as shown below.

Figure 8c: Traditional leaders

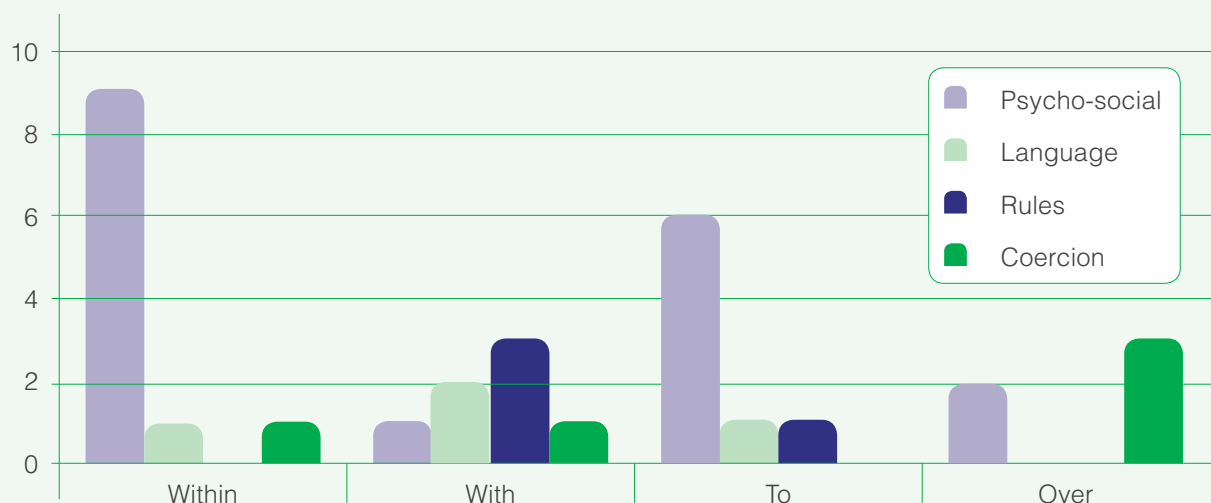
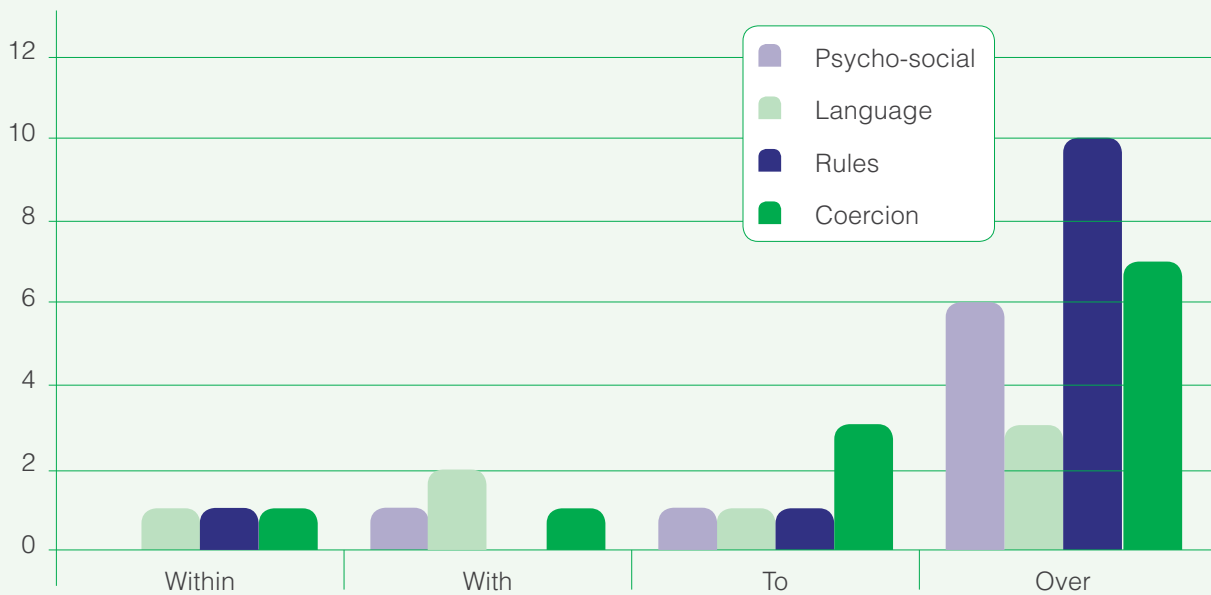


Figure 8d: Elected representatives

The graphs show that, according to the participants, the media would have more influence on all forms of power exercised through language by providing information, challenging majority discourses, and encouraging language of empowerment. It would have very weak influence for the citizens except in a moderate way in 'power to'.

The picture for influence of traditional leaders is shown Figure 8c. In the case of traditional leaders, they would have a very significant influence on the citizens' 'power within', and through influence on their psycho-social dispositions, which is not surprising because they are expected to influence the socialisation processes of individuals, as custodians of acculturation processes in the community. However, they would have very low influence on a 'power over' level, except moderately through some forms of coercion.

Lastly, in terms of elected representatives, Figure 8d shows that they would exhibit huge influence on citizens in terms of building their 'power over' in ways that none of the other

actors would do, and through all avenues. On the other hand they would have very little influence on 'power within', which is expected given the temporary nature of the role that they play in society and politics.

Implications for practice

The quick-fire analysis produced by the event participants suggests the kinds of processes that project designers and implementers often use when interacting with communities, and when bringing in other actors that they think are important for the achievement of objectives. However, the discussion in the previous chapters and the social-accountability framework provided challenge this intuitive approach to analysing collective-action situations and solutions on three counts.

- a) It is based on the past experiences and life-worlds of the intervener (in this case the event participant) and may not take into account the contextual differences between these interveners and the actors in the collective-action situation under discussion.



Zambian citizens show their voting cards. Louise Mellor/DFID.

- b) It uses the broad categories of media, elected representatives, civil society and traditional leaders, without accounting for the different incentives and interests within these actor categories. It might therefore miss the fact that a certain type of civil-society actor might be more effective in strengthening 'power over' for citizens, rather than all civil society organisations.
- c) This analysis is limited to the group of actors that were offered to the participants. The discussion in the previous chapters suggested moving away from fixed actor categories.

These caveats emphasise that any similar analysis aimed at designing projects should occur at a very local and specific level.

In this next section, I analyse various interlocutor processes that occurred in

the Mwananchi projects, and point to the interlocution features that were important for those situations and the actors associated with them. In view of the fact that this analysis and presentation is done in a reflective rather than design mode, it does not provide a complete picture of what would happen in a typical project. For instance, it still retains too much of the use of broad categories of CSOs, the media, elected representatives and traditional authorities. As argued above, in real-life project situations, it should be possible to redefine these actor categories into more specific ones, such as the print media, radio, social media, and various types of media-oriented actions that exist in communities. The same sub-categories can be identified within the 'traditional authorities' category, in order to unpack which aspects of traditional authority are associated with which kinds of interlocution processes.

As regards the interlocutor characteristics associated with chiefs as a type of traditional authority in Africa, we find that chiefs are regarded as the embodiment of the cultural identity of the people that they represent, acting as the head of political functions within their localities, including some judicial, legislative and executive functions (Odotei, 2003). These chiefs are also in other contexts spiritual mediators with ancestors and hence responsible for necessary rituals and festivals to ensure the well-being and prosperity of his/her citizens. Chiefs' responsibility over land and other natural resources makes them responsible for development.

These characterisations are no more than potentials, however, because real-life situations and historical analyses bring forward the true nature of the politics of chieftaincy in Africa, including such elements as the politics of succession and promotion, which state regimes accommodate in different ways (ibid, 2003). These chieftaincy politics have implications for which interlocution features can be accessed by these traditional authorities in a given context, as was demonstrated in so many different ways in the Mwananchi programme.

The analysis in the following subsections is about interlocutor characteristics that were found to be useful for collective-action situations across the six countries. The difference from the power analysis above is that this time we are reading into data generated from the collective-action situations themselves and formulating themes as interlocutor characteristics, rather than forming the categories before the data. This suggests that in social-accountability projects with a different context to those in the Mwananchi programme, the list of these characteristics might be completely different. The emphasis here is on the approach/

methodology rather than what emerges as themes/actions and actors. For the same reason, the lists of examples of projects that appear in the discussion below are intended to describe the interlocutor characteristics and the associated actors, and are not exhaustive of all the different cases that existed in the Mwananchi programme.

In looking through all the projects across the six countries where Mwananchi worked, the following interlocutor features⁵⁵ are indicative of those that were found to most useful for change:

- 1 creating dialogue platforms
- 2 agenda-setting processes
- 3 provision of expert knowledge to citizens and state actors
- 4 negotiation processes
- 5 increasing credibility through partnerships
- 6 strengthening the processes around sanctions.

5.3 Creating dialogue platforms that work for citizens

In all the Mwananchi countries the main institutional blockage for citizen engagement was the lack of relevant spaces for citizens to dialogue with public officials. It has often been assumed that democratically decentralised structures will lead to citizens engaging with these structures at the local level, which will then work their way upwards to national-level engagement. In reality, however, these structures are often there on paper but the practice is wrought with politics that impedes structured collective action. As Booth (2012) rightly observes, it is the context, including the complexion of central government, regime interest orientations and a myriad of political contestations, that is most critical.

Mending or providing working alternatives to dysfunctional local planning committees

In Malawi, for example, district councils are dominated by politically aligned MPs, which erodes the trust that citizens place in committees at the lower level and in the council itself. There is evidence that, at the local level, parallel party structures are more prominent than the elected decentralisation committees, which have not been replaced for many years. They are basically dysfunctional except where they are well aligned with the ruling party's agenda. This affects both the expression of demand, through local planning processes, and the responsiveness of government to these plans because other parallel planning processes easily usurp the space for decision making.

In many communities the interface between citizens and those who represent them is either weak or non-existent, with contact happening only during elections when votes are needed. Few local and national elected representatives have established formal mechanisms through which they regularly inform citizens about

policies and actions meant to improve their lives, inform them and render account to them.

In this context, what has been most useful has been the creation of interface dialogue spaces that bring different actors together. Interface meetings tend to be open interactive fora where duty bearers come for a round table discussion with rights holders with the intention of jointly seeking solutions to community problems. They are effectively inverted technical meetings where the aim is to capture local knowledge in order to inform decision-making processes. Interface meetings have inherent in them the ability to pick up on live and burning issues in society because ideally censorship and self-censorship is limited (although this takes good facilitation to enforce). They are held in the local language and are less intimidating to community members because they take place in their own community, giving them a 'home ground' advantage over the invited duty-bearers. Interface meetings are the preferred fora in which to demand services and accountability from duty-bearers.



Roger-Blaise, head of Betokomia Trois parents' association. Simon Davis/DFID.

Box 10: Stories of change: community forums in Ghana

SocioServe-Ghana organised a community forum at which elected and appointed representatives were able to engage with ordinary people and discuss with them their development priorities. The outcome of the forum was a commitment from the duty-bearers to address the needs citizens had identified in ranking order. The CSO also created a space where assembly members met with a community to identify a pressing community problem relating to unemployed female youth. Both the assembly members and the female youth are receiving skills training.

Friends of Nation (FoN) (working with fishing communities) created a forum that brought together

stakeholders in the fisheries sector, including the judiciary and Attorney General's Department, to deliberate on better ways of enforcing the fisheries regulation. Basic Needs linked up district assemblies with district user associations of people with mental illness to help them gain a better appreciation of their obligations to the mentally ill. Tongu Youth and Children's Evangel (TOYACE) arranged for the District Chief Executive and senior officials to visit for the first time a hard-to-reach area to listen to local people's concerns. The visit has motivated the duty-bearers to prioritise the needs of this hitherto neglected community.

Source: Gazekbo, Audrey, Governance expert report, Ghana

These interface dialogue platforms are often created by CSOs and they take the shape of community forums, town-hall meetings, workshops and seminars that enable discussion to take place among interlocutors and ordinary citizens. Citizens are able to meet elected and appointed officials and traditional authorities to demand accountability, which helps in two ways.

- a) The elected and appointed officials always seek to be seen as performing well. Therefore the minimum they can offer at an interface meeting is another promise, and citizens, with support from CSOs, are getting increasingly better at recording and playing back promises to duty-bearers.
- b) Interface meetings provide a lot of opportunities to both citizens (e.g. in terms of open support from other citizens attending the meeting facing the same situation) and duty-bearers to explain the nature of the provision, the limitations within government and the broader picture (e.g. how priorities within government are negotiated among competing sectors). CSOs often prepare communities with information

on the entitlements around the sector in question (using input tracking matrices) before they engage duty-bearers⁵⁶.

As a result, interface meetings of different types, such as exemplified in Box 10, were a common strategy facilitated by CSOs.

The down-side to some of these platforms is that they are often temporary e.g. an interface meeting around a health facility, a seminar, a symposium etc. One innovative idea has been the Community Town Hall Coordinating Committees (CTCCs), established through the initiative of the Tongu Youth and Children's Evangel (TOYACE) Mwananachi project in Ghana. The CTCCs now provide a regular platform for District Chief Executives and assembly representatives, members of parliament (MPs), ruling-party constituency officials and senior bureaucrats to meet with ordinary citizens.

The rationale behind the CTCC is to get community members to take the initiative in organising their own town-hall meetings, to which they can invite elected representatives, voice their concerns, and demand

accountability from the representatives, rather than wait for their representatives to invite them to meetings. The CTCCs now routinely delegate members to accompany assembly members to district assembly sessions and to participate in radio programmes to share information and experiences. The community used the CTCC platform during the December 2012 election campaigns to confront elected representatives over previous pledges they had given, and to encourage issues-based campaigning.

Mobilising for dialogue in politically difficult environments

Dialogue spaces of a more permanent nature are often observed in relatively stable democracies, such as Ghana, because government commitment to following them through enhances performance by duty-bearers. In weaker democracies, or politically volatile environments, it is often the media that provides a substitute for face-to-face meetings.

In Uganda, for example, the Kibaale Civil Society Network enables members of the community to participate in discussion through phone-ins, a mechanism which allows the community to voice their concerns but still remain anonymous. Another project in Uganda sponsors a radio station to air 'spot messages' or jingles to alert the community on topical issues⁵⁷. Interface between the community and duty-bearers comes through a phone-in programme called 'Leaders' Corner'. The programme provides an opportunity for elected leaders and technocrats to listen and respond to issues raised by the community. The programme has widened participation in the discussion of health issues. People in districts neighbouring Kapchorwa such as Namalu and Nakapiripirit also phone the radio station and participate in discussions.

The community trusts the radio because, unlike other societal institutions, it publicises information without exposing the source. In one focus-group discussion in Lira, someone



An HIV programme on the air. Christophe Viseaux/Internews.

intimated that when citizens report a case to police, they ensure that the media are also informed to guard against the police 'sitting on' or 'killing' the case, because the police are considered to be corrupt.

In Malawi, owing to a lack of government responsiveness, DCT established some RLCs. These clubs gave communities the chance to prepare and debate, before recording their voices on tape for DCT to send to the responsible duty-bearer. The latter would then listen to the tape and have a chance themselves to prepare, before coming to an interface meeting to engage with citizens. This means that the citizens had time to prepare their evidence, and the duty-bearer was able to look through the issues and decide how to respond in a way that protects their job.

The same strategy was used by the Wolkite radio station, in Ethiopia⁵⁸. In Sierra Leone on the other hand, the interactions between citizens and duty-bearers were aired live,

putting duty-bearers on the spot to respond to questions. These media mechanisms were useful for change but dependent on the kinds of political contexts in which they were operating. Most ordinary people find it difficult to confront duty-bearers directly on issues of governance.

Unlike CSOs, which provided interface encounters through mostly face to face meetings, the media have played a catalytic role in influencing governance relationships and processes by bringing together interlocutors with citizens on programmes designed to stimulate public discussion on salient issues to the community. The creation of such civic forums is helping to change power relations. When they appear on media platforms, elected and appointed officials are forced to respond to questions and clarify positions when confronted by citizens. Panel discussions on local FM stations have enabled citizens to engage such officials directly, sometimes resulting in action on promises made during the programme.



Listening to the radio. Neil Palmer/CIAT

This is especially true when the media invite ordinary people at community level to speak for themselves. Local radio stations especially have participatory voice-affirming programming formats such as oral testimonies, phone-ins and panel discussions that enhance the capacity of citizens to articulate their perspectives on issues. For example, Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) in Ghana used oral testimonies to allow dowry victims to recount their negative experiences, which helped to persuade many listeners into considering a reduction of the bride price in the areas in which BEWDA is working. In this case women who had been adversely affected openly shared their experiences, challenges and frustrations on the radio, and these experiences were also repeated during the dialogue platform attended by chiefs, queen mothers, and relevant government agencies. In this way, the information that came into the public domain was rich in testimony about 'behind the scenes' issues, such as the way the brides' mothers prepared for marriages

including the expensive demands on clothing etc. which escalated the costs still further, and which government officials were unaware of. As a result there was more respect for women in the communities and increased enrolment and completion rates of girls in schools because of reduced pressure from parents on their daughters to marry 'in order to receive the juicy dowry' (Participatory Development Associates -Ghana, 2013, p.13).

Facilitating interaction with duty-bearers

In some cases, communities have had a clear view of which action needs to be taken and which actor is best placed for such actions. However, they have also found it challenging to bring these actors on board. Across the six countries where the Mwananchi programme was implemented, citizens have always said that it is difficult to interact with elected representatives, especially MPs, beyond general elections. Incentives seem to work against the desired interaction and representation

Box 11: Story of change: an accountability platform in Sierra Leone

Counterparts in Rehabilitation and Development (CORD-SL) used their Mwananchi funding to address the excessive partisanship among MPs and councillors by setting up parliamentary caucuses at the district level. This was done with a view to undertaking collective action by advocating, supporting and promoting legislation in Parliament without the usual parliamentary tactics of challenging and opposing bills and draft legislation from rival political parties. The facilitated caucuses provided major dividends as political parties began working together. In order to leverage this, discourses were organised giving constituents increased opportunity, space and time to express their feelings and be heard by more than one representative (on average between two and seven MPs attended each caucus).

