Connecting the Dots

the Dots

for Accountability

Civil Society Policy Monitoring and Advocacy Strategies

Report from international workshop
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Contents

I. Introduction
Jonathan Fox

In June 2015, a North-South convergence of four organizations hosted a workshop entitled "scaling accountability." In contrast to the conventional idea of "scaling" as involving the replication of local pilots, our use of the term was intended to convey the idea of going beyond bounded projects to address systemic accountability problems. To get at this issue, the conveners' agenda focused on different ways of connecting accountability initiatives so that the whole could be greater than the sum of the parts, which we called *"integrated approaches to civil society monitoring and advocacy."* This umbrella concept tries to capture both public interest advocacy across different levels of governance, as well as citizen engagement with governmental checks and balances institutions.

For two and a half days, participants from more than a dozen countries debated which approaches have the potential to achieve systemic impacts, both in terms of their own work and in the context of the broader field of transparency, participation and accountability (TPA). This preface summarizes the intent of the agenda and previews the central findings, followed by the conveners' agenda-setting concept note.

The context for this focus is the increasing recognition in the field of "transparency, participation and accountability" that we need strategic approaches to have sustainable impacts on entrenched practices and powerful institutions. In this terminology, "strategic" involves multiple actors working on multiple fronts, at multiple levels (local, national and transnational) -- in contrast to tactical, one-off interventions. Workshop participants were invited based on their leadership of campaigns that fit this description of "strategic."

Workshop goals included questioning, clarifying and unpacking the language that we use to describe accountability campaigns, to share experiences with civil society campaigns that have elements of vertical and horizontal integration, and to begin to discuss their learning and research priorities. Discussions were grounded in presentations about five such campaigns, told from the perspectives of their strategists. Participants from Ghana analyzed the Oil4Ag campaign, which brings together organized peasant farmers, national good governance think tanks and policy advocacy organizations, as well as Oxfam America, to campaign to earmark a share of national oil income for investment in smallholder agriculture. Participants also learned from the work of PEKKA in Indonesia, a broad-based national membership organization of women heads of households that advocates locally and nationally for economic empowerment, civic engagement and their right to legal recognition. In Malawi, thousands of grassroots HIV-positive women organized the Our Bodies, Our Lives campaign, to challenge stigma and win the right to appropriate medicine. In Peru, a national health rights organization, Foro Salud, partnered with CARE, grassroots indigenous women organizers and the provincial government ombudsperson to defend health rights by monitoring the performance of local clinics. In the Philippines, a watchdog group in the national capital – G-Watch – partnered with the Education Department and civic organizations all over the country to monitor the entire process of producing and distributing school textbooks, lowering costs and increasing efficiency.

Participants advanced the discussion of multi-level advocacy and engagement with checks and balances institutions, underscoring the inherently coalitional nature of multi-level work, as well as recognizing differences between civil society monitoring and advocacy. The vigorous discussion also revealed both strengths and limitations of the conveners' proposed language for describing this approach, which included the spatial metaphors of 'vertical'– to get at the idea of multi-level – and 'horizontal' – to sum up a focus on checks and balances institutions.

For some, the workshop's concept note offered a useful frame for capturing the dynamic interaction between the different moving parts involved in strategic accountability initiatives. Others considered the term "integration" to be implicitly confining, and saw the use of spatial metaphors to describe different kinds of linkages between actors (vertical and horizontal) as lacking intuitive clarity. While some terms resonated more than others, there was broad agreement that pursuing inter-connected accountability initiatives on multiple fronts, across levels, makes sense – and describes what many of the participants are actually doing in practice. This exchange produced the rebooted umbrella term that titles this report: "connect the dots."

The rapporteur's narrative that follows draws out the main themes that emerged in the conversation, weaving together both synthesis and direct quotes from participants. The report is organized around the main takeaways, which can be summed up as:

1. **Naming and framing: What do we call what we do - and who decides?**

2. **Vertical integration can be an organizational strategy, a goal for coalitions, or a tool for analysis**

3. **Engaging checks and balances institutions can be strategic, but building and sustaining partnerships is a challenge**

4. **Civil society-led accountability initiatives are inherently political, so language, strategies and external support should address this reality**

5. **While confrontational and collaborative approaches to promoting accountable governance are often seen as mutually exclusive, they can also reinforce each other**

6. **Policy wins or movement building? Balanced CSO-grassroots partnerships and strategies find ways to bridge differences and fragmentation**

7. **Policy advocacy and policy monitoring often draw on different skills, coalitions, and political considerations**

8. **Research needs within and across accountability initiatives are growing and often unmet, yet balanced researcher-grassroots-strategist partnerships are few and far between**

II. Workshop Overview and Conceptual Framework

Joy Aceron, Jonathan Fox, Brendan Halloran and Albert van Zyl

Across the globe, civil society organizations and social movements are struggling to hold governments more accountable to their citizens. Some of these efforts are limited to tool-based projects while others pursue more integrated approaches. What insights can we learn from strategic citizen-led monitoring and advocacy campaigns for rights, justice and government accountability that are seeking systemic impacts, in contrast to those that address symptoms rather than causes? How can public interest groups strengthen their capacity to determine whether governments are walking the walk, and not just talking the talk?

The evidence from both research and practical experience is beginning to demonstrate key factors for more promising citizen-led accountability strategies. The principal message is that change strategies need to take a systemic approach to state accountability, taking into account how impunity is grounded in power structures and political dynamics. Civil society efforts must address 'accountability politics' and build 'countervailing power' if they are to be successful over the long term. But what does this look like on the ground? This workshop addresses these questions by exchanging experiences with integrated campaigns through two main lenses: multi-level advocacy and checks/balances.