The elected representatives meanwhile benefited from expert facilitation supported by Mwananchi. In the case of district councillors, the facilitated sessions built their capacity to understand and appreciate the nature and forms of relationships that should exist between duty-bearers and right-holders: a valuable input as there is no structured process for most elected officials. In this context, where representatives had weak educational backgrounds and little knowledge of conventional approaches to governance, it became apparent that ignorance played a major part in constraining officials from creating space for meaningful interaction with citizens. The provision of training support enabled representatives to use new skills in engaging their subjects in downwards accountability as well as articulating their needs upwards, and this contributed to bridging the gap between voice and action emanating from policy responses.

with MPs, because multi-party politicking has increasingly encouraged a 'winner takes all' practice, and hence also led to empty promises being made to the electorate. The common attitude is: 'Save [money], you may not see Parliament again', according to one two-term MP. Non-performers with deep pockets are often preferred to stingy doers. 'As much as possible, avoid your constituents in the first three years and show up only towards the last half of your term, with plenty of money!' said Joe Khamisi, former Kenyan MP (Khamisi, 2011). This attitude and practice was perpetuated in situations where MPs were acting in their individual and party spheres, without mechanisms for direct dialogue with MPs and leaders from other parties. These attitudes sometimes arise from the representative's insecurity about their own lack of knowledge; as shown in Box 11.

5.4 Agenda setting

Agenda setting is another significant interlocution feature that was seen as especially important in highlighting issues that are not receiving attention from duty-bearers. In relation to the framework discussion in Chapter 4, agenda setting relates to interlocution processes that are meant to develop new relationships and raise the stakes for citizens to engage in social accountability. In this case, it was mostly the use of the radio that provided the necessary interlocution of new relationships.

For instance, in Uganda, Mwananchi projects have engaged the media, especially FM radio stations, drama and puppets, to enhance citizens' voice, promote accountability and improve service delivery. Grantee organisations used the media for civic education, sensitisation of the community, elected leaders

and technocrats, and for advocacy. Mwananchi grantees involved the media in gathering evidence, disseminating information and stimulating public debate. The mechanism used included radio talk shows, press conferences and the deployment of spot messages. One example is the case of Masindi NGO Forum (MNF) in Uganda: MNF and Masindi District Education Network (MADEN) use radio phone-in programme *Iraka ryomuntu wa burikiro* (the voice of the common man), hosted by Radio Kitara, to give duty-bearers an opportunity to respond to issues of concern to the community. Recordings of citizens speaking about issues affecting them are used to generate discussion.

In Ghana the media took advantage of World Mental Health Day in 2012 to give wide coverage to the mental-health issues that Basic Needs was working on. Media coverage included the airing of a documentary on stigma and mental illness, and programming that featured expert discussions on mental-health issues. During that period many more citizens and policy-makers were exposed to mental-health issues than usual, so when the issue was taken into Parliament for the bill on mental health to be passed, they already had substantial knowledge about the issues. The media debates helped to push MPs to prioritise the bill and pass it into law, and the inclusion of mental health in the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) framework of the District Assemblies also resulted in increased funding allocation to address mental illness. Similarly, in Malawi, it was only when the national television station, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation Television (MBC-TV), broadcast the Mwananchi findings regarding the government's failure to construct the Phalombe district hospital over many years despite the annual budget allocations, that the President promised to construct the hospital.



Female youth in community meeting, Ghana. Nyani/PDA

In Uganda, some grantee organisations use puppets and drama to mobilise and sensitise the community, and generate discussion about service delivery. The Masindi NGO Forum (MNF) uses the Forum Theatre to sensitise citizens on their rights to health services and to generate discussion. Recommendations from such discussions constitute citizens' voice, which the grantee organisation presents to duty-bearers. Similarly, World Voices Uganda (WVU) has engaged the services of Engabo za Bunyoro, a drama group comprised of young people who organise drama and musical shows during dialogue meetings. The shows are entertaining and therefore attract people to dialogue meetings. They are also informative because they raise issues around conflict resolution and alternative justice systems, thereby provoking discussion.

In Zambia, we found evidence of people enhancing agenda setting through increased interaction among actors on the radio. Radio debates on land ownership have led to some

women being able to apply to traditional leaders to own land in their own right. For example, during the period in which we carried out fieldwork for the case studies, at least 14 local women⁵⁹ were reported to have accessed land from the traditional leaders in Senior Chief Kalindawalo's area. The traditional leadership in collaboration with Zambia Land Alliance, an implementing partner with Petauke Explorers, has also introduced a land-allocation initiative that includes issuing traditional land-holding certificates. The chiefs have begun to issue these landholding certificates to their subjects. The land initiative promotes transparency and accountability in land allocation to the marginalised groups, particularly women, who now have some measure of security of land tenure.

In all countries, traditional-leadership has been embedded in the government's decentralised governance structures, with the intention that both parties maximise the benefits of dual authority, through a process

Box 12: Traditional leaders as agenda setters

The interlocutor category of traditional leaders was included in the Mwananchi programme design in recognition of their role in local governance in many African countries. In Africa, both colonial and post-colonial governments have prescribed the role of chiefs in constitutions and policies, and in the various forms of decentralisation. In terms of government, this is with a view to maintaining peace and order in communities (e.g. through provision of local justice), while at the same time facilitating development in their communities.

In Zambia, for instance, a chief is expected 'to preserve the public peace in his area and to take reasonable measures to quell any riot, affray or similar disorder which may occur in that area'. The legislation that spells out the responsibilities of chiefs in Zambia is the Development of Villages and Registration Act (1971), aimed at getting chiefs more involved in the economic development of areas at the local level through formal registration of villages and its inhabitants. The Local Government Act (1995) provides for representation of chiefs at the council level. Under the Act, the composition of local council shall include 'two representatives of the Chiefs, appointed by all the Chiefs in the district'. Taken together the Local Government Act (1995) and the Development and Registration of Villages Act (1971) provide the main institutional framework defining how chiefs are supposed to be integrated in development at the local level.

In Ghana, Zambia and Uganda, the House of Chiefs is an advisory body to the Government on traditional, customary and any other matters referred to it by the President, and in Sierra Leone 12 seats in Parliament are reserved for traditional authorities (also referred to as Paramount Chief MPs because they are elected by their chieftdom councils). In Malawi, on the other hand, chiefs relate directly to the President on an individual basis because, although the constitution provides for a senate (as a second house to Parliament), that provision has never been put into practice.

The Patriotic Front government in Zambia has gone further, creating a Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs upon taking office after winning the September 2011 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, to recognise the role of chiefs in local governance. The new ministry plans to provide technical staff to advise traditional leaders on various developmental issues.⁶¹ In Sierra Leone, on the other hand, there is provision in law for each Paramount Chief to have an executive council known as a Chieftdom Committee (composed of the Paramount Chief, speaker and some section chiefs). There is another council of relatively broader composition (Chieftdom council) with the expanded membership including 'prominent and respectable chieftdom members', and this committee is meant to be deliberative, with limited legislative powers (such as the consideration and approval of chieftdom bye laws) necessary to support the execution of the Paramount Chief's mandate.

of 'incorporation'⁶⁰ (Sklar, 2005). This would theoretically enhance traditional leaders' role in setting the agenda for development based on the authority that they have in their localities. However, this 'incorporation' has not always worked as designed, and sometimes leads to significant forms of compromise on the interlocution features that citizens could obtain from traditional authorities to help with agenda setting. In Malawi, for example, traditional chiefs have largely perceived the concept of democracy as a plot against them, especially when operationalised through

decentralisation. Such a perception emanates from the fact that traditional authorities and sub-traditional authorities who are members of the District Council are non-voting ex-officio, as stipulated by the Local Government Act and National Decentralisation Policy. The chiefs' perception has been heightened by the amendment of the Local Government Act in 2010 which has given MPs' voting powers: as MPs are already voting members at the National Assembly, their ability to vote at local councils constrains the chiefs' ability to raise agendas that are meaningful to citizens.

Providing expert knowledge

In most Mwananchi project contexts, communities faced an important collective-action problem for their livelihoods but did not have enough expertise to explore the depth and extent of the problem and mobilise effectively. In these situations, some CSOs and think tanks were found to have the capacity to gather, analyse and present evidence to state actors and, in the process, build trust.

One example from Malawi is the work of the DCT on RLCs described above, which invested time in furthering the understanding of the people's right to development and the role of local governance structures, before recording citizens' voices and arranging feedback interactions with the members of the District Development Committee. Similarly, other CSOs organise training workshops for elected leaders on their responsibilities. This approach not only builds capacity but also creates trust between CSOs, elected leaders and the community.

The training workshops were particularly effective in the case of Community Development and Child Welfare Initiatives (CODI) and Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Uganda, where the duty-bearers

were initially hostile to the activities of the two grantee CSOs. The workshops changed the attitudes of the duty-bearers from suspicion to trust, because they were able to establish that the CSOs were working towards constructive development rather than threatening their jobs. Duty-bearers started soliciting for help from the grantee CSOs to expand the initiative to other areas after realising the benefits that accrued from citizen monitoring of service delivery.

Lastly, accountability relationships have been working to help improve the provision of public goods and to meet governments' obligations to citizens. We found that by providing up-to-date data to the district assembly, for example, FoN in Ghana built up recognized expert knowledge on the needs and resources of fishing communities. As a result assemblies have been more responsive and have included fisheries in district-assembly plans.

SocioServe-Ghana went a step further in equipping district assemblies with information by producing a manual titled Effective communication with constituents – a manual for assembly members, which provides practical strategies to help assemblies improve

Box 13: Story of change: using geographic data in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, for example, a group of highly skilled individuals from Guraghe zone, mostly from the private sector, called the Guraghe Mihuran Forum was involved as a strategic human resource for the development of Guraghe. The Mihuran Forum used their expertise in geographic information systems (GIS) to produce evidence from research on the social infrastructures and extent of environmental degradation in the Guraghe Zone. This evidence was useful for engaging communities and government departments to such an extent that an environmental council was formed to meet regularly and implement a government-led environmental strategy. The Mihuran Forum as interlocutor was able to identify a key point of leverage in the state-level green development strategy, which allowed them to engage with zone officials to drive engagement. By sharing the information with both ordinary (including marginalised) people and officials, the forum used research-based knowledge to create an accountability link on shared natural resources. A next step could be combining the data from GIS on environmental issues with local political information to allow citizens to see the interaction between political structures and resources.

their engagement with citizens. The assemblies now plan meetings in a more timely fashion and circulate agendas to assembly members in advance so that members have enough time to consult their citizens ahead of meetings. The manual provides ideas on how assemblies can raise funds, and helped some assembly members to embark on fundraising activities to pay for development in their areas.

These social-accountability arrangements often do not work in situations where politics is exclusionary and the CSO interlocutor itself is in a vulnerable position. Returning to DCT in Malawi, we can see that third-party technical expertise is not enough in situations of polarised and contested politics because the collective-action situation can negatively implicate the expert. When the radio listening club started a discussion with local chiefs about the failure of the CDF to ensure funds were used for bridge construction, they were told that there was no need to follow up with the local MP. It was made clear that, as the MP was of the ruling party, the chiefs would not 'rock the boat' by challenging him on the expenditure of the CDF. Where evidence can easily be interpreted as personal, interlocution processes need to rely on negotiation.

Strengthening negotiation processes through evidence

There is strong evidence in the implementation of Mwananchi projects that negotiation skills constitute a key interlocution feature. Most of the CSO grantees started with a confrontational approach in their demand for accountability. One common method used by grantee organisations involved gathering evidence and publicising it through the media without prior discussion with the duty-bearers, often provoking strong resistance from state actors. The shift towards gathering evidence

and presenting it to the duty-bearers prior to publicising it improved the relationship between the two and achieved better results.

For example, elected leaders and technocrats initially thought CODI was inciting the population. To allay these fears, CODI provided an outline of its activities, organised committee planning meetings and dialogue sessions involving sub-county leadership to explain CODI projects. Sub-county leaders later realised that there were mutual benefits from the CODI intervention, such as the provision of information about the under-use of agricultural materials supplied by the government.

Similarly, local leaders and officials used to look at FOWODE as a policing organisation, resulting in tension and hostility. To build confidence, FOWODE organised a stakeholders' dialogue meeting with sub-county officials. Further meetings were held with the sub-county chairperson to explain what FOWODE activities about social accountability and transparency entailed. This has contributed to improved working relations, based on consultation. Duty-bearers appreciate the approach adopted by FOWODE of consulting with them before planning a press conference. In the case of Kapchorwa district, the Kapchorwa Civil Society Alliance (KACSOA) organised an awareness meeting for elected leaders and technical staff to sensitise them on the Mwananchi initiative. This has resulted in a good working relationship. Duty-bearers at the district and sub-county levels participate in dialogue meetings to discuss and validate monitoring reports and other issues that require attention at those levels.

These meetings also provide the opportunity for district officials to explain the constraints they are under. For example, through a shift

to consultation by the Kalangala District NGO Forum (KADINGO) in Uganda, a project engaged in advocating for improved maternal healthcare in the far-flung islands of Kalangala, not only were district health inspectors better supplied with citizen-led monitoring of health services, but district officials also had the chance to explain which issues are beyond their control, such as budget limitations.

In Malawi, the tensions between MPs and the CSOs reflected the general attitude of the then ruling party and the executive dominance at the central level. All the MPs that were not supportive of the Mwananchi programme were from the then ruling Democratic Progressive Party, led by the late President Bingu Wa Mutharika, which had a heavily contested relationship with civil society.

Traditional chiefs as negotiators

Although traditional authorities have always existed in tandem with governments, especially from the colonial to the post-colonial era, multi-party democracy in Africa has ushered in a complex political environment where every political party wants to draw in some involvement of traditional leaders in order to secure local legitimacy. In a sense, political parties recognise the anchorage of chiefs' power and authority, which connects them to ethnic groups and communities at large.

Chiefs are fully aware of the tremendous community respect and support base that they have from their subjects. This inherent advantage is used as leverage to tacitly pressure state officials into agreeing to deal with their demands and aspirations. This very potent force continues to make paramount chiefs very influential in the politics and governance in African countries. National politicians (even sitting or aspiring Presidents) need the support of Paramount Chiefs to garner support

around their candidacy, and so the chiefs are treated with respect, granting them such privileges as dealing with issues of concern and interest to the chiefs quickly. It is perhaps only Paramount Chiefs that enjoy this authority whereby politicians ensure that they maintain cordial relationships with them in return for their support at the polls. In Sierra Leone, for example, this has led to a culture of 'give and take' developing between Paramount Chiefs and politicians over several years in Sierra Leone's governance history.

In Malawi, it was noted that most of the traditional leaders were limited by the phrase 'serving the government of the day', which has proved a constraint to their discharging of duties. From the perspective of the chiefs themselves, 'serving the government of the day' is supposed to mean that chiefs should be committed to government activities in order that the agenda of government can be fulfilled. From the perspective of the 'serving government', it is expected that chiefs will be loyal to the government, ensuring they follow orders from government. It is also accepted that chiefs should be neutral in carrying out their duties. However, chiefs have confessed that it is difficult to remain neutral because at times they have been coerced by 'their master' to deviate from discharging their duties. In a key informant interview, one traditional leader said that 'serving the government of the day' in practice means serving the ruling party'.

We have observed that both traditional leaders and government use the phrase 'serving the government of the day' to advance their own interests. Thus, the relationship between traditional leaders and government is publicly presented as mutual and symbiotic. However, in reality, government uses the phrase 'serving the government of the day' to get cooperation from chiefs and win their support. This



A meeting at a Mwananchi project in Uganda. Andrew Kawooya Ssebunya/DRT

‘serving the government of the day’ means having to endure ‘carrot and stick’ tactics in some circumstances. To this effect, one traditional leader pointed out: ‘If you decide to chicken out from government program, you may be dethroned, your salary withheld, sidelined in meetings, you are castigated and labeled the agent of the opposition, and upon instructions, the District Commissioner may not recognise you with development projects. The consequences of not cooperating with government directives are huge.’

In most of these countries the inherent negotiating power of traditional leaders is curtailed because Presidents can use their constitutional powers to remove or promote chiefs. In Malawi, for example, the Chiefs Act 1967, which guides the operations of the chiefs, under Section 11 (1) of the Act indicates that the President may by writing under

his hand remove any person from the office of Paramount Chief, Senior Chief, Chief or Sub-Chief if after due inquiry he is satisfied that (a) the person has ceased to be entitled under customary law to hold such office; (b) the person has lost the confidence of the majority of the people residing in his area; or (c) such removal is necessary in the interests of peace, order and good government.’ Chiefs find it difficult to safeguard themselves from the abuse of these provisions either directly or through mass support from their subjects, because they are on the government payroll and hence are expected to serve the government whatever the government does. As a result, in some circumstances chiefs pulled back from supporting media or CSO-facilitated community events where the citizen voice and accountability activities were deemed as politically sensitive and attacking the government, for fear of reprisal.

Increasing credibility through partnerships

Collaborative partnerships, formed both horizontally and vertically, were observed to be one of the key ingredients of effective interlocution, leading to solutions to many collective-action problems. These partnerships significantly contribute to building social capital, with trust-based relationships that include strengthening accountability. These partnership relationships emerged in various ways.

Collaboration among CSOs of different types, volunteers and the media

For instance, grantee CSOs that collaborated with other CSOs benefited in terms of scaling

up their activities as a result of co-sponsoring. The process of working with other CSOs also gave grantee CSOs an opportunity to work with ordinary people's grassroots organisations, the community-based organisations (CBOs). The fact that most grantee organisations were based in local communities also gave them the advantage of being able to collect appropriate information/evidence more cheaply. The ordinary people, and even some officials, felt more confident entrusting them with the information. In situations where communities did not have this trust, organisations had to pay for surveys to be conducted. Where they were trusted, grantee CSOs were able to recruit local monitors to



Pupil monitor empties the student suggestion box, MADEN project, Uganda. Andrew Kawooya Ssebunya/DRT.

Box 14: Story of change: partnering for schooling for disabled children in Zambia

Radio Maranatha built a coalition of stakeholders invested in improving education for deaf children in Kabwe district, Zambia, including deaf people's associations, local schools, statutory agencies such as the Zambian Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and community members. Already seen as a trusted organisation, due to its long standing in the community, the radio station was able to bring together stakeholders to discuss the issues on air, increasing awareness among the communities in general, policy-makers, government officers, private-sector organisations, and elected leaders about the challenges facing the hearing impaired pupils in Kabwe.

Community enrolment of children with hearing impairment at Broadway Basic School in Kabwe has increased from about 32 to 50. The district-level government officials have been responsive to the Atwaambe project in part as they were highly involved as discussants on the radio programmes. In 2011, the Provincial Permanent Secretary instructed the Planning and Information Unit in the Ministry of Education Provincial Office to participate in the Radio Maranatha Atwaambe project. The unit drew up a three-month comprehensive programme on different topics concerning the children with special education needs. The participation of government officials on the programme has raised the profile of the issues of disabilities in the district and beyond.

A senior classroom for pupils with special education needs has been created at Kabwe High School to

ensure that those who wrote Grade Nine composite examinations in 2011 and have qualified to get to Grade 10 could start their high school locally. This positive outcome was noted by one senior official from the Provincial Education Office in Kabwe:

'Atwaambe project has had positive impact in that it prompted us as a province also to see that Broadway School is only catering for children up to Grade Nine and we do not have some senior classes at the end of Grade Nine. They write their composite examinations and thereafter, what next?'

Due to sustained advocacy around the issue in Kabwe, the Ministry of Education provincial office has embarked on a project to construct a school for children with special needs. This has been budgeted under the 2010/2011 and 2012 infrastructure plans of the Ministry of Education.⁶²

The debate on the Radio Maranatha Atwaambe programme about the challenges facing the hearing-impaired children at Broadway Basic School has also spurred the business community to donate material and financial resources. Learning materials worth K20 million were donated by a local Chinese-owned private company and Lusefwa Hydro Power Company donated K4 million towards the purchase of concrete blocks for the construction of classrooms for the pupils with special needs. Recreational materials such as soccer balls have also been donated to the school for use by children with special needs.

check on service delivery, capture the voices of the people and check the conduct of service providers. For example, in Uganda, MNF worked closely with Mirya Community Health Volunteers Project, which has 118 volunteers representing 35 villages. This meant MNF both gained information from the community and could pass on useful information through these grassroots committees. MNF also partners with Bainomugisha Integrated Development Organization, which advocates for land rights and women rights, and tracks public expenditure. This relationship helped

the grantee organisations to use ordinary people's structures to get and pass on useful information, and to identify suitable community monitors. Meanwhile the CBOs benefited from the structures and capacity of larger organisations with better access to national policies and funding.

Lastly, CSOs can also link up interlocutors at the grassroots, regional and national levels in order to exert more influence. Radio Ada in Ghana, for example, linked the locally based Ada Songor Advocacy Forum with the National

Coalition on Mining (NCOM) in their bid to strengthen governance of the salt-producing Songor Lagoon. This linkage resulted in a petition being sent by NCOM to the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, protesting against a unilateral decision to evacuate people for the privatisation of salt mining, previously a community livelihood, for big companies to undertake at a larger scale. Because NCOM was a nationally recognised advocacy group with authority, the Minister was compelled to respond to the petition. Also in Ghana, Basic Needs' ability to link up, network and build alliances with other CSOs and interests, including an investigative journalist who produced a well-received documentary exposing abuse in a mental-health facility, has resulted in the passage of the mental-health bill into law and the establishment of region-based Alliances for Mental Health and Development.

Participatory Development Associates (PDA), the National Coordinating Organisation for Ghana, linked CSOs working with traditional authorities to the Regional and National House of Chiefs. After an NCO-instigated meeting between the Northern Region House of Chiefs and Mwananchi-Ghana CSOs working in the north, some chiefs have invited BEWDA to expand their initiative on dowry reforms to include their areas or jurisdiction. BEWDA is now working with seven other traditional authorities and CSOs across the Upper-East Region to develop a region-wide resolution on dowry reduction.

Partnerships between CSOs and radio stations have already been mentioned; they are often mutually beneficial relationships where the radio station receives highly relevant local content and voices, and the CSO benefits from a far greater reach than it could hope to achieve on its own. There are local FM stations in every

part of the country and most ordinary citizens own radio sets. The stations broadcast in local languages, discussing national issues in local fora and with local perspectives.

Partnership with traditional authorities and the media

There is strong evidence from Mwananchi projects that traditional systems have been most useful in addressing issues that are linked to customary practices and laws, such as land or dowry practices. In Ghana, for example, chiefs made themselves available to address cultural issues, including 'taboo' issues such as land rights for women (Choice-Ghana & Grassroots Sisterhood), natural resources such as salt (Radio Ada), dowry practices (BEWDA), and the rights of the disabled in traditional custom (Socio Serve-Ghana).

As mentioned, the Zambia Land Alliance promoted transparency and accountability in land allocation, particularly for women, who now possess some land security, by working with district chiefs to issue traditional landholding certificates. The Petauke Explorers radio station was able to add value to this by mobilising local community-based groups, and facilitating interaction through radio listening clubs. The radio debates on land-ownership issues have led to some women being able to apply to traditional leaders and own land in their own right. For example, during the timeframe of doing fieldwork for the case studies, at least 14 local women reported to have had accessed land from the traditional leaders in Senior Chief Kalindawalo area.

As discussed earlier, an interesting model engaging with women's roles in traditional leadership structures has also generated good results. Advocates & Trainers for Women's Welfare Advancement and Rights (ATWWAR)

Box 15: Story of change: local media and healthcare in Ethiopia

The Mwananchi programme in Ethiopia is supporting Wolkite 89.2 FM Radio (WFMR), which aims to bridge the information communication gap between citizens and local government on public policies. As a media organisation, WFMR was in a unique position to mediate between state officials and marginalised citizens to help create honest dialogue. When a disagreement between local women and health workers revealed shortcomings in the standard of care provided in the district, the radio station escalated the problem to the Health Department by inviting them to participate in a series of online forums.

WFMR focused on a core government initiative, the Health Extension (HE) programme of the prevention-based health policy, primarily aimed at rural women. WFMR began by gathering the opinions of local health extension workers and local women on the HE programme. In theory, the HE programme constitutes a package of 16 types of healthcare services that should be offered in a Kebele (the smallest spatial unit of formal administration in Ethiopia) by a health extension worker at a health post supplied with basic equipment and drugs.

The interviews revealed discrepancies between the health workers' views on the delivery of services and those of the women interviewed. The health workers said basic services were in place and pointed to more advanced services such as birth delivery, child pneumonia and malaria.

Local women, on the other hand, complained that they have never seen these services in their Kebeles. Some complained about the absence of basic drugs at the health post while others reported that they don't even have a health post in their Kebele. After the broadcasts, some women got in touch anonymously to complain of conflict with the health workers, who blamed them for undermining their position.

The disagreements drew the attention of the Health Department, who contacted WFMR to demand that the radio programme was taken off air because it was disrupting the HE programme, and complained about the fact that it had been broadcast without the prior knowledge of the Health Department. The station manager responded firmly, saying the station was an independent institution meant to serve the public. To

give the Health Department the opportunity to answer questions and explain the situation and the challenges facing health services in the district, WFMR decided to organise live forums between the Health Department, the health workers and local women.

When officials attempted to stop the radio forum through the highest body of local government, the office of Guraghe Zone Administration, they were informed the radio station is accountable directly to the regional state, which is beyond the office's control, so the discussion was recorded and aired to the public as planned.

Prior to broadcasting the discussion, WFMR notified the public about the programme and broadcast phone numbers for the audience to call to express opinions and enquiries to the Health Department. When the discussion with the Department went live, in three sessions, the Head of the Health Department was in the studio responding to public inquiries on air.

The Health Department admitted there were challenges facing the HE programme and promised to rectify problems in service delivery and implementation as soon as possible. The challenges acknowledged by the Head of Department included a lack of knowledge and skills among health workers in delivering some of the more complex services, shortages of basic facilities and drugs across the entire region, and shortages of ambulances meant to be kept on standby to transport women in labour to a health centre or hospital.

These discussions helped to explore the needs of the health service itself, which the health workers had been trying to hide in order to defend both themselves and the Health Department from accountability. By acknowledging the challenges, the Health Department also made itself responsible for addressing them, and showed that it valued ordinary women's voices just as highly as those of paid health workers.

Source: Blog by Mesfin Tekleab, Coordinator, Mwananchi Ethiopia and Jessica Sinclair Taylor, Communications Officer, Mwananchi Programme, available at: <http://www.mwananchi-africa.org/news/2013/3/4/accountability-starts-with-acknowledgment-local-media-and-he.html>



Farmers engage in participatory rural engagement exercise. Kara Brown/ILRI.

decided to work with women in the traditional role of Queen Mothers, female counterparts to local chiefs, through reinstituting the 'Belandan-Bo' platform, a traditional forum for community members to deliberate on community affairs. As women and children's issues are traditionally seen to come under the authority of Queen Mothers, this role can serve as an ideal interlocutor to intervene on behalf of, and monitor the welfare of children, especially as child trafficking was identified as a local issue of concern. By tapping into existing cultural structures, ATWWAR was able to find an appropriate entry point to tackle sensitive issues of child welfare and to develop champions with strong respect and authority within the community.

However, it needs to be noted that the various African governments have had influence on the extent to which chiefs can have authority over customary assets, especially land. In Ethiopia, for example, the Derg regime had a very heavy

control over land resources; and even though the current Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime has gone for ethnic-based governance, the issue of land is still a preserve of central government.

Improving the power of sanctions

The 'winner takes all' mentality that characterises multi-party politics in most African countries means that it can be difficult to challenge poor performance. In between elections, it is often the media that has some controlling influence on duty-bearers: duty-bearers fear the embarrassment of being exposed for incompetence/poor performance, particularly by media reports. The ability of the media to name and shame non-responsive service-providers was a unique factor in the interlocution process.

When a talk-show on local radio aired the story of a woman in Uganda who gave birth with the assistance of a traditional birth attendant

during a journey by boat to a referral hospital, the District Health Officer called the radio station for more details. The District Health Officer was compelled to explain the situation of health services in the district and to answer allegations against the health department live on the radio station. Health officials in the district became regular guests on the early-morning radio talk-show. In Kapchorwa, complaints about a lack of medical doctors at Kapchorwa Hospital contributed to the recruitment of three more medical doctors by the district authorities. The story of change in Ethiopia in Box 15 further illustrates how media can help local communities to sanction government authorities.

Traditional leaders and sanctions

Just as duty-bearer resistance to media exposure presents an opportunity, so too can traditional leaders use shame and sanctions to force action. Again, MPs are the elusive players in the governance process. Through informal institutions, some chiefs were able to compel MPs' cooperation because of the respect they command among their voter subjects. MPs cooperated with chiefs to fortify themselves against resistance to their political ambitions. MPs were inclined to seriously consider views coming from chiefs, especially in the run-up to general elections.

In Malawi, for example, an interview with one traditional leader in Phalombe made reference to his command of authority over MPs:

“MPs are my subjects. They are Honorable people when they are in Parliament making laws. But when they are here, it is me who is an Honorable. I make rules for my area and MPs as subjects, they need to observe them. Often times they have wanted to override my authority but I

know how to handle them and when to reward or punish them. So are government officials. If they come to my area, they need to listen to me because I speak on behalf of people or sometimes let people speak for themselves.”

The power of the traditional leader was confirmed in an interview with the MP who observed:

“A wise politician will not deny the traditional leader audience. Unless you are planning on losing in the next elections, then the best strategy to ensure that you lose at all cost is to annoy the chief. You annoy the chief by disregarding his/her views.”

Ultimately the discussion in this chapter turns on its head the conventional approach of applying categories to various situations in order to determine which actor is most appropriate. Using this approach, for instance, Karlstrom in Uganda showed how, depending on their functions, local governance structures were in essence civil society even though on paper they were extensions of government, because they were part of the implementation of decentralisation (Karlstrom, 1999). This ability to build strong structures at the grassroots level is what effective interlocution processes need to work towards. The next chapter delves into how organisations can work effectively to translate this approach into programming.



Community Youth air their views
at Matseko, Ghana. Nyani/PDA.

6. An approach to developing theories of change for social-accountability projects

The social-accountability lessons that have been generated from the analysis of the Mwananchi programme have a significant bearing on how project theories of change are constructed. The process clearly shows that, with these kinds of outcomes, we will often identify the best path of change by looking in the rear-view mirror – looking backwards to see precisely how we got to where we are now. This retrospective analysis and any subsequent changes to implementation comprise a better alternative to the predictive process of trying to guess what will happen right from the start of a new governance programme or project. Preparedness to find and manage surprises during implementation is also key; hence the focus on how best to prepare for identifying, accommodating and turning surprises into opportunities, in order to facilitate change in unpredictable and complex environments. This chapter aims to capture the lessons learned about developing theories in these often dynamic contexts.

6.1 Analysing context

We have seen how political contexts shape the kinds of social-accountability results that are possible and the kinds of interlocution processes that can bring them about. When thinking about how to develop theories of change for social-accountability projects, therefore, we need to start by addressing the issue of how best to analyse and understand contexts, and be able to distil from this analysis, the characteristics that might be important for the ensuing social accountability projects (O'Meally, 2013).

The first place to look for answers to this question in the Mwananchi context was to understand what was going on around the various citizen-state and interlocutor interactions, as well as in the wider environment at the sector and broader levels. As discussed in Chapter 2, in order to understand national-level governance context, the programme conducted baseline governance assessments at the beginning of the work

plan (see Annex 3 for the analysed results). The country variations were also useful to help us understand and anticipate some of the results of project interventions. However, we observed that the World Governance Assessment (see Appendix 3) results used in baseline governance assessments were far removed from the specific project dynamics, especially because most of the grantees were operating at the grassroots and sub-national levels.

What was needed was an understanding of the dynamics at work around specific interactions and results, and to locate these in the wider governance dynamics (which WGA provided), and vice-versa. I developed a tool that would effectively combine the project dynamics within the results chain at a project level, and the political-economy analysis (PEA), which would be done at the sectoral and macro levels. The tool draws from a number of existing PEA tools, and then combines these aspects with OM methodology. The challenge was to improve the quality of both the analysis and results of social-accountability projects (Mwananchi projects in this case) at the local level, as well as draw meaning from them based on dynamics at the macro (national and global) level. As explained in *Citizen voice and state accountability: towards theories of change that embrace contextual dynamics* (ODI Working Paper 343, Tembo, 2012b), the tool, comprising five inter-related steps, helps to explore the following political-economy dimensions for social-accountability projects .

The five political-economy steps for social-accountability projects are to:

- 1 Establish the underlying foundational factors. This includes the history of the formation of the state, the basis of the economy (especially public revenue), the roots of the social, political, cultural and economic structures within which

fundamental public decisions are made, and the country geography and geo-strategic position in relation to other countries. These are the factors that fundamentally shape the social, political and institutional landscape, and therefore also the scope for constructive state-society bargaining, and the institutional arrangements for organising collective action.

- 2 Identify the rules of the game (formal and informal narratives). This refers to the formal and informal institutions that shape the incentives and capacity of key actors, the relationships between them, and how processes of political bargaining play out. These are critical in influencing opportunities for different groups, including those representing poor people, to mobilise and engage in collective action that promotes development over the medium term. Methodologically, this use of rules was initially drawn from the WGA results (see Annex 3). However the WGA study was expensive and hence we could not repeat it during the course of programme implementation. We then relied on prevailing narratives (as written in formal public-policy documents, reported in the media or discussed among citizens, especially where the oral culture is strong) in a given governance situation.
- 3 Identify game changers or interlocutors of change. This is an emergent category because the actors are identified from the narratives or from the analysis of the rules of the game as mentioned above. In this case the idea is to identify who the main influencers are in a given context: as such a politically derived category as opposed to the traditional stakeholder analysis where everyone benefiting or affected by a given intervention or activity is mentioned.



Market near Khulungira Village, in central Malawi. Stevie Mann/ILRI

- 4 Explore engagement dynamics. These pertain to the behaviour (formal and informal) of various actors around the specific governance issues (including policy issues). This too is based on exploration of the narratives or rules of the game but is focused mainly on observable behaviour in action rather than on rules.
- 5 Establish institutional patterns and decision logics. Then, from these, find entry points or room for manoeuvre, towards the desired changes. In other words, from the analysis of a) who the main actors are, and b) what their behaviours are, we can analytically reach some conclusions around what might be the most useful way to intervene in the context and around the issue, in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

The first two steps 'foundational factors' and 'rules of the game'⁶³, were drawn from an established country-level PEA tool called Strategic Governance and Corruption

Analysis⁶⁴ (SGACA). The SGACA formulation has a final third element, called the 'Here and now', which is used in order to examine the conduct of day-to-day politics, and the way this is shaped by rules of the game as well as contingent events⁶⁵. In the Mwananchi programme, however, with the challenge of translating to project practice as articulated above, I found it useful to deconstruct this 'here and now' category into three PEA elements (the last three steps above). In doing this, I also drew on lessons from another PEA methodological application used by Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2009) in studying road-policy reforms in Uganda. In each case, I was aware that the Mwananchi challenge was a social-accountability challenge and not a policy reform one per se.