Integrated civil society strategies seek to achieve systemic impacts by operating at scale. Just as the systems of governance that produce social exclusion integrate local, regional, national and global power-holders, civil society accountability chains face the challenge of stretching from the local up to the regional, national and global levels of governance, with different entry points, potential allies, and relevant tactics at each scale. In addition, effective monitoring efforts require organizational coverage across geographies as well, suggesting that campaigns integrate organizations and networks rooted in diverse localities as well as capital cities. This kind of broad-based monitoring capacity is necessary to know whether campaigns are getting beyond policy wins that could turn out to be superficial, to actually transform the behavior of the public sector and turn claims into enforceable rights. Yet the kinds of capacities (and allies) involved in policy monitoring can be different from those involved in advocacy campaigns. What are the best ways to articulate policy monitoring with policy advocacy? Vertically-integrated civil society campaigns combine engagement across scales of governance and on-the-ground presence.
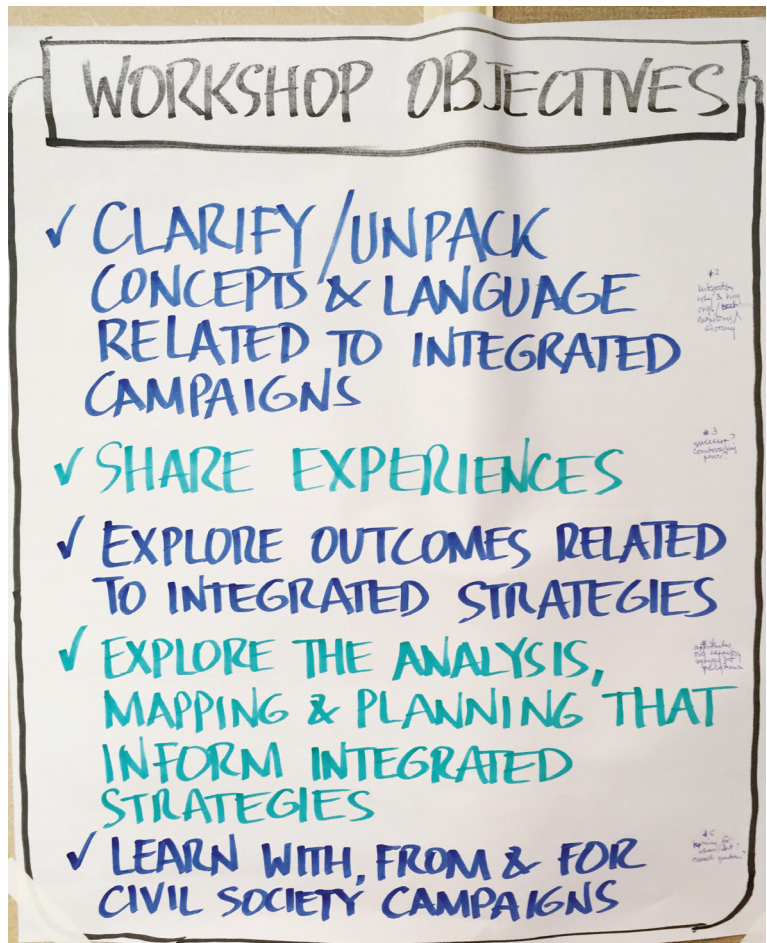
Photo 1: Workshop Objectives. Credit: Jonathan Fox

Seeking Synergy
Multi-Level Independent Policy Monitoring and Advocacy
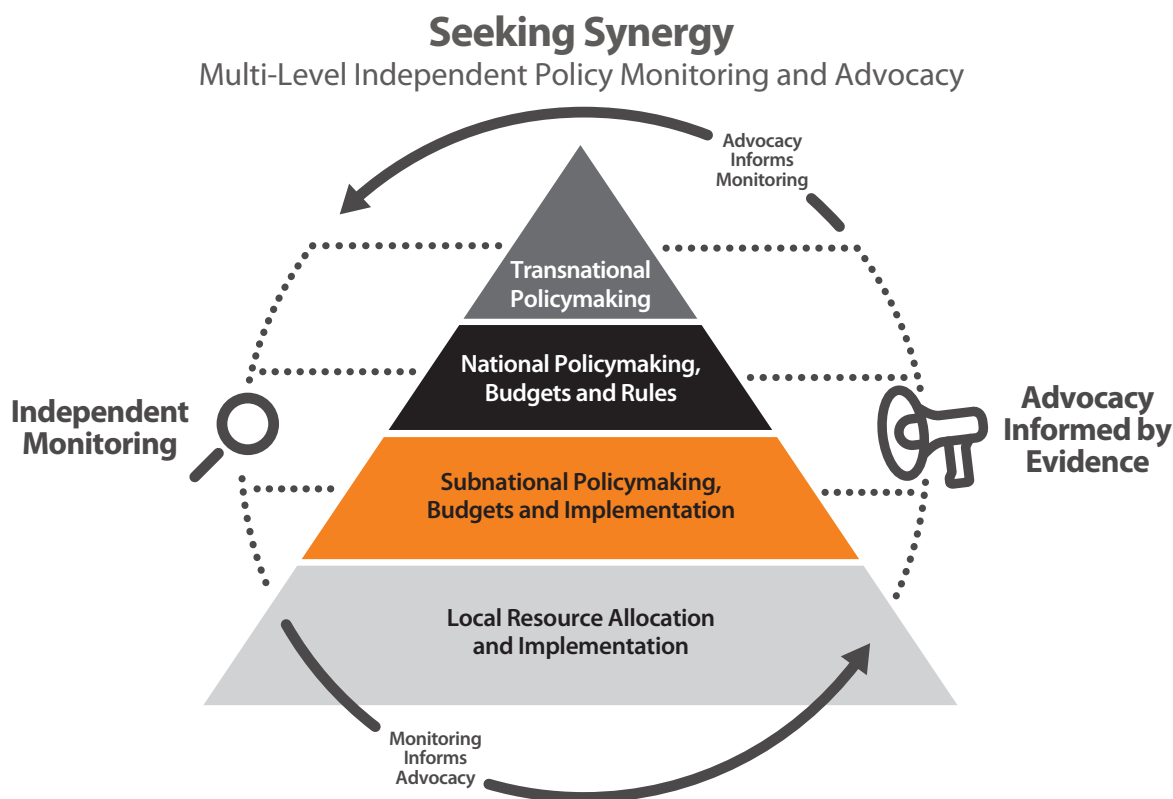
Figure 1: Seeking Synergy - Multi-level Independent Policy Monitoring and Advocacy. Credit: Jonathan Fox and Waad Tamaa

Secondly, citizen-led efforts to have deeper impacts on public institutions have been trying to activate and empower those governmental actors that are supposed to play the role of checks and balances - also known as "horizontal accountability". These include institutional actors and processes, such as legislative oversight committees, judicial systems, and public accountability agencies (e.g. human rights commissions, supreme audit institutions, ombudspersons), as well as a myriad of informal partnerships with state managers and politicians that are willing to invest their own political capital in responding to citizen voice. Nuanced mapping and analysis of the institutional framework, as well as building relationships and advocacy strategies that respond to these systems, are necessary for horizontally integrated civil society campaigns. When official oversight agencies have difficulties 'delivering accountability,' how can CSOs tell whether they are just weak – and therefore need external support - or are captured by vested interests? Insider-outsider strategies are often attempted, but what can we learn from the results?