If we take a methodological approach, the behaviour of actors around specific governance issues and projects in a given dynamic are best explored using the OM methodology (see Tembo, 2012b). In this case, actor behaviour is explained with regards to particular incentive

Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

structures presented through projects. In the Mwananchi programme, therefore, the PEA methodology was further developed so as to link steps 4 and 5 using OM monitoring logs.

Figure 9 shows how the PEA context analysis would proceed. It is circular in nature in order to make the point that, because of a fluid context, this analysis needs to be done periodically (e.g. every year) over the lifetime of a programme: rules that were identified as important rules now might not be important the next year, or actors that are game-changers now might not be game-changers next year. The ruling-party shift from the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy to the Patriotic Front in Zambia, for example, will have meant a

shift in which rules are important and which are not, and also in the game-changers in the context. Some of the factors though (especially foundational factors) remain relatively constant across the regime types until a radical change happens.

Overall, this five-step PEA structure, shown in Figure 10 (explained in greater depth in ODI WP 343), helps the analyst assess opportunities for change by distinguishing between foundational factors that are often very slow to change, rules of the game which may be sticky but more susceptible to change over the medium term, and short-term factors (interlocutors, their engagement dynamics and decision logics) that may offer windows of opportunity

for change. It also provides the basis for understanding what is shaping relations between politicians and investors; what might stimulate collective action by social groups to demand better services; and how informal local institutions are influencing development outcomes (Unsworth and Conflict Research Unit, 2007). It then provides ways of following how behaviours are changing within these contextual dynamics, herein understood as including changes in actor incentive structures as well.

The inner chain of Figure 9 above shows the actual project results chain (e.g. a project on increasing participation of women in the local-council decision-making process). The idea is

Figure 9: A conceptual map of on how to conduct PEA in contextual dynamics

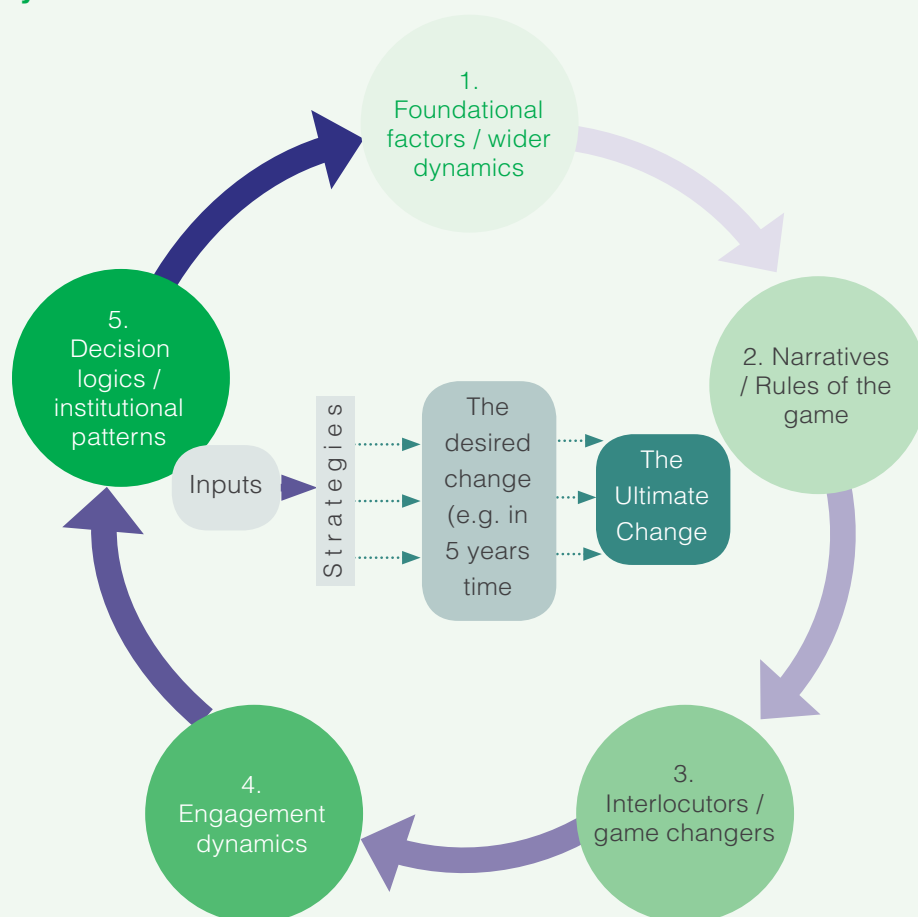
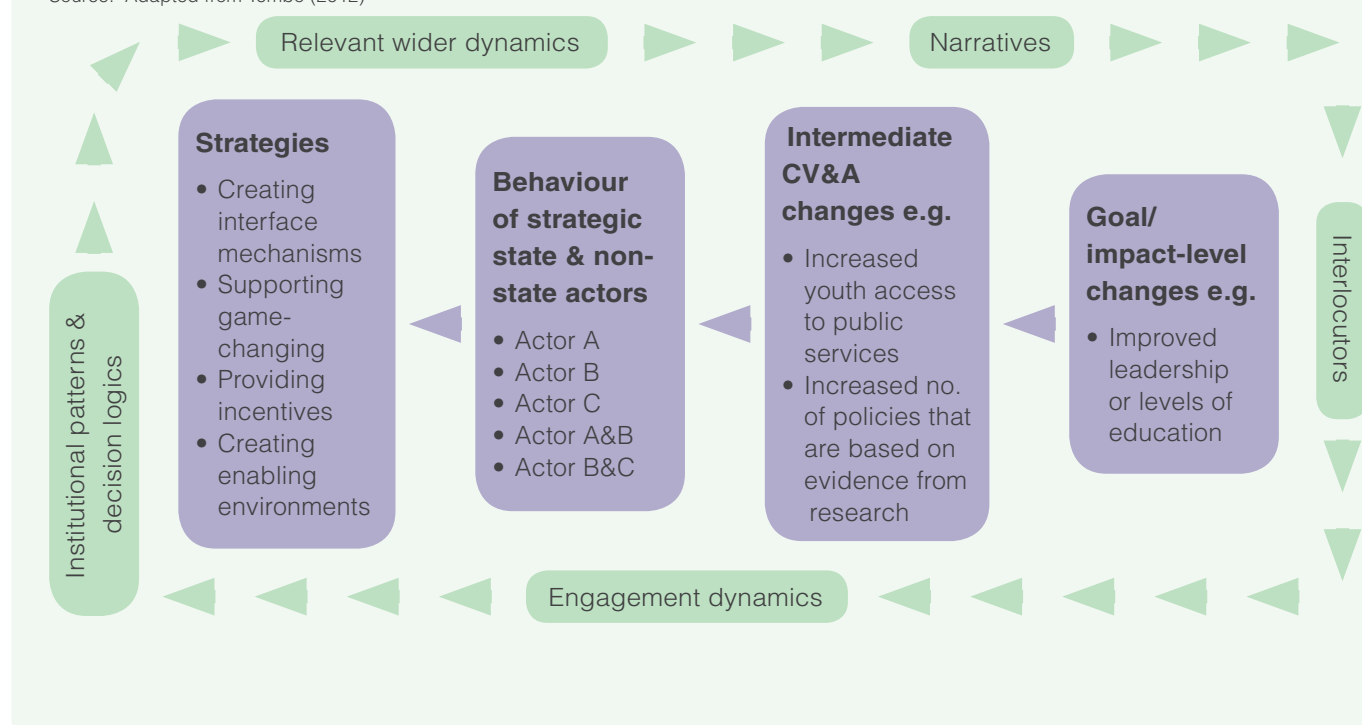


Figure 10: Model for using political-economy analysis and outcome mapping to develop a more realistic social-accountability results framework

Source: Adapted from Tembo (2012)



that the choice of results chains – or pathways of change within the project theme – will be informed by deep analysis of what is going on in the context (as understood through the five steps indicated) and the choice is flexible depending on what is possible to influence in this context. Figure 10 shows a more complete results chain, as more usually developed in projects except now reflecting the fusion of OM and Logical Framework approaches.

6.2 Road testing the theory-of-change methodology: the Zambia Governance Foundation

This methodology was used in revising the theory of change for the Zambia Governance Foundation (ZGF), which operates in the same environment as the Mwananchi–Zambia programme (known as Atwaambe in Zambia).

In this process, which actively involved a wide range of stakeholders and the ZGF secretariat, it became apparent that ‘foundational factors’ and ‘rules in use’ are easily developed from a rapid PEA (general or sector-based).

However, the last three elements (identifying interlocutors, engagement dynamics and then establishing decision logics and hence opportunities for finding room for manoeuvre) are best understood while projects are in action. This is because the intervening agencies can then gain the advantage of observing the various actions before attributing behaviour and incentive structures to particular actors: the actor might have behaved in a certain way in another sector or project, but when the dynamic changes (such as through the introduction of a new donor) their incentive structure and thus their behaviour might change as well. This is why it is difficult to develop a fixed theory of change that will work for the entire lifetime of the project or



Removing freshly caught fish from nets, Ghana. Arne Hoel/World Bank

programme, except in broad terms. Social-accountability projects therefore must be implemented within a strong learning-process approach if they are to be effective.

6.3 Relationship between the theory-of-change development process and the social-accountability framework

The main difference between the proposed social-accountability analytical framework in Chapter 4 and the approach to developing theories of change discussed here is that the social-accountability framework is project- or problem-focused, while the theories of change discussed in this section are about working from the meta-analysis in order to locate the place for the specific project. Therefore, in a process of designing governance programmes, such as Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana (STAR-Ghana) or ENCISS in Sierra Leone, the first process is to define the theory of change

more broadly, using the framework in Figure 9 above, and then work with specific grantee projects on an ongoing basis using the framework discussed in Chapter 4.

The key element of the proposed alternative social-accountability framework, discussed in Chapter 4, is to define the areas of the dynamic where interlocution processes are required, and then the necessary interlocution processes and interlocutors. It is only when these aspects of the collective-action situation are understood that citizen engagement, in terms of 'citizens holding governments to account', can also be understood, as well as the role of a whole range of relevant interlocutors.

In order to do this we need to draw from steps 3 (identifying interlocutors) and 4 (identifying engagement dynamics) in Figure 9 to help define and locate the collective-action problem and then to deepen the understanding of the wider context in which the problem is situated, in which there are also rules in use and foundational factors, using knowledge generated in steps 1 (foundational factors) and 2 (understanding rules in use).

In practice what would happen is that, in a given project collective-action situation, as experienced by the actors involved in a project (citizens, state actors, private sector, organisations trying to help etc.), the first issue would be to understand the dynamics of the problem, as well as who the various actors are, and how they are involved⁶⁶. It is important at this stage to conduct a power analysis and define the characteristics of marginality within the setting, bearing in mind the visible and invisible power patterns (Lukes, 1975). The process will emerge with the characteristics of the collective-action problem, of an understanding of what is already being done, and of who the game-changers might be (Step 3).

The idea then is to draw into the situation actions that can enhance further analysis and action, as part of finding collective-action solutions. This is also the process of supporting the existing interlocutors in the situation or bringing in others external to the situation, those who possess the characteristics that are relevant to finding solutions to the problem, and then also supporting them in a way that builds rather than erodes collective action. The observed and expected actors (citizens, government, interlocutors etc.) are then given the benefit of a better understanding of the prevailing rules of the game (Step 2) and its foundational factors (Step 1).

6.4 Summary

An overall observation from the Mwananchi programme is that theories of change for social-accountability projects need to adopt an outcomes approach that is anchored in a 'context-led' political-economy analysis. In this case, outcomes are what is being achieved (the results), including both the tangible

shifts (e.g. more learning time for children in class), captured through the traditional monitoring tools, and behavioural changes, captured through monitoring logs such as in OM methodology. The context-led political-economy analysis helps to explore these outcomes in terms of the context in which they are occurring. Three important lessons on theories of change for social-accountability programmes and projects can be drawn from this reflection.

- » Accounting for contextual dynamics is of vital importance. In social-accountability projects, however, there is a need to merge the contextual perspectives of those experiencing the collective-action problem and the analysis done by external experts. For those actors in the situation, it is part of the process of finding room for manoeuvre through learning by doing to know and influence their context where possible.
- » A rear-view mirror shows more clearly what is working than does a prediction from the original log-frame. Collective-action situations are complex and dynamic.
- » For a working theory of change, it is more important to keep examining assumptions than to develop a neat narrative. Often assumptions, as in log-frames, are relegated to the fourth column and never examined in monitoring and reporting frameworks; yet they can reveal much of the learning as well as the fundamental information for managing risks or other 'killer assumptions' on a given pathway of change.



Water committee members in
Demes, Ethiopia. Water.org

7. Implications for policy and practice

The discussion in this paper has shown that social accountability is based on relationships. By focusing on interlocution processes that are possible within these relationships, we add experiential evidence on how to build accountability. With this evidence it is easier to capture which actors and actions are most useful to support citizens in holding their government to account in a given context and how to scale up an intervention. In research terms, the actors are the dependent variable, while the interlocution processes are the independent variable, which need to be observed over some time and will be affected by changes in context. In this way, there is an opportunity to clarify the difference that actors such as civil society, media or elected representatives are making in real situations, rather than attributing a hoped-for citizen-state accountability relationship to them in advance and facing disappointment when they fail to deliver it.

Furthermore, although we have argued against the use of actor categories, it is sometimes possible to categorise actors that deliver certain types of change in certain circumstances. These categories might be useful for designing donor-support programmes for media or civil society, in response to contextual demand for

particular types of civil society. In this case the categorisation provides an opportunity to clarify further what exactly they are contributing in terms of changing the rules of the game. Generic support to 'civil society' or organs of the state (e.g. oversight bodies) has often meant that, even when the contextual dynamic or the nature of the collective-action problem changes, organisations that fail to adapt continue to be supported. For example, without this analysis, calls for proposals for civil-society participation would be shaped in ways that are not related to the context, resulting in ineffective funding of collective-action situations, which then carries the danger of eroding the actions that were already working well (Bano, 2012).

● *The key lesson from implementing the Mwananchi programme is the need to focus on context-specific interlocution processes, and, by extension, to address the question of how to find and support the right interlocutors of change to enhance citizen engagement and hold governments to account.*

Exploring and illuminating what works and under what circumstances is one of the current preoccupations in the search for results in transparency and accountability initiatives (McGee and Gaventa, 2010). However,



Bako-Shambu, Aynalem Haile with community members.
Apollo Habtamu/ILRI

the focus on change agents themselves and what they do has rarely been explored (except for some seminal work such as Bano (2012) showing how aid can unknowingly erode institutions for collective action). This is a question of 'what works and how' in social accountability, and is different to the question of impact, which has been capably addressed by Barrett and Gaventa, (2010) in 'So what difference does it make?' Mapping the outcomes of citizen engagement. Both of these perspectives – the Mwananchi focus on interlocution process, and the Barrett and Gaventa focus on analysing the nature of impacts – are important for clarifying how social accountability happens: how it empowers citizens; contributes to deepening democracy; improves governance; and enhances development.

The main lessons from a critical analysis of the Mwananchi experience include:

1. The support for strengthening social accountability is currently based on an unduly mechanical approach in terms of which organisations and/or individuals help 'citizens hold governments to account', especially when they are supported with aid resources.
2. Social-accountability projects do not deliver the impacts that we want from them because the main assumption is that when citizens face a common problem, they will naturally work towards the common interests of finding collective-action solutions, in spite of the incentive structures at play.
3. The interlocution characteristics that civil society, media or others possess cannot be assumed based on a prototype because they are dependent on the nature of the collective-action problem in question. Such characteristics must be identified with a specific collective-action problem at play, and encouraged during the course of programme or project implementation.
4. Solutions to collective-action problems that social-accountability projects seek to resolve must be found within the analytical assessment of people's citizenship identities and expressions, power and the characteristics of the state, and within actor bargaining processes.
5. The current 'citizen-demand' frameworks are based on untested assumptions about what incentives are at work among citizens themselves (including elites). These incentives are based on the different identities, power configurations and expressions of citizenship, within which is embedded the expected citizen influence on government.
6. An alternative social-accountability framework was developed based on a

layered approach that starts with core relationships; examines the incentive structures of the actors involved; next the rules in use; and finally the influence of the wider context. The emergence of social-accountability relationships runs through all these layers.

7. The context in which the results are being seen to be achieved, or not, is as significant as the indicators of results or difference being made: An overall observation from the Mwananchi programme is that theories of change for social-accountability projects need to adopt an outcomes approach that is anchored in a 'context-led' political-economy analysis.
8. The social-accountability approach suggested offers the opportunity to clarify what exactly actors are doing in contributing to the changes in the rules of the game, as the basis for external support.

7.1 Key Implications for policy and practice

In order to properly implement the Mwananchi alternative social-accountability framework, we must also take into consideration certain key implications. These include the importance of:

- a) approaching social-accountability projects as policy experiments
- b) approaching social accountability as learning to build trust-based relationships
- c) creating a level playing-field for the marginalised citizens
- d) gradual movement from 'accountability as responsiveness' to 'accountability as answerability'.

Social-accountability projects as policy experiments

In this alternative framework, social-accountability projects are best regarded as policy and practice experiments in a given governance environment, where the main focus for interlocutors is on establishing core relationships⁶⁷ that are required to deliver a public good. This makes sense, in that most social-accountability projects tend to be either too localised so that the evidence emerging from them has to be presented as a case study for policy in action, or addressing only one aspect of a policy issue (e.g. education for only girls), making it difficult to influence wholesale policy change.

In some cases, wholesale policy change has occurred with additional support from international NGOs, who have had better entry points in influencing the donors' home policies, and this has in turn helped with the local change process. These other factors often go unreported in local NGO success stories. While these kinds of wholesale policy changes are good, they only work in as far as creating an enabling policy environment is concerned. However, as learnt in Mwananchi projects, in order to achieve real change in citizen



Testing new machinery, Uganda. Andrew Kawooya Ssebunya/DRT

livelihoods and engagement with government, a whole range of projects at the local level, finding points of real-life traction, must take place. In this way there are opportunities for the translation of policy into real-life stories of change. This might explain why the problem in all the countries where the programme was implemented was not necessarily a lack of policies but rather policy implementation.

If social-accountability projects were regarded as policy and practice experiments, showing what a good policy could look like and how it could be implemented effectively, a lot of project energy would be put into these projects.

The idea of 'experiment' here should be understood as important for learning within the community of actors involved, as well as about the way the intervention is managed. These are real projects, changing real lives and policies where possible. The form of accountability that is likely to emerge from these projects will initially be one of responsiveness.

This situation is expected to be transformed gradually to 'accountability as answerability' following the increase and deepening of trust-based relationships, rather than a 'demand for accountability' as conceptualised in the current social-accountability frameworks (see Chapter 4).

Social accountability as learning to build new relationships

A social-accountability framework that builds on collective-action theory as explained helps in reinforcing commitment to learning from the contextual dynamics, and allowing local realities and relationships to be the primary leaders of change, rather than wholesale importation of working tools, such as citizen report cards, from another region or continent. This learning process is suggested for where the interlocution process provides or generates new information so that the actors modify their incentives in favour of production of public goods (Wolleb, 2007). To secure the newly developed collective-action problem-solving relationships, Wolleb suggests four rules (or



policies) that are created or promoted within these relationships: discouraging free-riding, favouring the creation of social capital, raising level of knowledge, and economic efficiency.

As regards free-riding, the rules developed in these new relationships help in incorporating incentives to reinforce cooperative behaviour among the actors, and also to introduce sanctions that curtail opportunism effectively. Secondly, social capital is critical for strengthening relationships, trust-based networks between the public-office holders and the public, and is also useful in the process of building trust, increasing cooperation and communication. Projects do not normally aim at these elements of local institutional arrangements, but they are crucial for finding collective-action solutions. The third function of rules developed in these relationships pertains to raising the level of knowledge through learning by doing in the projects. The fourth and last function of these rules involves minimising the costs of these processes as a way of achieving economic efficiency.

Working with elites and facilitating political leverage of the poor

In the context of social accountability recast into collective-action theory as suggested, 'accountability' should be seen as a relational outcome where several actors involved in finding solutions to the problem that exists in a collective-action situation are setting the rules that maximise outcomes. They are holding each other to account for rules that are agreed⁶⁸. The picture of this understanding of accountability, however, changes when we consider the multi-level rule-making informed by the prevailing power and politics that creates differential citizenship and the right to it, as well as various forms of marginality, as discussed in chapter 3 of this report. In these

situations, we do not have a level playing-field.

In the context of power and politics, the processes of 'rule-making', 'rule-following' and applying sanctions are in themselves biased towards elites. These elites are the ones with the ability to exercise 'strategic agency' while the marginalised work within what they can afford (see Chapter 2) as windows open and close at other's will – 'tactical agency' (Honwana and de Boeck, 2005). In this situation, accountability is created if two conditions are met: elite interests are promoted in a such a way that they influence rules that benefit both them and the poor; and the poor find political leverage⁶⁹ through collective organisation. The interlocution processes that are required in various collective-action situations (including the building of essential relationship characteristics, and rules that sustain them, as described above) therefore need to work in both of these realities.

From 'accountability as responsiveness' to 'accountability as answerability'

In conceptualising the alternative social-accountability framework, it is important to bring into the framework the earlier discussion on 'accountability' (see Chapter 3), in terms of how 'accountability' can be understood and hence experienced differently in different contexts. As observed in most of the Mwananchi projects much of what is called 'accountability' was actually 'accountability as responsiveness' and not accountability as being answerable for performance against an agreed set of performance standards, or 'accountability as answerability' (Hyden, 2010). Conducting research among MPs in Ghana, Hyden observed that most elected representatives were held to account in terms of trying to meet the expectations of the electorate (what

they had done to meet those expectations) – ‘accountability as responsiveness’. In the rare cases of ‘accountability as answerability’, elected representatives were held to account in terms of giving a report on how they had carried out the work, and the measures that they had taken to address anomalies, which by definition reflects the accountability that is sought (as discussed in Chapter 2 above).

In the context of multi-party democracies, with a ‘winner-takes-all mentality’ (Booth, 2012), these role confusions often worsen because public-good provision on a short-term basis becomes a vote-winning strategy and a means of shutting down the opposition’s voice, rather than an issue of policy. As Hyden (2010) found in Ghana, some elected representatives do their best to account in ‘accountability as answerability’ terms. However, in the context of reciprocal relationships between the public-office holder and the society, where there is a strong sense of belonging representation that drives the motivations of both the citizens and the electorate (Chabal, 2009) what prevails is meeting the expectations of the electorate, which includes, but is not limited to, the distribution of resources based on patronage relations. The resulting situation is often one of MPs with multiple and dynamic accountabilities both in the formal and informal sense in the context in which they operate.

The interlocution process suggested in the social-accountability framework above offers possibilities of ‘accountability as answerability’ because for its emphasis on starting with an understanding of how core relationships around an issue are working or not working. The move to ‘accountability as answerability’ emerges in the form of relationships of trust, the application of sanctions when deviance from rules occurs and appropriate measures

for mitigating risks that actors have developed together in the process of solving the collective-action problem. These mechanisms of accountability are more engrained in the actors’ reality than those that are celebrated and based on a formulation made outside people’s life-worlds.

Increase sharing of information at country level among donors in their support for social accountability

Given the importance of actor incentives and interests, including those of interlocutors of change, one significant implication for donors and funding agencies is the need to facilitate sharing of information at country level. The creation of multi-donor funds at country level addresses this issue but only in part because there are still a lot of parallel funding mechanisms in these countries and there is often no mechanism for these support streams to speak to each other and share experiences as well as discuss the politics or organisations that are being funded and how to deal with them. It is possible, for instance, to find an organisation that has been rejected for funding on fiduciary or management grounds by one funder being supported by another. This lack of coordination promotes not only attitudes of double or triple dipping on finances but could easily lead to perverse incentives and erode local initiatives.

7.2 Looking forwards

The social-accountability approach discussed in this paper opens up a space for actors that possess the necessary game-changing (‘interlocution’) characteristics, to help ordinary citizens engage in a state-citizen relationship, and to be recognised for the contribution that they are making. I see the possibility of a genuine move towards democratic

development in Africa that is able to empower citizens, releasing their hidden creativity and potential – a move that has proved elusive in spite of the excellently crafted intentions of the African Charter of Popular Participation 23 years ago.

Kofi Annan, chair of the Africa Progress Panel, was right in observing at this year's meeting that it is easy to see different partners as having similar goals and overlapping interests. However, this seeming overlap does not necessarily mean that it is easy to find collective solutions, nor that all actors will pursue these solutions. Kofi Annan rightly observes that trust is the ultimate condition for successful policy reform; also, I would add, for mutual accountability and achieving inclusive growth and development. The Mwananchi programme

has shown why it is harder to build trust than change policies.

I started the Mwananchi research and learning platform to bring together interested people from civil society, business, government and other sectors, to keep on searching, analysing and discussing these issues in a critical, yet open and relaxed manner, as a future research and engagement agenda. **Africa's future lies in finding the key ingredients to build relationships based on trust. I suggest that the social-accountability framework discussed in this paper goes a long way to providing a thought process in which all passionate actors must engage in order to achieve this end.**



Changing women's lives. Lindsay Mgbor/DFID.

Endnotes

- 1 Incentives are the driving forces of individual and group behaviour. They depend on a combination of (i) the individual's personal motivations (material gain, risk reduction, social advancement, spiritual goals etc.), and (ii) the opportunities and constraints arising from the individual's principal economic and political relationships. DFID (2013) Political Economy Analysis How To Note. For an example of the impact of incentives, see blog on the legislator's dilemma, posted 28 May 2013, available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/publicsphere/legislator-s-dilemma-following-or-moving-against-tide-perverse-incentives>.
- 2 Social accountability refers to the wide range of citizen and CSO actions to hold the state to account, as well as actions on the part of government, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts (McNeil and Malena, 2010, p1).
- 3 Sixty of these cases (an average of 10 cases per country) were closely supported, researched and discussed at both the national and Africa region level over four years of project implementation.
- 4 The concept of 'cargo image of interventions' was developed by Norman Long (see Long, 2001) to depict the external packaging (through the discourse of what is deemed right to do) of interventions giving little or no room to local experiences and interpretations because they are deemed as not working or otherwise inferior to the external frameworks.
- 5 'Actor' in this report is a term used not as limited to individual persons but also includes informal and formal groups or interpersonal networks, collective groupings, organisations, national or local government, churches, NGOs etc. that have the potential for agency or to respond to interventions. It is however important to take care in that by attributing 'actor' to groupings or organisations, we are not at the same time implying that they are acting with a unified voice. They often possess some common characteristics but also harbour a diversity of interests and incentives (see Long, 2001).
- 6 The African Union and its subsidiary institutions have always developed a plethora of position papers and articles relating to the promotion of citizen engagement as a way to deepen democracy and enhance popular participation on the road to achieving pro-poor growth and development, starting with the ambition of the Africa Charter of Popular Participation in Arusha (Tanzania) in 1990. Most of these declarations make an exhilarating and intriguing read and serve as an emphatic promise for citizens. The Charter, for instance, puts emphasis on 'the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interests of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits' (Africa charter for popular participation in development and transformation, paragraph, 11. Available at <http://www.afrimap.org/english/images/treaty/file4239ac8e921ed.pdf>). Twenty-three years after the charter was signed, the rhetoric in the claims is obvious. For example, the Africa Progress Panel meeting in Cape Town in May 2013 observed glaring development inequalities and attributed it directly to the lack of government transparency and accountability to citizens despite record economic growth rates registered over the past decade that have even pushed some countries to middle-income status.
- 7 This argument has continued to gain momentum despite research findings that show that local realities are more complex than is assumed and that the evidence so far does not show that there is a direct link between increasing citizen voice and getting more responsive and accountable public institutions; and that both of these lead to achievement of broader development impacts such as meeting the MDGs (Rocha Menocal and Sharma, 2008).
- 8 For more information, see <http://opengovernmentinitiative.org/>
- 9 The Open Budget Initiative, for instance, aims to promote public access to budget information and the enhancement of governments' adoption of budget systems that are more accountable to their citizens. For more information, see <http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/major-ibp-initiatives/open-budget-initiative/>
- 10 For a list of African empowerment, voice and accountability initiatives, see Tembo and Nkonkolimba (2012).
- 11 See conference proceedings and associated blog posts on <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/event/citizen-voices>
- 12 Another way of explaining collective-action problems is that 'they exist where a group or category of actors fail to cooperate to achieve an objective they agree on because the first-movers would incur costs or risks and they have no assurance that the other beneficiaries will compensate them, rather than "freeriding" (Booth, 2012, p.11, emphasis mine).
- 13 See Patrick Mier's blog post on <http://irevolution.net/2011/06/26/wrong-assumptions-tech/>
- 14 This will mostly be sectoral – e.g. failure increasing youth employment despite the government increasing the budget allocation to businesses for youths as a policy.
- 15 See Appendix 2 for a full list of grantees supported.

- 16 The Mwananchi programme was set up by ODI in 2008, with a grant of £5 million over five years from the DFID GTF. The GTF was intended by DFID to help citizens hold their governments to account by strengthening the wide range of groups that can empower and support them. Thirty-eight organisations implemented programmes in over 100 countries around the world, with links to around 1,000 local organisations. Sixty-six organisations linked to over 200 local communities implemented the ODI Mwananchi programme. For more information on the GTF, see <https://www.gov.uk/governance-and-transparency-fund-gtf>
- 17 This approach was sometimes criticised by some of the local stakeholders as overly elaborate for the amount of money that was available for grants. The focus however was not on granting but on how to set up an effective governance programme that best fits in the various country contexts and adds value to what was already going on.
- 18 The facilitator goes through these points at the start of the issue selection process during the meeting.
- 19 Even then, it was evident that most grantees indicated a number of other organisations as coalition members in their proposals because the application templates provided for this as a preferred approach, and hence these first coalition lists were suspect of compliance with the 'imagined' winning-proposal requirement than as an understood theory of change.
- 20 See Appendix 2 for a list of all grantees and projects.
- 21 This has had implications on governance-project log-frame outlines in that what are considered 'outputs' are actually behaviour-oriented 'outputs', and hence not really within what management can control.
- 22 This often starts with non-tangible engagement processes such as building trust and collective action, resolving some of the community conflicts etc.
- 23 In Mwananchi, we developed a quarterly report template that would help consolidate monitoring data by combining elements of the log-frame (outputs, outcomes/ purpose and impacts) indicators, and OM progress markers that are aimed at tracking and reporting on actor behavioural changes, including the very early-day indications. This means that there is no pressure on putting numbers against the log-frame indicators if these numbers are not there as yet or if the numbers are not looking 'impressive', because the trajectory of change is including actor behaviours (from OM tracking). In this case, it is the trajectory of change that has to be robust. In other words, the nature of actor behavioural changes could give the confidence that the quantitative log-frame indicators could be achieved in future even if they are minimal at the time of reporting.
- 24 DFID had actually produced 'How To' notes on working with civil society and the media; and there was ongoing work at both DFID and OECD on supporting parliament, around the time when the GTF was launched.
- 25 For a deeper analysis on the expected roles of CSOs, media, elected representatives and traditional leaders, which endorsed the assumptions in the programme, see Tembo (2010).
- 26 See for example Court, Mendizabal, Osborne and Young, (2006)
- 27 These research streams were developed in such a way that the normal project life-cycle (including proposal submissions from grantees to national-coordination organisations (NCOs) in the six countries, submission of requests from funding to ODI and then ODI to KMPG, the flow of funds, and then the actual implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes etc.) was as uninterrupted and as focused on results as all the other 37 DFID GTFs.
- 28 Mwananchi Working Paper 1 (Tembo, 2010) explains the thinking behind these questions.
- 29 This analysis is provided in the second Mwananchi Working Paper (Tembo, 2012).
- 30 A blog series from national coordinators explored these features by taking stories of change from each country and analysing what features of the interlocutors and the processes involved created change: <http://www.mwananchi-africa.org/news/>
- 31 It is possible to find similar strategies being used by post-independence African leaders in other countries. In Malawi, for instance, the slogan was one of 'Ife tonse, boma' (We are all government)' and 'One Zambia, one nation' in Zambia.
- 32 Referring to the colonial state, Mamdani asserts that citizenship was a term reserved for the civilized (Mamdani, 1996).
- 33 'Agency' refers to the knowledgeability and capability associated with the act of doing and reflecting that impact upon or shaping one's own and others' actions and interpretations (Long, 2001). In other words, if you are able to knowledgeably act or hold the capability to act, you are exercising 'agency'. These actions can remain within the remit of one's private life (including one's household e.g. religion), but can also be exercised in public life and hence become political actions, because in that realm there are also the interests of other citizens who are affected as a result of the individual's actions (Ekeh, 1975).

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- 34 It is possible to discuss these intrinsic factors in terms of power analysis, including 'power within', 'power with', 'power to' and 'power over' (Rowlands, 1995).
- 35 In another paper, I tried to unpack the effects of different identities, representations and categorisations of citizens on agency (Tembo, 2003).
- 36 Ekeh (1975) provides an interesting interpretation of citizenship in this regard as having two elements: the rights and privileges that an individual as a member of a political community can claim from it, and the duties and obligations that the individual has to perform in the interest of the political community. According to Ekeh's view, it is in the interplay or otherwise balance of these two elements in the exercise of citizenship between private and public realms that makes the state-society relations in Africa different from other parts of the world. Unfortunately, most social-accountability initiatives are much more about claiming rights than about encouraging citizen duties and responsibilities; or how to best invest in the public realm for the good of the wider community.
- 37 There have of course been numerous studies on CSO, or more specifically NGO, legitimacy and accountability, since the 1980s (see Edwards and Hulme, 1996). These studies, however, have not been pursuing the underlying structures of interests and incentives of these actors. In this regard, Masood Bano's (2012) research in Pakistan is spot on. I come back to this research later on in the paper.
- 38 By features here I mean both the content (e.g. funding, training materials etc.) and the behavioural characteristics of the actor.
- 39 Suffice to say that the CAR framework's construction of 'capability' and 'responsiveness', is not argued as based on a direct link with 'accountability'. The weakness of the framework therefore is exactly in its lack of an explicit theory of change that relates the three components in the triangle.
- 40 Public goods are those goods and services that are '(1) consumed jointly by individuals, (2) difficult to exclude consumption by non-contributors, and (3) one person's consumption does not subtract from the availability of the good to others' (Gibson et al, 2005, p.36). Booth (2012) also defines merit goods (such as schools) as facing this same problem, except that they can be provided by the private sector as well, and underprovided in this case because the private sector does not have the benefit of an educated population as one of its incentives.
- 41 Duncan Green, for instance, suggests that APPP should present this work to a group of practitioners (bilateral, NGOs etc.), then brainstorm on examples where they are successfully pursuing this kind of approach (see <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=12453>).
- 42 The public sphere in this case pertains to notions of 'a polity that cares about the common good and has the capacity to deliberate about it democratically... The development of shared interests, a willingness to cede some territory to others, the ability to see something of oneself in those that are different and work more effectively as a result.' (Edwards, 2004, p.55). No one can argue that this is a desired end for most polities and could form the basis for deliberative democracy (actually, where collaborative spaces and actions were possible is where the Mwananchi programme achieved the most impressive results). However, the reality of the public sphere in different state-society relations and they come rise and fall at different moments, as Edwards also observes.
- 43 Unlike Bano, the use of the term 'other-regarding groups' in this case is not limited to NGOs, it can refer to private actor groups, state-formed groups etc. The emphasis is on the fact that they get involved for the needs of others. As we find out in Bano's case, of course, the incentives for other-regarding groups are not purely altruistic. These services to others primarily serve their own psycho-social needs such as career enhancement, finding a business opportunity etc.
- 44 It can be argued that the further an intervening organisation is from the collective-action situation, the more prone it is to manipulating the interlocution process, even when it has the best intentions in mind.
- 45 See Mawsley and Townsend (2000) for what they call 'development managerialism'.
- 46 The specific projects (e.g. health, water, education, access to justice) often form the focal points for building accountability relationships among actors involved and provide answer to some of the immediate structural issues (e.g. the numbers of stakeholders, the way they are organised and their buy-in into the project aims, their characteristics, in terms of resource endowments etc.).
- 47 The ability to read the political dynamics (on both the citizens and state sides) and to seize opportunities for manoeuvre as they come and go; and then the ability to draw in the better placed actors to engage with their existing skills, credibility and reputation; and also deliberately marginalising or even withdrawing other actors from engagement when their role is not or no longer needed.