For the purpose of stimulating discussion at this workshop, we are proposing the term "integrated approaches" to refer to strategies that are both vertically integrated across scale and that take institutions of horizontal accountability into account. While such strategies need to flexible and adaptive, this poses a challenge when it comes to convening outside resources. External actors that support accountability efforts sometimes impose a linear, simplifying logic to the projects they fund – or expect measurable impacts in the short term – rarely investing in building the national capacities and flexibility needed to pursue the more holistic and integrated strategies outlined above. Furthermore, civil society strategists that have been pursuing integrated approaches could benefit from more opportunities to meet and learn from each other in order to generate new insights they can apply to their own campaigns.

III. Five Case Study Summaries of "Connecting the Dots" Civil Society Strategies

Mobilizing Citizens for Transparency and Accountability: The Textbook Count Experience

Joy Aceron[1]

Textbook Count was a joint program of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Government Watch (G-Watch) of the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) in the Philippines that aimed to ensure that the right quantity and physical quality of textbooks reached public school students at the right time following the right processes. The civil society organization (CSO) monitoring in Textbook Count, coordinated by G-Watch from 2002 to 2007, covered the entire textbook delivery program of DepEd from procurement at the central office level to distribution at the district/ school level. This was accomplished by building a coalition with various national/ broad-based and local CSOs for the mobilization of volunteer-monitors on the ground covering up to 80% of the total delivery points (high schools and district offices) of textbooks nationwide.

Among the CSO participants in the Textbook Count initiative were NAMFREL (a clean elections watchdog group), and the Boy and Girl Scouts of the Philippines. Scouts and volunteers from local CSOs would gather at the designated delivery points (DepEd high schools and district offices)

Photo 2: In the Textbook Walk program, Girl Scouts take part in the distribution of textbooks from the district office of the Department of Education to their school in Dauin, Negros Oriental. Credit: Gladys Selosa

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[1] Joy Aceron, "Mobilizing Citizens for Transparency and Accountability: The Textbook Count Experience." Presented at Scaling Accountability: Integrated Approaches to Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy, June 18-20, 2015, Open Government Hub, Washington, DC.

to 'count' the textbooks upon delivery by winning suppliers. Textbook Count monitors would also check the physical quality of the textbooks and note their monitoring findings on a report form and the Inspection and Acceptance Report (IAR) that were collected at the national level by G-Watch to prepare the CSO Report. The participation of CSOs in Textbook Count marked the beginning of a type of approach to combating corruption in the Philippines that later on came to be referred to as social accountability.

Textbook Count prides itself on contributing to the achievement of the following results, upon comparing 1999 and 2005/2006 performance accounted for in various studies and reports: reduction of textbook unit price from Php80 to Php120 to Php30 to Php45, shortening of the procurement cycle from 24 months to an average of 12 months and improvement of DepEd's trust rating. In 2007, G-Watch informally 'turned-over' Textbook Count to DepEd. The program's level of operationalization, particularly the participation of CSOs, has been unclear since then.

Many of the reform-oriented officials in the cabinet who championed good governance either left or were quickly removed from office when, in 2005, the administration of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo started to get implicated in several big-ticket corruption scandals that caused political instability and crises in the country. One of these reform-oriented officials was the executive in the Department of Education (DepEd) who championed Textbook Count. The absence of a reform-oriented champion in DepEd in the midst of a corruption-haunted administration made it inappropriate and unfeasible to undertake a high-profile and celebratory nationwide CSO-government good governance undertaking like Textbook Count.

Meanwhile, there were growing expectations that social accountability initiatives such as Textbook Count should become self-sufficient or self-sustaining after years of donor support. This prompted the donors to conclude their support for CSO monitoring in Textbook Count being coordinated by G-Watch after 5-7 years covering four (4) rounds. One of the funders, being an intermediary donor, could no longer mobilize resources to continue supporting Textbook Count and the other was expecting that Textbook Count to had already been 'institutionalized' after years of implementation. At the same time, donors continued to support G-Watch in its succeeding engagement in DepEd, while other donors also supported similar and related initiatives in the education department, indicating the seeming pressure for donors not to be seen investing in the same initiative over a long period of time regardless of whether the initiative was proven effective and supporting 'innovative' ones instead.

These two factors drove G-Watch to 'turn-over' Textbook Count to DepEd and embark on a process of exploring more strategic and sustainable ways to ensure accountability in DepEd. Since then, G-Watch has undertaken pockets of social accountability initiatives covering 'strategic' processes and projects/programs within DepEd in an effort to sustain CSO engagement in DepEd (albeit to a limited extent). G-Watch is exploring ways to strengthen the 'supply side' of accountability, particularly through the strengthening of control and accountability mechanisms inside DepEd, in collaboration with the middle manager allies in DepEd that G-Watch has mobilized/ activated over the years, and a number of national and local partner CSOs. Thus far, this type of collaboration is yielding ways forward for social accountability that enables CSO monitoring to engage with mechanisms of accountability and controls of the government.

Citizen Monitoring to Promote Accountability in Health Services Quality and Respect of Rights

Ariel Frisancho[2]

- In Peru's Puno Region, indigenous Quechua and Aymara women community leaders engaged with ForoSalud, CARE Peru and the regional office of the Human-Rights Ombudsman to monitor women's health rights, particularly the right to high quality, culturally appropriate and respectful maternal health services. Five key components make this initiative unique within Peru: capacity building specific to the initiative; direct citizen monitoring of health facilities, documentation and production of reports on the monitors' findings, the monthly analysis of these findings with the regional Ombudsman's office, CARE Peru, the Departmental Officer for Integral Health Insurance (ODESIS) and ForoSalud members, and the creation of "dialogue spaces" with health authorities and health providers.