- 48 Recent ODI research shows that the enforcement of policy disciplines is different from context to context and makes a significant difference to the provision of public goods and services (See Wild et al, 2012)
- 49 The incentive structures for most other-regarding interlocutors make it difficult to take risks because as NGOs, for example, they are vulnerable to state withdrawal of the registration, especially in politically volatile and competitive environments
- 50 For more information on the Mwananchi project engaging with this situation, see <http://www.mwananchi-africa.org/news/2013/7/2/a-district-hospital-for-phalombe-using-district-forums-to-pu.html>
- 51 For more information on OM, visit the Outcome Mapping Learning Community www.outcomemapping.ca
- 52 The construction of the rubrics was done by an independent research team using the Mwananchi OM and facilitated interviews with National Coordination Organisations and support from the ODI team in terms of explaining the templates for grantees. The researchers had not read Barrett and Gaventa's report. I am matching them against this report from my own interpretation.
- 53 The Afrobarometer is an instrument that uses periodic surveys to measure public attitudes regarding the social, political, and economic atmosphere in selected African countries. Data can be analysed and compared across country as each countries' data consists of answers to a standard set of questions. See <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>
- 54 See for example Fowler, A. and Biekart, K. (2012)
- 55 The focus is more on these interlocution features than on the collective-action problems themselves because, in looking across the six countries and over 60 grantee projects, the collective-action problems were numerous and will be further explored systematically after this synthesis report, and in the context of the research and learning platform within which the grantees themselves will be part of the analysis.
- 56 This 'single-sector' tracking of entitlements also has the weakness of not exposing what is happening in the other sectors government needs to explore to deliver services comprehensively. It is also often devoid of a comprehensive analysis of the broader political and economic considerations at play in the country.
- 57 KACSOA, see Appendix 2 for details.
- 58 For a full story of change exploring Wolkite's strategy, see 'Accountability starts with acknowledgment: local media and healthcare in Ethiopia' <http://www.mwananchi-africa.org/news/2013/3/4/accountability-starts-with-acknowledgment-local-media-and-he.html>
- 59 Crispin Matenga's interview with Moses Phiri, Coordinator, Petauke Land Alliance, 13/03/2012.
- 60 Sklar defines 'incorporation' as 'the inclusion of elements of one dimension within structures of the other', (2005, p. 9). In this case, the traditional authority is also seen as a government, albeit at the local level.
- 61 Inonge Wina – then Minister of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs; cf. The Post, 1 February 2012, 'Give PF govt a chance – Inonge'
- 62 Interview with Ruth Simbeye, Senior Planning Officer, Provincial Office, Ministry of Education, Kabwe, 01/03/2012.
- 63 WGA results also showed most of the rules in use
- 64 For details see Unsworth, S and Conflict Research Unit (2007).
- 65 More recently, O'Meally (2013) has developed a model for the contextual analysis that has six variables, identified as domains that overlap and interlock in different ways. The six domains are: (1) civil society (CS), (2) political society (PS), (3) inter-elite relations, (4) state-society relations, (5) intra-society relations, and (6) global dimensions. The first, second, third and fourth domains in my view, resonate well with some of the WGA arenas.
- 66 Most of these processes are already known and used in project planning and design processes.
- 67 Some of the elements that would encourage collective action would be those that increase the level of cooperation (including between citizens and state actors around a collective-action problem) such as reputation, trust and reciprocity (Ostrom, 2007).
- 68 Contrast this with the earlier definition given in Box 1: 'Accountability refers to the relationship between two parties, those who set or control the application/implementation of the rules, and those who are subject to the rules'.
- 69 Political leverage refers to the advantage that an actor has over others, which enables him/her to achieve his/her objectives, among other actors who are politically pursuing their objectives at the same interface (Tembo, 2003, p.172). In this formulation, it is argued that enabling political leverage is a more authentic form of citizen empowerment than a generic project of citizen participation can offer.

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Appendix 1: National coordinating organisations

Country	National coordinating organisation	Organisation description	Local Mwananchi programme name
Ethiopia	Guraghe Development Association (GDA)	<p>GDA aspires to see a united community of Guraghe people whose socio-economic challenges are tackled, poverty alleviated, all round development sustained and standard of living improved.</p> <p>GDA's purpose is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) design and implement development programmes and provide services via a participatory approach 2) serve as a knowledge institution by undertaking socio-economic research and generating information required for development 3) strengthen collaboration, partnership and networking for resource mobilization and experience sharing 4) create a strong sense of unity and solidarity among Guraghe communities. 	Lem Limat
Ghana	Participatory Development Associates (PDA)	<p>PDA is an organisation of skilled people who aim to support processes of empowerment and self-determination in communities, organisations and individuals. PDA is based in Ghana with offices in Accra and Kumasi and works with government, non-government and private organisations in areas such as governance, advocacy, poverty and social assessments, youth gender etc.</p>	Mwananchi Ghana
Malawi	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	<p>MEJN is a coalition of CSOs committed to championing participatory economic governance for poverty reduction. The Network was formed in the year 2000 following an evaluation of the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation.</p> <p>MEJN's thrust is to empower ordinary citizens to enable them to participate effectively in public policy processes and demand performance accountability from duty-bearers. MEJN envisions a society where citizens are treated justly and live a dignified life. In order to achieve this MEJN has two main strategic issues that it is addressing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) inadequate capacity among rights-holders (citizens) to know, understand, claim and practice their economic entitlements and rights to demand information on the national budget, special programs and policies. 2) ineffective economic policies and laws. <p>This is principally facilitated by the promotion of equitable and just contribution of socio-economic opportunities through networking; capacity building of CSOs and communities; and policy research.</p>	Liu Lathu

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Country	National coordinating organisation	Organisation description	Local Mwananchi programme name
Sierra Leone	Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)	<p>CGG exists to increase citizen participation in governance through advocacy, capacity building and civic education in order to build a more informed civil populace and a democratic state.</p> <p>CGG programmes have evolved over the years to adapt to the changing needs of Sierra Leone and a long history of successful campaigns have given CGG an excellent reputation as one of Sierra Leone's finest local NGOs. The organisation's main objectives are three-fold: freedom, democracy and gender equality.</p> <p>It has mapped out three broad strategic programme areas to achieve these objectives: democracy, gender and governance, justice security and human rights, and public financial management.</p>	Leh Wi Tok
Zambia	Panos Southern Africa Institute (PSAf)	<p>PSAf is a regional not-for-profit, non-governmental, communication for development organisation that works with innovative methodologies to engage the media and other key stakeholders to ensure that the development agenda is shaped and driven by the most vulnerable members of Southern Africa's communities. PSAf's work is premised on amplifying the voices of the poor and marginalised through innovative communication approaches, working with mainstream and alternative media, interfacing development actors and local communities, and providing platforms for informed debate and voice. The organisation's thematic focus is on four areas: media development and ICTs; health and development; governance and development; and environment and natural-resources management. PSAf engages actors in these themes by applying a set of strategic approaches that include public policy analysis and research, a rights-based approach to development, gender mainstreaming and communication methodologies. The organisation's communication methodologies are premised on the use of oral testimonies, radio listening clubs, interactive radio programmes, research reports, manuals/toolkits, roundtable discussion/debates and policy briefs.</p>	Atwaambe
Uganda	Development Research and Training (DRT)	<p>DRT is an NGO founded in 1997 with the aim of influencing pro-poor policies and programmes. DRT involves partners in participatory policy analysis, engagement and capacity building for them to develop and implement pro-poor policies and programming effectively.</p>	Mwananchi Uganda

Appendix 2: List of Mwananchi grantees and projects

Grantee	Project title	Main interventions
GHANA		
Basic Needs Ghana	Ghana: a picture of mental health	Using photographic documentaries to influence policy and practice that addresses the needs and rights of people with mental illnesses.
BElim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA)	Breaking the myth around the dowry system	Creating a platform for dialogue between traditional authorities and community members, particularly women, to tackle tradition of high dowry costs.
Choice Ghana	Promoting effective collaboration between traditional authorities and youth to facilitate the course of development	Youth-led activities to set up education endowments in partnership with traditional leaders and to increase inclusion of youth views and issues in local governance.
Conservation Foundation	Bridging gaps in local government for improved community development	Research on information flow between assembly members, traditional leaders and citizens. Collaboration with Central Regional House of Chiefs to establish roles of different governance actors.
SocioServe Ghana	Promoting the rights of the vulnerable to information (PRIVI)	Using drama to create awareness of marginalised groups and increase dialogue with elected representatives and traditional leaders.
Friends of the Nation	Improved decentralised fisheries project	Enhancing fishing communities' input into policy and practice that affects their livelihood by dialogue with coastal authorities, Fisheries Working Group and radio sensitisation of local communities.
Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD)	Deaf information and communication access-improvement project	Building advocacy capacity of deaf community leaders, sign-language training for healthcare professionals.
Radio Ada	Governance for Songor Lagoon	Setting up a Salt Cooperative with over 1,000 members and arranging dialogue meetings between communities, traditional leaders and elected officials on management of the salt resource.
Tongu Youth & Children's Evangel (ToYACE)	Promoting inclusive decision-making in rural communities; eradicating marginalisation and vulnerability through constructive engagement	Setting up a children's club and training members in public speaking, radio presenting and journalism. Enabling children to produce and host radio programmes on issues that matter to them.
Advocates & Trainers for Women's Welfare Advancement and Rights (ATCWAR)	Listening to the voices of the poor and marginalised through the Belandan-Bo platform	Reintroducing traditional Belandan-Bo platform which allows community members to meet with traditional leaders to discuss issues affecting them, focused on issues affecting women and children. Research on Queen Mothers' role in communities.
Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation	Enhancing transparency and accountability in land management: the rights of women in land access and control	Documenting traditional land policies and advocating for changes in customary law. Creating dialogue groups with women chiefs (Queen Mothers) and other women to advocate to traditional leaders.

Lessons from the Mwananchi Programme

Grantee	Project title	Main interventions
MALAWI		
Umodzi Youth Organisation	Campaigning for rural communities' rights to safe water	Baseline survey on water supply in target villages, training of community-based educators on government procedures and policies, and public discussions on water issues in the district.
Youth Network and Counselling (YONECO)	Tonse Boma	Tackling severe marginalisation and local accountability through citizen interface meetings to monitor the community development fund, particularly youth projects, against a baseline survey.
Centre for Human Rights Education and Advice	Increase citizens' access to justice	Training community-based educators to reach out to increase awareness of rights and justice issues and to set up village rights committees which will monitor rights issues and participate in Court User Committees.
Development Communication Trust (DCT)	Liu La Kumudzi – promotion of citizen engagement and voice by allowing the citizens' voice to be heard through media	Use radio listening clubs to sensitise community members to development planning and to bring their concerns to the ears of duty-bearers.
Women's Hope for Change	Tilawilane – access to justice focusing on domestic-violence project	Assisting women to report domestic violence and strengthening alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms. Engaging traditional leaders to sensitise them to access-to-justice issues facing women.
Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC)	Promoting voice and accountability – creation of a community of accountability through empowering citizens on their right to development	Establishing community accountability coalitions to monitor and participate in district planning and engage with councils, MPs and traditional authorities on behalf of citizens.
Association of Progressive Women	Community participation in transparency and accountability of local development funds	Formation of a district governance coalition, capacity building of fund-monitoring committees, and using public rallies to promote dialogue with elected representatives.
Institute Policy Research and Social Empowerment	Citizens' participation with particular focus on implementation of the cash-transfer scheme	Forming a district civil-society platform on social protection to monitor the Social Cash-Transfer Programme and train district CSOs on advocacy skills for engaging local government.
National Women's Lobby Group	Community initiative empowerment (Chidachanga Project)	Training 60 community volunteers in accountability and governance issues to monitor implementation of health and education projects in the district, particularly issues identified by newly formed rights groups.

Grantee	Project title	Main interventions
SIERRA LEONE		
Counterparts in Rehabilitation and Development in Sierra Leone (CORD-SL)	Strengthening women, youth and the poor in institutional transformation of governance in Sierra Leone	Regular meetings with elected representatives and traditional leaders, school debates and parades, leading to an accountability platform for MPs and citizens in the district.
Democracy Sierra Leone (DSL)	The Parliament and the People project	Training youth and women's groups on the roles and responsibilities of parliament, meetings with chiefs, establishing a basket fund to provide training opportunities for young people in the district.
Movement for Resettlement and Rural Development (MoRRD)	Strengthening cooperation for women's political participation, rights and empowerment in Kenema District	Working with rural women to build their confidence to run for elected office, radio programmes, increasing cooperation between women of different political parties to support increased women's participation.
Network Movement for Democracy and Human Rights	Creating a platform for youths to engage their elected leaders on the improvement of the poor road network in Kailahun District	Training young people to monitor road building and repairs and engage elected representatives to improve the state of roads in the district.
Centre for the Coordination of Youth Activities	The Young Entrepreneurs: Bike Riders and Conflict Management in Sierra Leone project	Supporting the creation of a union for commercial bike-riders, training the union's leadership, increasing dialogue between police and other officials and the union.
Advocacy Movement Network (AMNet)	Community Dialogue Forum through inter-generational and inter-age approach with elected representatives, media and CSOs	Training, radio-panel discussions and forming a coalition of CSOs, chiefs, party representatives, the media and women's groups to reduce conflict over cross-border trade.
Campaign for the Voiceless	Mapping out workable initiatives in local governance	Baseline survey on local governance practice, dialogue sessions between citizens and local councillors to address communication gaps.
Young Women's Christian Association	Research on Women and Mining in Moyamba district	Consultative meetings with established women's groups, radio discussions and participatory research to establish how mining affects women in the district, leading to a documentary aired on national television.

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Grantee	Project title	Main interventions
UGANDA		
Community Development and Child Welfare Initiatives (CODI)	Increased number of people benefiting from the Community-Driven Development Programme (CDD)	Using drama and comedy to increase engagement with community meetings with elected leaders and officials, on subjects such as health services, corruption and food security.
Cross-cultural Foundation	The Clan-Leaders' Charter	Supporting clan leaders to develop a Clan-Leaders' Charter in four regions of the country, document the values, principles, functions and aspirations of clan leaders.
Forum for Women in Democracy	Enhance the capacity of grassroots communities to demand accountability	Formation of Village Budget Clubs, providing space for citizens to develop an agenda to influence local government processes and track use of community development funds.
Lira NGO Forum	Reduction of public funds in Universal Primary Education schools in Lira sub-county	Establishing community-based monitors for local primary schools, facilitating feedback meetings with teachers and officials, publicised via local radio.
World Voices Uganda	Mwananchi Justice Agenda Project	Strengthening traditional justice systems to increase access to justice, through training, sensitisation and community roundtables between citizens and traditional leaders.
Kalangala NGO Forum	Promoting citizens' engagement to improving maternal-health service delivery in Bujumba sub-county	Consultations with citizens to identify issues of concern, stakeholder dialogue meetings and identification of two Parish Health Monitors from each parish, trained on methods of collecting maternal-health information and monitoring tools.
Masindi District Education Network	Improved learners' performance in Masindi Primary Schools	Expanding and strengthening existing community groups to monitor education issues in the district, establishing Child Advocacy Clubs and providing anonymous suggestion boxes for children to use.
Kibaale Civil Society Network	Enhancing community participation and community monitoring of community development programme	Radio talk shows to increase awareness of local budgeting, training budget management and procurement committees, reporting to regional anti-corruption committee, develop fund-tracking checklist tool.
Kapchorwa Civil Society Alliance	Empower communities to articulate their development needs and priorities	Organise and train local people to understand local budgeting and form Budget Monitoring Committees to lead monitoring and dialogue meetings with local officials.
Masindi District NGO Forum	Including the view of the community in local government development plans	Public-expenditure tracking, a report on local healthcare provision and public meetings with local officials to discuss the report.