- The citizen monitors visited health facilities in pairs two to three times per week, and discussed issues with female patients in their native language. Patients were asked about how they were treated at health facilities, how long they waited to be attended to, whether personnel complied with working schedules, and whether they were provided with information in their own language.

- The monthly analyses of citizen monitors' reports served to generate a "dialogue agenda" for a meeting *(audiencia)* with the directors of health micro-networks, provincial hospitals, the head of the health establishments and their teams. In these meetings, the monitors communicated concerns and issues that needed to be addressed locally. From 2009 to 2014, CARE and ForoSalud regularly met with staff and monitors, and visited facilities, to chart progress against the commitments made in the *audiencias*.

- The initiative employed a *"sandwich strategy"* approach toward health policy building in social monitoring: civil society and grass-roots organizations engaging with regional Ombudsman offices, combining efforts with pro-citizen participation Ministry of Health officers and working to address resistance from officers and professional unions who consider citizen monitoring unnecessary and invasive to traditional and frequently permissive management of health care facilities. The effort combined advocacy and technical assistance with implementation. In January 2011 the National Policy Guidelines for the Promotion of Citizen Health Monitoring were promulgated, and article 9 of the Regulations of the Law for Universal Health Insurance (Law 29344) highlights that the Ministry of Health is responsible for establishing spaces and mechanisms for citizen monitoring in the framework of Universal Health Insurance.

Summary of main findings

- The initiative enhanced transparency and accountability with the installation of the first systematic spaces for dialogue between health care providers and rural women. Women leaders are thus empowered to communicate what they expect from health care services, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing health care.

- It helped to identify practices that prevent rural women from seeking care (i.e., health services that are closed at times of peak demand, long waiting times, poor care, ignorance of standards that promote culturally appropriate vertical delivery and improper charges for services and medicines that should be free)

- The initiative contributed to the empowerment of women and addressed unjust power relations between health providers and rural women. It also created better understanding of the rights of health care services' users.

Photo 3: A Quechua leader addresses the Minister of Health at the II National Conference on Health. Credit: ForoSalud

Qualitative & quantitative studies' findings on impact

- Diverse studies show a variety of positive changes in the health care services where citizen health monitoring was implemented, such as improved progress in health care indicators. Positive differences were observed in a) the opportunity of the control of the pregnant mother (early control), b) the coverage of pre-natal control, c) care during institutional delivery, and d) access to laboratory tests provided by the Integral Health Insurance (SIS). Quantitative data showed increased access to culturally appropriate birth delivery - vertical birth delivery - from 194 in 2008 to 437 in 2009 in Azangaro Province.

- Some providers do not recognize issues of discrimination and mistreatment and instead focus on issues related to organization and service management – i.e., lack of drugs -, arguing that it is outside of their responsibilities. Some attempt to justify problems such as user mistreatment by referring to their own poor working conditions – low salaries, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, and under-staffing.

- Discriminatory and abusive behavior has diminished, as have incidents of illegal charges and culturally insensitive care. This may have translated into greater usage of local health facilities.

- In health centers where social monitoring was introduced, awareness of complaint mechanisms was four times higher, and the percentage of users with complaints was twice as high. This has increased patients' expectations of quality of services. Although service quality has increased, it has not done so at the same rate as patients' expectations.

Multi-sectoral integration of the monitoring and advocacy process

- Consistent and systematic analysis of monitors' local level findings served to connect strategic allies among checks and balances institutions and CSOs at the subnational level, such as regional Ombudsman, and national levels, such as CARE Peru and ForoSalud.

- Sharing concerns at the district level yielded concrete gains, especially regarding women's entitlements under the Integral Health Insurance. This led to some alliances with local health providers, and requests for additional health providers at rural posts, which could impact women's reproductive health and prevention of maternal mortality.

- The monitoring and formal reporting process shed light on deep-rooted structural challenges that shape the public health system, which are challenging to resolve at the local level. This reflects the political economic realities of governance of macro issues within a micro-level space. Those challenges demanded processes of "vertical integration".

- ForoSalud and CARE Peru were key allies in the process of integration of local citizen monitoring in Puno, and regional (sub-national) and national level advocacy. Citizen monitoring provides evidence from the field, which can inform national social programs as well as the creation and implementation of health sector reform policies so that that these processes respond effectively to evidenced people's needs and expectations.

The Our Bodies, Our Lives Campaign for Better ARVs in Malawi: Enacting Social Accountability through Women's Activism and Organizing

Renata Aguilera-Titus, based on a report by Shereen Essof and Alia Khan[3]

Over the past decade, the Our Bodies, Our Lives Campaign for Better ARVs in Malawi has grown into a movement built upon relationships at the community level led by HIV+ women, to a national policy advocacy campaign aimed at advancing gender equality and advocating for the accelerated roll-out of safer antiretroviral (ARV) drug treatment. The importance of replacing the cheaper, more toxic regimens provided in low-resource areas with newer regimens recommended by WHO was identified and underscored at the individual and community levels where the side effects of out of date treatment was most sharply felt, and built upon to mobilize advocacy by and for women themselves. The campaign has been carried out through a partnership between women living with HIV/AIDS (WLHIV), Just Associates Southern Africa (JASS SNA), the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living With HIV/AIDS (MANERELA+). JASS SNA began engaging with women in Malawi in 2005, laying the groundwork for this movement building approach.

Photo 4: Women from across dancing at the 2012 official launch of the Our Bodies, Our Lives Campaign at the National Women's Dialogue in Lilongwe, Malawi. Credit: Maggie Mapondera

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[3] Shereen Essof and Alia Khan, "The Our Bodies, Our Lives Campaign for Better ARVs in Malawi: Enacting Social Accountability Through Women's Activism and Organizing," Just Associates Southern Africa, presented at Scaling Accountability: Integrated Approaches to Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy, June 18-20, 2015, Open Government Hub, Washington, DC 4.