Grantee	Project title	Main interventions
ZAMBIA		
Citizens Forum	Community-centred education project	Discussions with traditional leaders and household visits to identify people with disabilities, capacity-enhancement meetings, establishing community noticeboards and social contracts to hold parliamentarians to account, publicity campaigns at schools' open days.
2410	2410 initiative	Research on issues affecting youth in Lusaka, councillor indabas with youth to provide forums for youth to lobby on their issues, drawing on 2410's large grassroots network.
Christian Information Network	Integration of sign language and e-learning in schools project	Integrating hearing-impaired people in policy-making processes through workshops and meetings with stakeholders, media campaign to improve public awareness of challenges facing deaf people and draw attention to the National Policy on Education.
Petauke Explorers Radio	Women's participation in governance for sustainable development project	Use radio and local media to raise awareness about the need for policy-makers, civil society organisations and communities to engage on issues affecting the participation of women, promote knowledge-sharing and policy-engagement on governance by involving the grassroots in the production of radio programmes.
Yatsani Community Radio Station	Youth-empowerment initiatives	Disseminating information on existing youth initiatives and lobbying for favourable policies to address youth empowerment. Project activities include radio programmes featuring elected representatives, youths and CSOs.
Radio Maranatha	Atwaambe Radio Programmes Project	Building a coalition of community members and stakeholders, including school teachers, deaf associations and NGOs, together with government and statutory bodies such as the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Capacity development through provision of tool-kits, exposure to organisations dealing with the disabled, skills development in research, data collection, analysis and report writing, together with tailor-made training on producing radio programmes that engage with local issues.
Kasempa Community Radio Station	Disabled people's agenda setting and participation in governance	Collaboration with civil society organisations working on participation, education and rights to maximise their reach and share information on the rights of people with disabilities. Listener feedback and call-in sessions.
Foundation for Democratic Progress	Strengthening public accountability and participation at grassroots level	Mobilise people with disabilities to participate in planning, budgeting and implementation of development plans, including on land ownership and income generation.

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Grantee	Project title	Main interventions
Media Network on Child Rights and Development	Children's participation in the media	Provide a platform for children and the public to speak on child-rights issues through creating Children's News Agencies to engage with existing media platforms and train child journalists.
Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD)	Civic engagement project	Promoting equal participation of men and women in local governance through locally developed participation action plans, gender promotion groups and gender manuals.
ETHIOPIA		
Guraghe Zone Women's Association	Enhancing women's empowerment in Guraghe Zone	A research study of rural women's socio-economic roles, training workshops with local women, officials and governance actors on gender policies and rights.
Guraghe Mihuran Forum	Enhancing and scaling up the role of volunteer intellectuals in community empowerment	Establishing a land-use and geographic-information system for Guraghe zone and forming a database of skilled volunteers. Establishing the Environmental Council.
Wolkite FM 89.2 Radio	Bridging the gap in information communication for improved governance in Guraghe Zone	Broadcasting work and achievements of other projects, training journalists, regular programmes expressing views of marginalised citizens.
Coalition of Parents, Teachers and Students Associations	Mobilisation of Parents, Students, and Teachers Associations (PSTAs) of secondary schools for growth and transformation in education	A research study on the quality of education in four schools, consultative meetings with PSTAs, media training for students, quality-enhancement training for teachers.
Admas and Walta Farmers' Cooperatives Union	Participatory Sector Planning	A research study of governance of two unions, to be used in consultative meetings with union leadership and local governance actors to improve performance and accountability.
Guraghe Zone Association of Persons with Disabilities	Enhancing access to basic social services for persons with disabilities in Guraghe Zone	Baseline study on the profile of disability in Guraghe zone, workshop with local stakeholders on outcomes of study, training for people with disabilities and local governance actors on rights.
Environmental council	Engaging community in evidence-based negotiation with government and other development actors in Guraghe Zone	Mobilise community members to learn about environmental issues affecting the region, raise environmental concerns and find local solutions.
Guraghe Zone Council of People's Representatives	Children's Parliament	Three Children's Parliaments created, children trained in assessing inclusion of children's rights in government policy, increased awareness of children's rights in local government bodies.
Association of Kistane Kiflehizb	Enhancing access to justice through the Customary Judiciary	Review and codify the operation of the traditional Gordena Sera system of justice so that it can be practiced in local customary courts.

Appendix 3: World Governance Assessment findings

The primary-data collection to inform the Mwananchi Programme was undertaken using an adaption of the WGAⁱ. Each survey took four months to complete on average including: identification of local researcher, training in use of Survey Gizmo software, sampling, administration of questionnaire, validation of initial report to in-country multi-stakeholder group, and production of a final report. Some of the key features of the WGA of particular relevance for the Mwananchi programme are:

- » a focus on governance at national level: national actors carry out the survey and participate in data analysis. The assessment is based on the perceptions and experience of 'well-informed national stakeholders'
- » a comparative dimension: the WGA facilitates comparison of the findings of the national surveys. This is possible because (i) the sampling of respondents within each country allows for statistical analysis at the aggregate level, and (ii) a common set of indicators and typology of respondents is used in all country surveys
- » it avoids preconceived definitions of 'good governance' based on existing standards or donor-driven models. Rather, it focuses on national stakeholders' experiences of governance
- » capacity building: all national coordinators who are responsible for administering the questionnaire and analysing the data are trained in survey design and statistical-data analysis.

By focusing on the understanding of governance in terms of the 'rules of the game'

i http://www.odi.org.uk/pppg/politics_and_governance/what_we_do/Governance/WGA.html

and the norms underlying what is deemed legitimate or not, the WGA methodology was aligned with the objectives of the Mwananchi programme. The WGA focuses on process rather than performance and on rules rather than results and is treated as both an activity and a process that sets the parameters for how policy is made and implemented. The political process is separated into six separate but inter-related arenas: civil society, political society, government, bureaucracy, economic society, and the judiciary (Hyden et al, 2008).

The WGA also differs from the majority of other instruments in that it does not rank countries on a ladder in terms of how close they are to an optimum derived from the qualities of one particular model of governance (see Andrews, 2013, on the limits of applying 'best practice' models universally). The project instead relies on six principles that are not country- or region-specific but reflect universal human values. These six theoretical principles, inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and drawn up through consultations with a number of academics and practitioners, were: (1) participation, (2) fairness, (3) decency, (4) accountability, (5) transparency, and (6) efficiency. The first three of these refer to state-society relations, while the latter three refer to operational aspects of the state. This approach allows the WGA to be more holistic and reflective of what determines the quality of governance in a country at any one time. Table 4 shows how the principles and arenas are overlaid in developing the survey instrument.

The following sections present some of the findings from the WGA survey that are of relevance for understanding the rules that were

Table 4: Principles of the World Governance Assessment

	Participation	Fairness	Decency	Accountabil- ity	Transparency	Efficiency
Civil society	1. Freedom of association	2. Society free from discrimination	3. Freedom of expression	4. Respect for governing rules	5. Freedom of the media	6. Input in policy-making
Political society	7. Legislature representative of society	8. Policy reflects public preferences	9. Peaceful competition for political power	10. Legislators accountable to public	11. Transparency of political parties	12. Efficiency of legislative function
Government	13. Intra-governmental consultation	14. Adequate standard of living	15. Personal security of citizens	16. Security forces subordinated to civilian government	17. Government provides accurate information	18. Efficiency of executive branch
Bureaucracy	19. Civil servants shape policy	20. Equal opportunities to public services	21. Civil servants respectful towards citizens	22. Civil servants accountable	23. Civil-service decision-making transparent	24. Merit-based system for recruitment

prevalent in each country, and for comparative analysis. These contextual dimensions help in understanding why it is possible to find certain interlocution processes in one country context and not the other. It should be possible to overlay the citizen-engagement possibilities in various countries with the overall contextual findings from the WGA.

Civic engagement

The findings from the WGA survey give the impression that the fundamental freedoms of association, expression and freedom from discrimination have improved over time. Of the five countries in which the perception survey was conducted, Ghana is far ahead of the others on freedom of expression and association. On the other hand, Zambia scores highly on freedom from discrimination, which is not surprising given Zambia's emphasis on 'One Zambia One Nation' since independence, where the emphasis was to promote the common good and suppress any divisions derived from ethnic and cultural differences. However,

the Zambia study showed that multi-party democracy is testing this long-held governance principle as political parties are seen to gain advantage over others by campaigning along ethnic lines. Uganda was also worse off in terms of freedom of association, as shown in Figure 11.

Although there is the perception that the fundamental freedoms have improved, evidence from this research shows mostly less than average scores on civic engagement in policy-making processes, as shown in Figures 12 and 13.

In other words, although there are improved freedoms of association and expression, these have not resulted in significant improvements in the way citizens engage with governments in a policy agenda settingⁱⁱ.

ii It should be noted that the WGA survey in Malawi was conducted just before the second phase of President Mutharika's leadership, when he had popular support and relations between the government and CSOs were cordial. If the survey had been repeated in 2011/12, the results might have been different because the government-CSO relations had by then deteriorated.

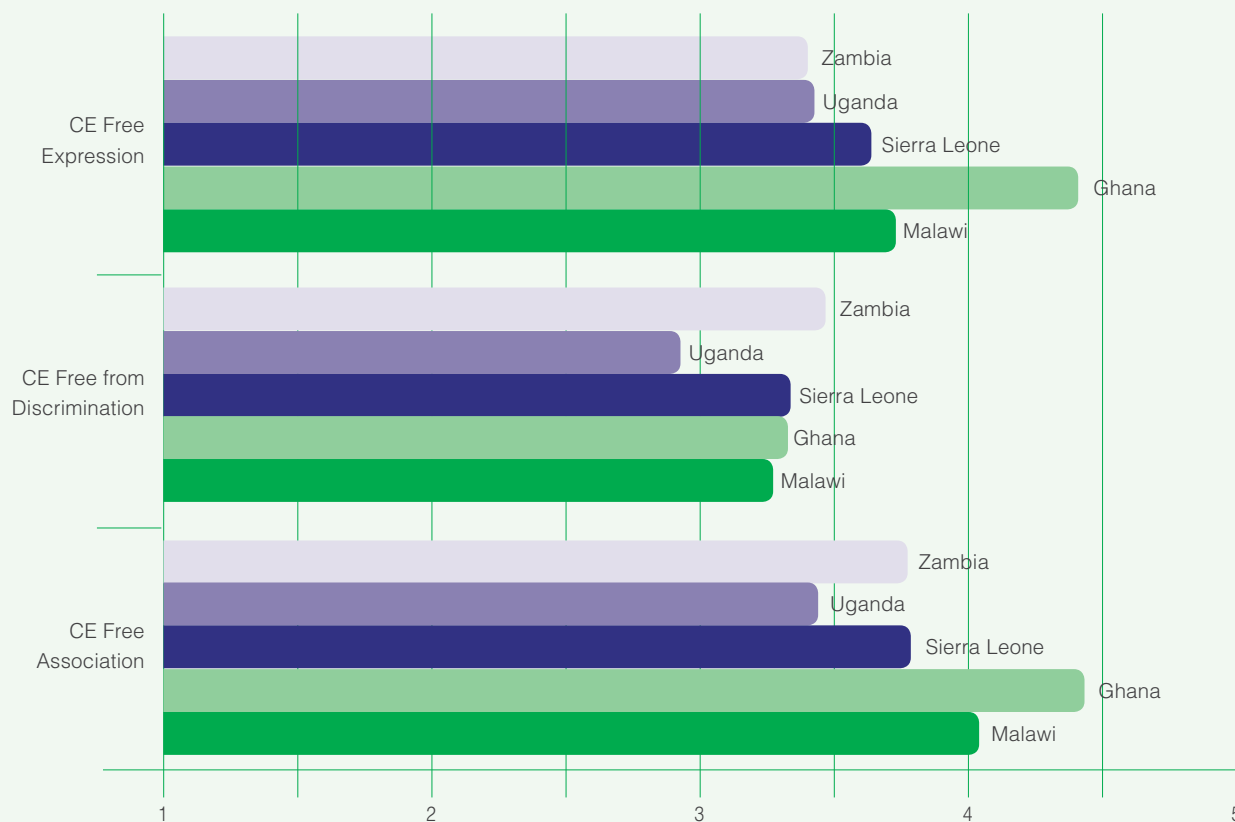
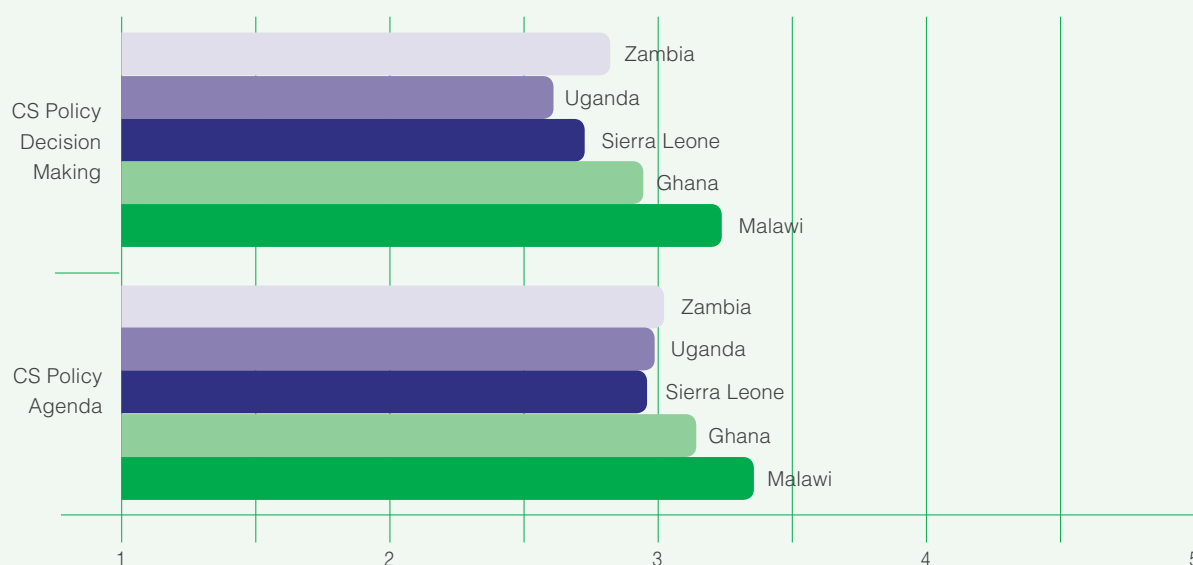
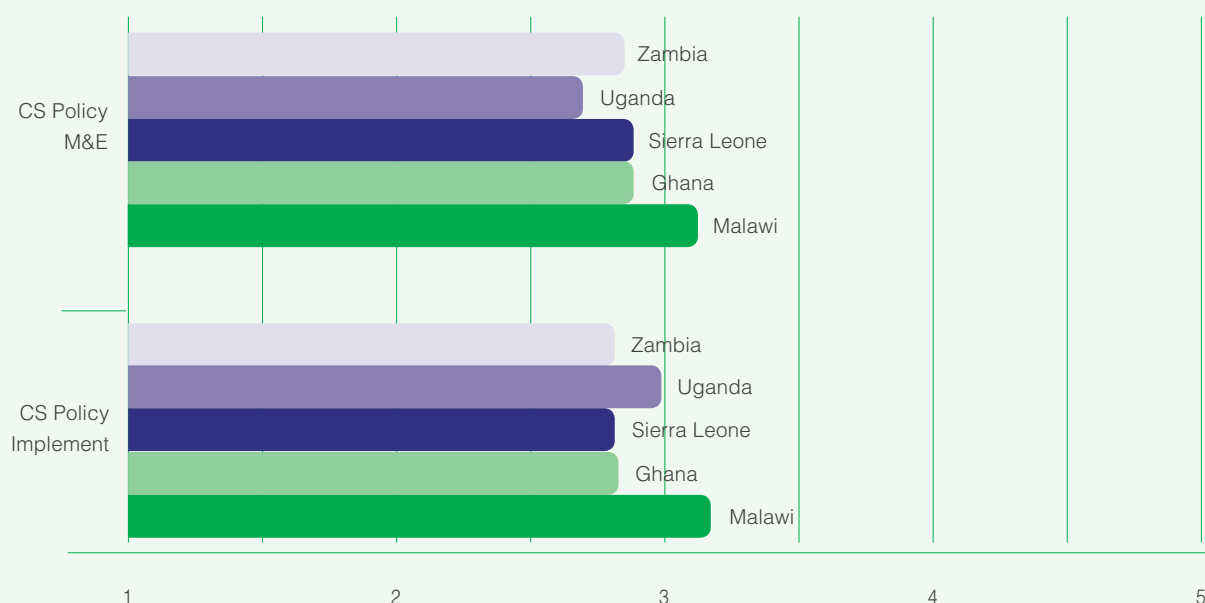
Figure 11: Civic-engagement indicators

Figure 12: Civic engagement: policy process indicators A


Figure 13: Civic engagement: policy process indicators B



a) Representation, policy and accountability

A representative is someone who has been authorised, at least temporarily, to act with relative independence from the one who has delegated the authority to act on their behalf. Elected representatives are theoretically considered as 'acting in the best interest of' the citizens (Przeworski et al., 1999). According to the WGA methodology stipulated above, they act to aggregate the interest of citizens and use it to influence policies through their legislative, oversight and representation roles. Elected representatives, therefore, constitute a critical mechanism of cultivating relationships between citizens and the state, and for providing the basis for voice and accountability. The promotion of this form of relationship has taken centre stage in the context of the increase in multiparty democracies in Africa over the past decade. A multi-party democratic system is seen as an effective way of providing citizens with more chances to elect representatives of their choice (often every five years) into public positions so that the representative can deliver on the citizen's interests.