This case study details the movement building journey undertaken by JASS SNA and partners. "Women's lived realities provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the context, including the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours driving the feminisation of HIV/AIDS and positive women's marginalization within social justice movements and society at large." Building upon this and community based womens' expertise and experiences gathered during an initial needs assessment, JASS SNA cultivated relationships with WLHIV in all three regions of Malawi and at the national level by engaging with support groups and organizing movement-building workshops. JASS worked with partners based in Malawi to over time support the emergence of community based women leaders, who were integral to the organizing and mobilising effort and who continued to bring a context-specific voice to the national and international campaign partners. Additionally, JASS SNA conducted reviews of national and regional policy frameworks and met with bilateral and multilateral development aid agencies, line ministries, and implementing agencies from public and private sector. Throughout the process of understanding context and establishing the movement's base, WLHIV applied the JASS framework for mapping and analyzing power in order to identify spaces important to the process of shifting the power dynamic and correcting misinformation about the experiences of WLHIV.

JASS SNA and MANERELA+ anchored and sustain the campaign's efforts on the local level and leveraged the visibility and clout of the Campaign. The community-based outreach continued to yield stories from women about side effects brought on by AIDS medication, as well as insufficient access to information and treatment services. Partners "embarked upon a participatory action research (PAR) process in order to build the evidence base for a concerted campaign to demand access to better quality ARVs but which also served the goal of building women's leadership and engaging a broader base of women that could be mobilized in the campaign." More than 60 activist leaders participated in the collaborative creation of survey tools, which were used to conduct 856 interviews of WLHIV in 13 districts in the North, Central, and South regions of Malawi.

The Our Bodies, Our Lives campaign was launched in September 2012. The evidence gathered during the PAR processes was shared at the national level with a mobilized constituency of WLHIV who participated in the National Dialogue on ART (antiretroviral therapy). A press briefing with 20 journalists from national and community-based media houses ensured wide coverage of the event and the dialogue gave campaign activists the opportunity to engage the Director of HIV and AIDS at the Malawi Ministry of Health. Women shared experiences, and formulated specific demands regarding care and treatment of WLHIV, and the availability of safer ARVs. Through a participatory process, 160 women activists drafted a communiqué listing their demands to the Minister of Health. The demands were delivered to Parliament, the Minister of Health and then President Joyce Banda.

The public pressure generated by this national dialogue and the women's collective voice helped create the needed pressure that lead to the 2013 announcement that the Government of Malawi would accelerate the roll-out, and eliminate the phased approach to making available the WHO-recommended ARVs. As part of the Our Bodies, Our Lives scale-up process, activists are monitoring the rollout of the Tenofovir-based ARV regimens and supporting WLHIV who face barriers to access in 24 of Malawi's 28 districts. In villages where WLHIV are organizing other women, there is 100% conversion to second line, and women who have started the new regimen are seeing improvements in treatment-related side effects. Significant challenges and factors remain, making full geographic coverage of the campaign difficult, and threatening the overall wellbeing of WLHIV. However, the Our Bodies, Our Lives activists and partners have seen significant shifts as a result of their work. The campaign continues to advocate for access and adherence to quality ARVs, which involves access to allied health care services, treatment literacy at the local and national levels and sustainable roll out and procurement at the national and international levels.

PEKKA: Integrated Approaches to Movement-Building and Social Accountability - From Women's Individual and Collective Power to Political Change

Nani Zulminarni and Valerie Miller[4]

PEKKA, an Indonesian women's savings and loan cooperative movement established in 2002, has grown from door-to-door organizing efforts in a few communities to a current network of 26,000 women in some 1,451 co-op groups in 806 villages throughout 20 of the country's 33 provinces. Facing the stigma of being widowed, divorced, or abandoned, and being among the poorest of the poor, these women have come together to challenge poverty and discrimination, change their lives and improve their family's and community's well-being. PEKKA's strategies address multiple, interconnected goals, combining the enhancement and expansion of women's voice, skills, knowledge, and organization, with the promotion of government policies, programs and structures favorable to women and families. The movement's advocacy efforts, however, are not formulated as discrete policy or accountability campaigns but rather as integrated initiatives, reflecting PEKKA's power analysis and emerging from the dynamics of organizing around an urgent and widely felt need of marginalized women – economic survival.

PEKKA has created a powerful member-led social movement that has produced over 500 women paralegals and contributed to shaping government policy and programs from local to national levels on multiple issues. Grounded in a power analysis developed with its international partners and allies -- Just Associates and Institute of Development Studies -- PEKKA assumes that problems of discrimination and inequality have policy dimensions, but are perpetuated and reinforced by norms, values, ideologies, social institutions, and powerful economic interests. Key strategies need to engage with the visible power of governments through traditional advocacy, lobbying, and policy research that targets policymakers and officials. But to sustain change long term, strategies also must address the invisible power of norms and ideologies as well as shadow forms of power that often operate behind the scenes trying to control the political agenda and undercut women's voice and leadership.

The movement's initial advocacy focus was on improving women head of household's economic stability and public status as part of a larger comprehensive change approach aimed at ensuring their dignity and equality. This empowerment process began with the formation of small community savings groups – safe, creative, collaborative, democratic and inspiring spaces where women learned basic leadership skills, deepened community bonds and began seeing themselves as protagonists and citizens.

PEKKA's effectiveness in organizing and advocacy draws on factors that include: a) its ability to turn members' widely-felt basic needs into into advocacy issues, b) its capacity to nurture productive, democratic and inspirational savings and loan groups at the community level, melding them into a national movement with clout, c) its comprehensive theory of change and power, d) its resulting strategies that draw on feminist popular education and organizing approaches, e) its close relations with national, regional and international allies, including its capacity to identify and cultivate key government allies, f) its leadership team's ability to negotiate and reframe donor and ally research projects into empowering, participatory and constituency-building processes that also produce solid evidence for advocacy, and g) its education and cultivation of international donors who have understood PEKKA's long-term view of social change and organizing and who have provided long term grants.

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[4] Nani Zulminarni and Valerie Miller, "From Women's Individual and Collective Power to Political Change. PEKKA: Integrated Approaches to Movement-Building and Social Accountability," JASS Working Paper – Discussion Draft. Presented at Scaling Accountability: Integrated Approaches to Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy, June 18-20, 2015, Open Government Hub, Washington, DC.

PEKKA engaged in the reframing of traditional research projects, turning very top-down, "extractive" studies, into participatory processes, benefitting both constituency-building as well as evidence-gathering for policy reform. This approach strengthened the skills and critical thinking of its grassroots members, who were trained as interviewers and analysts, while the data generated evidence to support a campaign for the official, legal recognition of widowed, divorced and single women as family heads. Likewise, the preparation and participation of women community paralegals bolstered PEKKA members' legal skills and awareness, while increasing community access to the courts. Similarly, PEKKA's collaboration with ALIMAT, a Muslim scholars' organization, has helped create supportive religious arguments to counter fundamentalist positions that denigrate and subjugate women.

As PEKKA's effectiveness has grown in the economic and political realms, more women have sought out their support to form savings and loans cooperatives. In response to the challenge of meeting greater demands for PEKKA's services and possibilities for engagement with government, PEKKA is mobilizing and increasing the capacity of some of its top grassroots leaders to take on more outreach, education and advocacy roles. The organization works to attract and train women leaders across many age groups and backgrounds. Another emerging challenge is the ageing of some PEKKA members and the need to develop and advocate for programs that address their changing lives. Finally, economic and religious fundamentalisms threaten and weaken women's empowerment and livelihoods. Even in rural areas, globalization undercuts the products that members produce. PEKKA, as a result, is developing educational efforts to encourage people to buy locally and support their rural economy. Additionally, PEKKA's alliance with ALIMAT and its ongoing education and advocacy efforts have targeted forces such as fundamentalist beliefs and leaders across religions, which continue to subjugate women and discourage them from participating in the political sphere.

Photo 5: Radio broadcast at PEKKA's community radio in Aceh. Credit: Seknas PEKKA, and Serikat PEKKA Indonesia.

Oil4Agric Campaign: Finance Agriculture with Oil Revenue-Reflections on a Call by Civil Society in Ghana on their Government[1]

Renata Aguilera-Titus, based on a report by Benjamin Boakye

Ghana's Oil4Agric campaign was led by a multi-sectoral coalition in order to advocate for increasing the amount of oil revenue allocated to support smallholder agriculture in the 2014-2016 budget. The Petroleum Revenue Management Act (Act 815) grants the Minister of Finance discretionary power in allocation of oil revenue to priority sectors, therefore the Ghanaian Minister of Finance was the primary target of the initiative's advocacy efforts.

The evidence-based initiative got underway in August 2013, and was developed and implemented by a coalition of partners throughout Ghana, including the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) and the Peasant Farmers of Ghana, with support from Oxfam's GROW campaign. ACEP published a technical position paper, which provided the evidence base for the campaign's outreach, advocacy and policy engagement. The paper supported the idea that peasant farmers should receive oil revenue allocation as part of policy efforts towards poverty reduction and food security. The document indicates that public expenditure on agriculture yields high returns in productivity in Ghana, and points to the examples of nations such as Indonesia and Malaysia, where poverty levels fell faster because of petroleum revenue allocation toward agriculture and associated increases in smallholder farmers' incomes.

The campaign broadened the civil space for this issue through integrated multilevel advocacy. This encompassed a bottom-up approach of engagement with the general public (garnering support for a petition), as well as lobbying national and international institutions. Public engagement was accomplished through multimedia strategies, and through direct contact. The coalition integrated strategies to reach two major subsets: the general public, with access to information communication technologies, and smallholder farmers, who were reached individually with the support of coalition partners. This diversity of outreach strategies, including radio, television, SMS, online platforms, and paper petitions, aimed to reach urban citizens, rural communities, and the Ghanaian diaspora community. The online petition campaign took place between November 1, 2013 and January 11, 2014. Because the campaign was carried out near the end of the budget consultation process, attempts to educate the public about the campaign by using media resources had to be executed quickly, and the paper-based petitions were carried out in only seven days. This approach relied heavily on the network and relationships afforded by coalition partners such the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana, which is grounded in the social fabric of Ghanaian agricultural communities.

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[5] This case summary draws from: Oil4Agric Campaign, "Finance Agriculture with Oil Revenue-Reflections on a Call by Civil Society in Ghana on their Government," presented at Scaling Accountability: Integrated Approaches to Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy, June 18-20, 2015, Open Government Hub, Washington, DC.

[6] Members included: "Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG), SEND-Ghana, Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition, Civil Society Coalition on Lands (CICOL), and Women in Law and Development in Africa, and Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition (GTLC), Friends of the Nation (FoN), FOODSPAN, General Agriculture Worker Union (GAWU), FARM Radio, Action Aid Ghana, FONG, and the recently established Ghana Federation of Agriculture Producers (GFAP) (a unified farmers' platform with representation from all farmer associations across Ghana). Source: Oil4Agric Campaign, "Finance Agriculture with Oil Revenue-Reflections on a Call by Civil Society in Ghana on their Government,"p. 2

Photo 6: Signed Oil4Agric petition in box to parliament. Credit: Naana Agyekum (Oxfam)

Coalition members engaged checks and balances institutions, and lobbied three committees in Parliament, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and civil society leaders. ACEP held three regional forums in Koforidua, Bolgatanga and Takoradi, which served to connect relevant agencies, CSOs, and coalition partners throughout the initiative. The ACEP position paper was sent to the Minister of Finance, as well as the Budget and Real Sector directors, and partners had formal and informal engagement with the Ministry. The petition and signatures were presented to Parliament on November 15, 2013, by GROW campaign partners and peasant farmers from the Accra region. The partners' intention was to present the petition directly to the Minister of Finance, in addition to Parliament. However, the Minister delegated the meeting to his director of administration, who refused to accept the petition in the presence of the media. The partners held a press conference following the presentation to parliamentary leaders, in order to create further awareness of the initiative.

Despite significant time constraints, campaign partners consider the initiative successful, as agriculture remained a priority sector in the 2014 budget. Allocation of oil revenue for agriculture jumped from GHC13.6 million in 2013 to GHC136.4 million in 2014. This increase amounted to an increase from 2.5% in 2013 to 15.2% in the 2014 budget. The share of actual spending on agriculture increased even more, to 31% of the oil fund. Further monitoring is needed to determine the actual impacts of this increased fudning for agriculture, and advocacy is needed in order to secure agriculture as a permanent priority sector in future budget cycles, which will require revision of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act.

IV. Rapporteur's Report
Anna Levy

1. Naming and framing: What do we call what we do - and who decides?

In the opening workshop sessions, participants emphasized how language shapes power dynamics in transparency, accountability, and citizen-led accountability initiatives. Around the world, many public interest organizations pursue their change goals by calling for accountability and the right-to-know, without necessarily using the discourse now associated with the "transparency and accountability" field at the international level. The workshop organizers' sought more inclusive language, in order both to describe existing grassroots and civil society strategies and to point towards promising new opportunities for change. The umbrella terms offered by the conveners to frame the workshop agenda – "integrated accountability strategies", "vertical integration", "horizontal integration" – provoked robust discussion and continued debate throughout the three days.