The research findings as shown in Figures 12 and 13, suggest that political-party competition in Africa is largely peaceful, and also that the legislature represent the people to a large extent, especially in Uganda and Ghana, but most of the scores are still less than average. In terms of performance in everyday governance relationships with citizens, the survey shows that the legislature is inefficient, not transparent and not accountable to the people. The picture is the same at both the national (mainly MPs) and at the local level (mainly local councillors). Figure 14 shows the picture at the local-government level, in the context of decentralisation.

b) Government transparency

Another key finding of relevance to the decentralisation and accountability discussion is the extent to which governments make essential information available to their citizens, CSOs and the media. The figures in this section show that civil engagement in policy processes tends to depend on the extent of government-information transparency. In general terms, except for Malawi, all countries scored less than

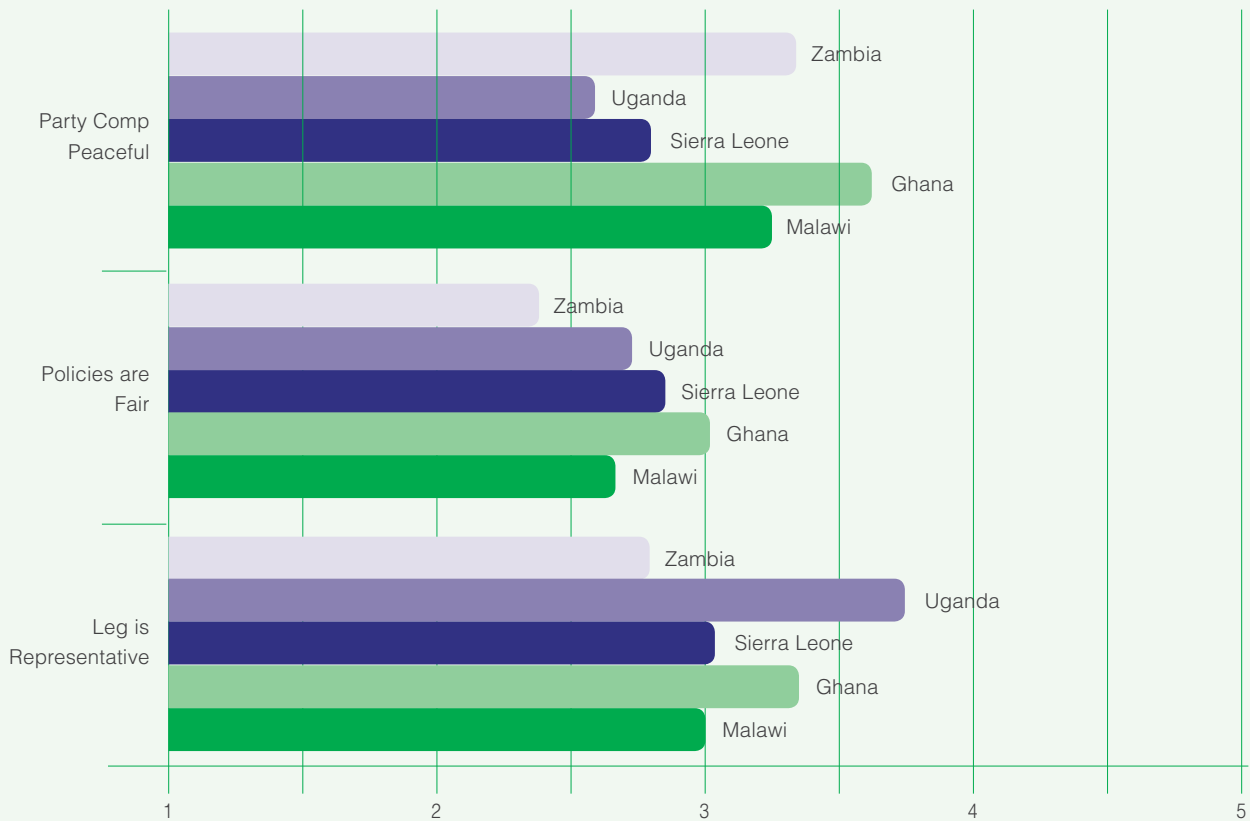
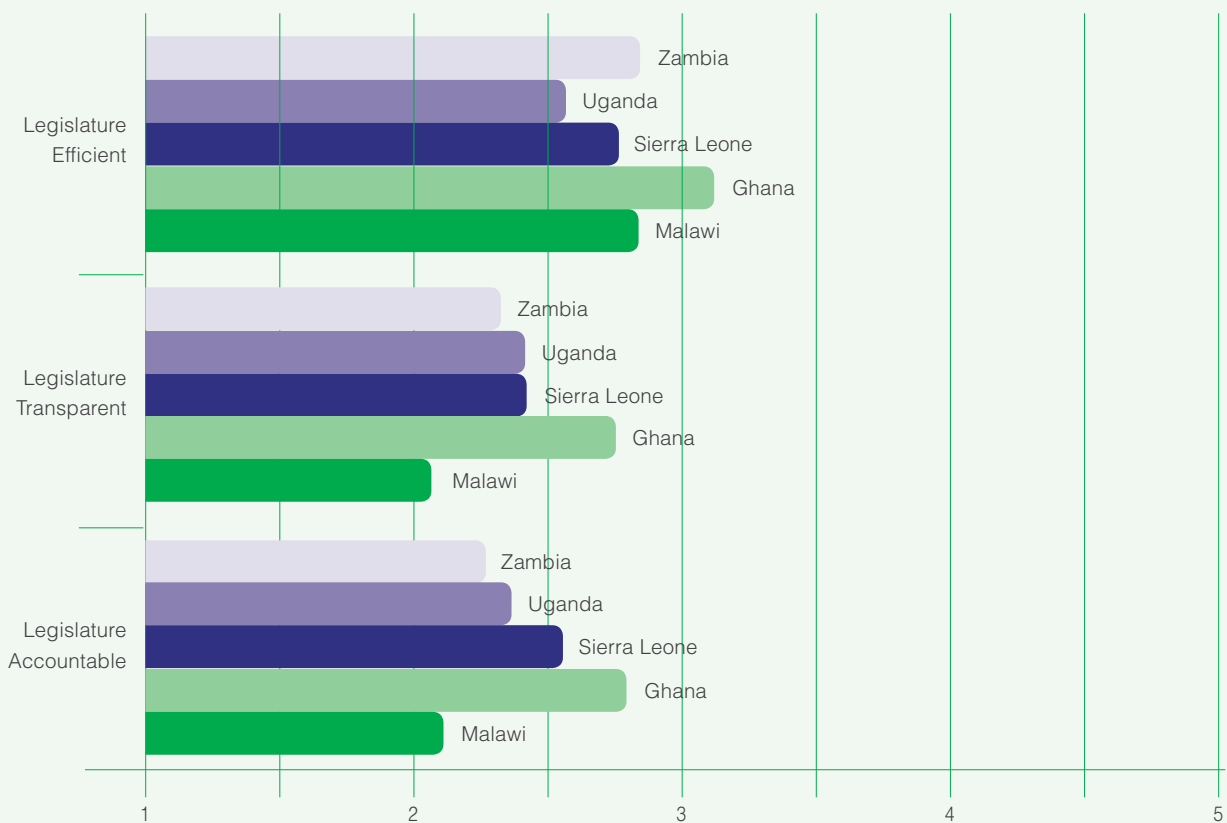
Figure 14: Interest-aggregation indicators A

Figure 15: Interest-aggregation indicators B


Figure 16: Local-government indicators B

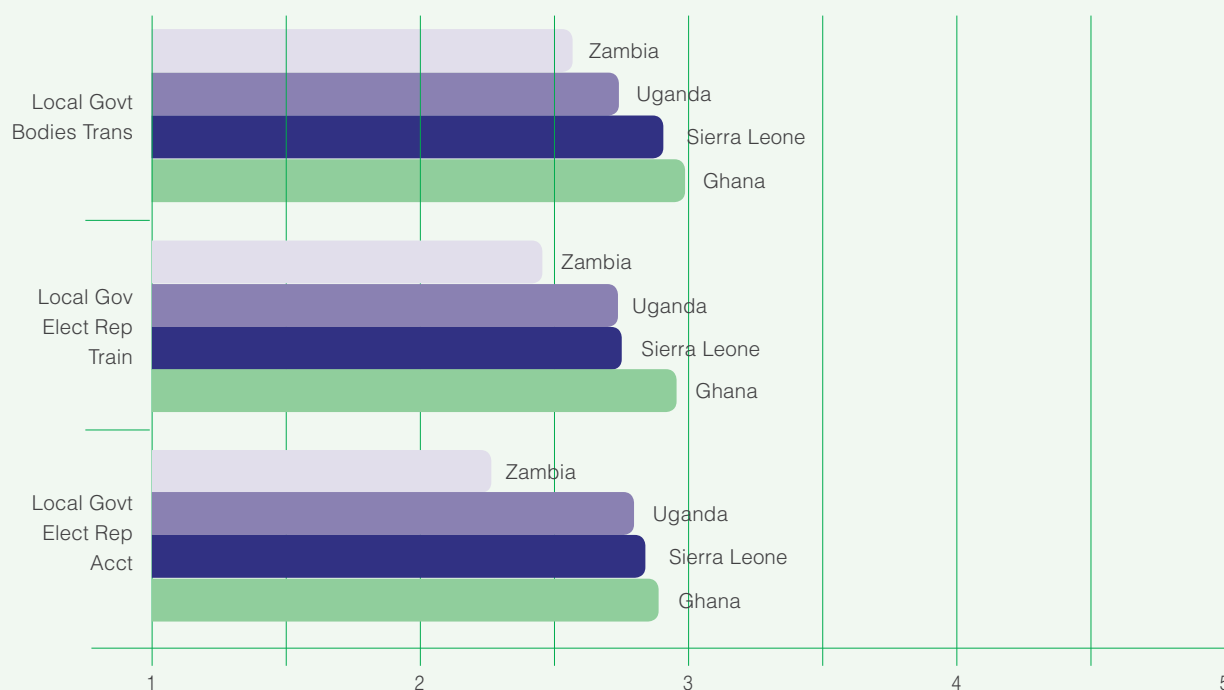
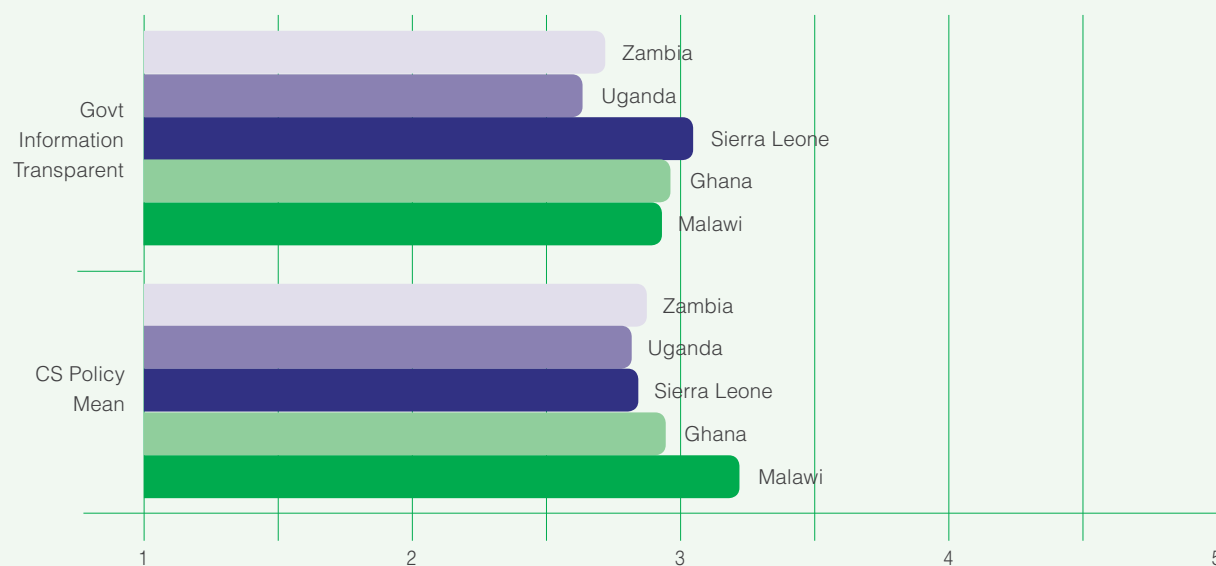


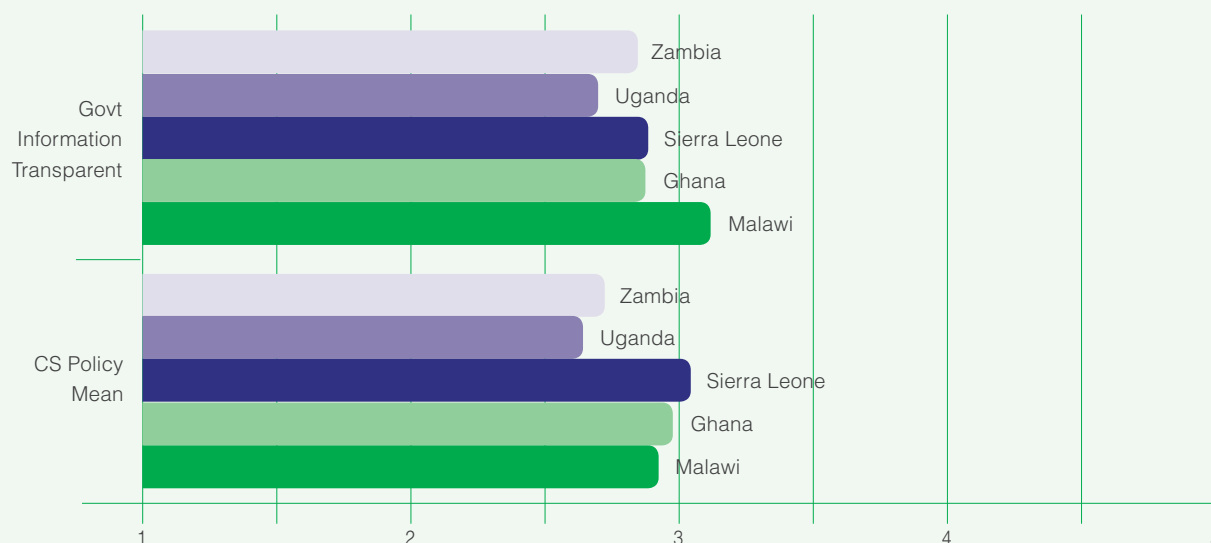
Figure 17: Transparency of government information and the mean score on the four civil-society policy process Indicators



average. In Malawi, the survey was conducted in the run-up to elections, and also after a regime that had a minority in parliament. It can be argued that being in a minority made the government more responsive to citizen demands out of its own vulnerability and not

necessarily because it had the intention of being transparent. The trend might have changed since the last elections when the government gained a huge majority in the house of parliament, with a much weakened opposition.

Figure 18: Transparency of government information versus civil society's ability to monitor and evaluate policies



The figures also show that the ability of civil society (not limited to CSOs) to monitor government policy also improves with an increase in transparency of government information. This suggests that there is more work to be done around transparency of government information in order to achieve democratic governance and accountability. It should be noted however that only certain forms of information can generate certain kinds of accountability (Fox, 2007). On this point, Jonathan Fox usefully distinguishes between 'opaque or fuzzy transparency' and 'clear transparency'. 'Opaque transparency' is the revelation of information to the public that does not show how institutions behave in practice, in the way they make decisions or act on decisions made. This kind of transparency can achieve some 'soft accountability'. In order to achieve 'hard accountability', in terms of being able to see citizens or organisations enforce answerability and sanctions, 'clear transparency' is required. This is when insight into institutional performance and official responsibility and behaviour is made available. This is seldom the case in situations of patronage politics, where power is personalised.

Lessons from the WGA

A key lesson learnt is that whereas the WGA was useful for initial analysis, the really important feedback came from the qualitative feedbacks and discussions during the multi-stakeholder meetings. Most PEA studies tend to be done by professionals and are taken straight to implementing agencies; and so practitioners miss out on these discussions. The WGA studies were resource-intensive, and the after-action review showed that it was difficult to administer the questionnaire. While the process and findings were useful, future programmes might wish to avoid using quite such a time- and resource-intensive process in favour of a 'light-touch approach'. Nonetheless, some form of pre-programme analysis to gauge contextual dynamics is vital, particularly for a large multi-country programme like Mwananchi.

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Fletcher Tembo has been Director of the Mwananchi Governance and Transparency Programme since its launch in 2008. Designing and managing the programme over the past five years has allowed him to develop a deep expertise in citizen empowerment, voice and accountability initiatives so as to generate models of how change happens for social accountability in different contexts. He will continue the pan-African learning of the Mwananchi Programme through an online learning platform to share lessons and experiences in promoting social accountability (www.mwananchi-africa.org).

As a Research Fellow then Associate at ODI, Fletcher also provides research, monitoring, evaluation and learning support to various accountability and civil society programmes in Africa, including: the Kenya Drivers of Accountability Programme; the Tilitonse Fund in Malawi; and the Zambia Governance Foundation for civil society. He also supported World Vision's project on 'Scaling Up Citizen Voice and Action'.

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Prior to joining ODI, Fletcher was Senior Economic Justice Policy Adviser for World Vision UK from 2002 to 2006, during which time he used research-based evidence to actively lobby multilateral organisations and bilateral donors around ways of promoting local ownership and accountability through civil society and parliaments within the aid effectiveness agenda.

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Other key publications:

Tembo, F. (2012) *Citizen Voice and State Accountability: towards theories of change that embrace contextual dynamics*, Working Paper 343. London: ODI.

Scanteam (2007) *Support Models for CSOs at Country Level - Synthesis Report*. Oslo: Scanteam

Tembo, F. and Wells, G. (2007) 'Multi-donor Support to Civil Society and Engaging with 'Non-traditional' Civil Society: A Light-Touch Review of DFID's Portfolio', London: ODI.

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