Many in the group agreed that language is a clear reflection of ideology or values, while others focused on deploying discourse tactically and in response to a particular audience being addressed. Nikhil Dey, a founder of India's MKSS [Association for the Empowerment of Workers and Peasants] discussed a range of terms commonly heard or used by those in the group, "funding, network, participatory research, social movement, political momentum, engagement…" to highlight that, "When one of us in this room uses it, probably many others … use these terms differently." Before finding ways to collaborate or try to build on one another's work, he asked, "How do we get to a point of even understanding shared language about what we're all doing day-to-day?" Walter Flores, from the Center for the Study of Equity and Governance in Health Systems, recounted his experience in Guatemala to convey a broader concern, "Accountability as a goal is still short. We use the word justice with indigenous communities; we don't talk about accountability. Accountability is a means to leading to a more fair society. The discourse of accountability is very bureaucratic and it's hard to get the grassroots behind it."

> **"Researchers use terms to describe the world; activists use terms to change the world"**
> Joy Aceron

The utility of common language also surfaced some of its consequences. Some noted that umbrella terms, or broadly shared terminology, can have ramifications that undermine the work and goals of grassroots organizations and social movements. Nikhil explained that many of the organizations participating in the workshop (and their leaders) have been doing this work far longer than the terms social accountability, transparency, and accountability have existed on national, let alone international agendas. He cautioned, "[International actors] seem to be searching for a technocratic language that will be uniform across the world. There is something missing in the globalization of these issues." Sometimes, after decades, referring to his own work with the right to information movement in India, these groups suddenly find their efforts framed, and sometimes constrained, by efforts to standardize language across contexts, whether or not it's a good fit.

The real risk of aiming for universal language, added Marta Schaaf, of Columbia University's Averting Maternal Death and Disability program, is that it becomes an unrealistic standard of sorts, reflecting "…incentives, blinders, and ideology." It can lend to "focusing on so-called 'big wins' to the detriment of what affects people in their own lives", she added, noting that it is difficult to "recognize the gaps between international standards and the reality in grassroots initiatives." These disconnects lead to situations where complex historical relationships, changing circumstances, and deeply entrenched root causes are overlooked or considered secondary. Open government is a relevant example, brought out by Jonathan Fox, one of the workshop organizers, "In practice, open government and social accountability risk becoming treated as ends in and of themselves. The ultimate focus should be on power shifts," pointing to the need for terms that recognize the roles of multi-faceted public interest campaigns with various moving parts.

Returning to one of the concepts underpinning the workshop, "vertical integration", participants differed in the extent to which it was understood to be something a single organization does or a process that would involve multiple actors. Thamy Pogrebinschi, of the Berlin Social Sciences Center, underscored some of the initial uncertainty around the term 'integrated', asking, "Who is being integrated? Is it citizens? What are integrated strategies and tools? How is vertical integration related to vertical *accountability* (e.g., elections)? How do we institutionalize vertical integration? If we're concerned about sustainability, these alliances need to be more stable than simply a loose confederation of organizations." Jonathan suggested that vertical integration is a "coalitional process," and is not synonymous with mass mobilization; it can involve a small number of people in some roles. Aaron Azelton, of the National Democratic Institute, agreed, pointing out that some groups exist purely to play a vertically integrated or connecting role

(e.g., think tanks that produce data intended for other organizations to use), but suggested that "coalition" is too strong of a word – since for him the term "coalition" implies very specific, agreed-upon goals and terms of engagement.

While language and terminology, in definition and use, remained the subject of debate and exploration over the three-day workshop, there was a simultaneous interest and desire to better understand how shared language could work in service of civic organizations and grassroots movements. One of the core motivations for organizing this workshop, Brendan Halloran, from the Transparency and Accountability Initiative, explained, was because a more basic question remained: Is shared language possible, and if so, is it useful? Albert van Zyl at the International Budget Partnership, another workshop organizer added, "There's a real opportunity here for us to make some language that allows us to have these conversations."
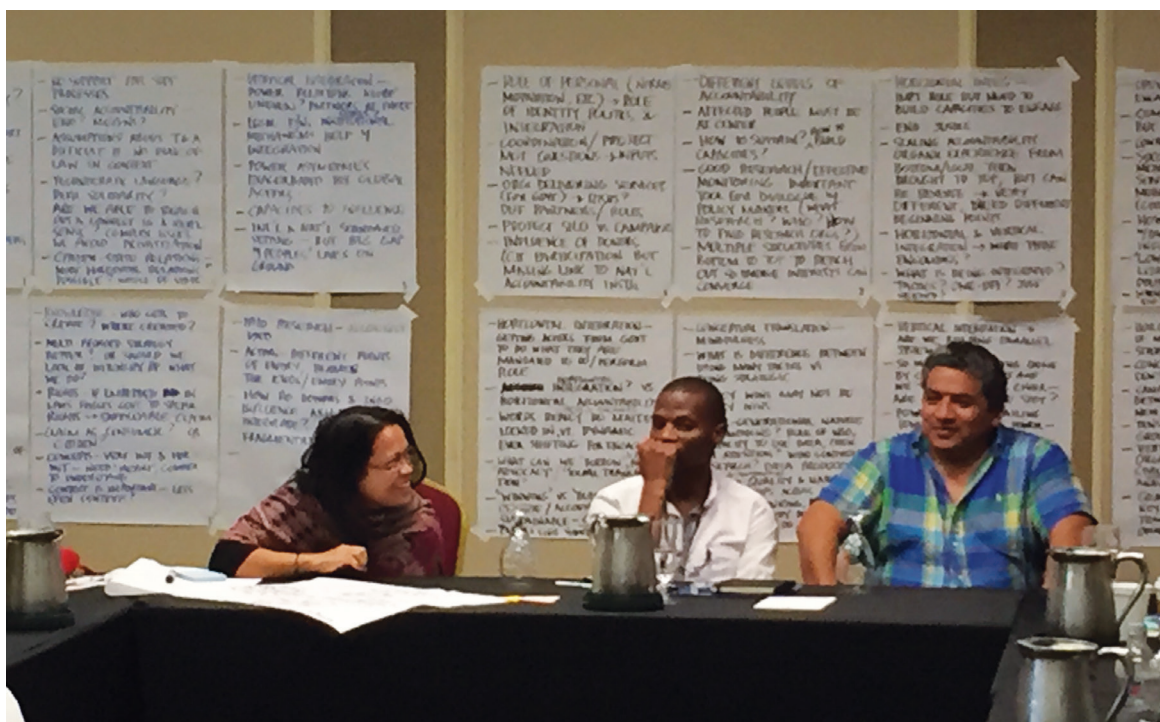

Photo 7: Workshop participants Joy Aceron, Axolile Notywala, and Walter Flores. Credit: Jonathan Fox

2. Vertical integration can be an organizational strategy, a goal for coalitions, or a tool for analysis

Vertical integration was a phrase introduced by Jonathan prior to the workshop, drawing on his past involvement with Mexican public interest campaigns that tried to bridge gaps between grassroots organizations and both national and transnational policymakers. The term refers to civil society initiatives that coordinate policy monitoring and/or advocacy at different levels, from the local to the subnational, national and transnational. More reading on vertical integration as a civil society tool for policy monitoring can be found here and here. The workshop deliberations clarified the term's strengths and limitations, unpacked the coalitional nature of this approach, as well as drew out the distinction between monitoring and advocacy at multiple levels.

Joy Aceron, a co-organizer of the workshop from G-Watch, at Ateneo University's School of Government in the Philippines, found the concept of vertical integration useful for analyzing how change happens, "What's critical about using a vertical integration framework is that you go beyond the silver bullet explanation, beyond the hasty generalization as to why change happens." Participants explored the term further, probing its ambiguities: Is vertical integration a tool for analysis, an advocacy campaign strategy, or something else? Vertical integration suggests the need for partnerships at different *levels* of advocacy. Another ambiguity involves whether the integration process refers to connecting different levels of policy monitoring and advocacy – from the local to the provincial to the national – or does it refer to different *stages* in a policy process – from agenda-setting to policy design, legislation and implementation? The Textbook Count campaign in the Philippines involved both (see case study).

To varying degrees, each of the five advocacy campaign cases presented at the workshop involved some kind of vertical integration of policy monitoring and/or advocacy – some connected the local to both the national and the transnational (as in Ghana, see case study), while others emphasized linkages between the local to the provincial level (as in Peru – see case study). Omar Ortez of Oxfam America pointed out that, "change takes a long time, you have to ride different waves at different moments." For example, in the Ghana case study, the 'first wave' was passing a law on oil revenue allocation,

the 'second wave' was lobbying around how to best allocate the money to different sectors and a 'third wave' to monitor reformed policy implementation is now required. Each of these waves requires different actors with different expertise in identifying problems. Though in this campaign, the Africa Centre for Energy Policy did play multiple roles, with different expertise, at different stages.

Building on this point, Ariel Frisancho of Foro Salud – who presented the Peru case – noted that "Successfully using vertical integration requires us to identify and understand the possible spaces for action and the incentives of various actors." Omar agreed, saying that power analysis is needed to know whether vertical integration strategies make sense.

Participants suggested that it could often be difficult to know which "level" needs to be addressed first. For example, is it best to deal with local level corruption or with the national procurement process? Marta brought up the issue of Roma health rights, which is often addressed via the European Union (i.e., the international level), and does not adequately address impunity and lack of accountability at national and subnational levels of government.

Similarly, participants spoke about the differing dynamics of top-down or bottom-up approaches. In some cases, as CSOs undertake elite level advocacy work at higher levels of government and are invited to engage in ongoing policy dialogue or advising, the pressures to compromise or dilute policy goals may grow. Omar suggested that "When you start at the top, with access to decision-makers, but without a constituency behind you, you face really different challenges. There is another way that starts at the national level that then reaches back down to the local level." Citizens and grassroots organizations may have a limited ability to work at more elite levels, because they don't necessarily know "the rules of the game" and don't have the time or money for sustained engagement (e.g. rural communities' ability to engage in sustained dialogue with government). This may involve imbalanced access to the resources needed for multi-level policy engagement. Victoria Adongo of the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana described her own experience with these dynamics, "The grassroots should be the ones to lead, the CSO should be building the capacity, giving technical information and equipping

them with information." With less formal education, she continued, CSOs "think that the grassroots won't understand them, but that's wrong." The experiences of workshop participants demonstrate that top-down and bottom-up approaches need not be mutually exclusive, though in practice they often are.

The legitimacy of representatives also needs to be carefully considered because some people may be working to advance their own political ambitions. Walter agreed, pointing out that the higher an individual moves from civil society into the state apparatus, the greater the risk for conflict of interest, and credibility/legitimacy damage. The same risk exists for organizations.

The diverse entry points and capacities needed for vertically integrated strategies highlights the need for balanced coalitions. However, as the above statements indicate, workshop participants' experiences reveal the challenges inherent in such arrangements. Indeed, the process of building a coalition can lead to struggles over differing agendas or approaches, while potentially stifling internal dissent for the sake of unity. Despite these risks, 'connecting the dots' through collaboration between NGOs and grassroots organizations is often necessary for sustained impact. There are many experiences of grassroots advocates who hit a wall where they have no influence higher up in the power structure, as well as national campaigners who get policy victories but lack a presence on the ground needed to effectively monitor them. Recognizing and naming different skills and interests brought by grassroots organizations, civil society organizations and even international organizations at the outset ofm a campaign—and at regular intervals over the life of a strategy—provided the basis for more effective cooperation and pre-emptive conflict mitigation strategies. For more on the dynamics, imbalances and possible tensions within coalitions that bring together grassroots membership organizations and NGOs, see here.

Over the course of the workshop, campaigns shared their diverse combinations of tactics. Most used action research to generate evidence needed for advocacy. Some reached out to checks and balances institutions more than others, some were more vertically integrated than others, while some were more grounded in grassroots constituencies than others. There was a range of different strengths and limitations in the approaches to vertical integration presented in the five case studies (as well as in the experiences of other workshop participants). Jonathan contrasted the range of different starting and pivot points, alliances, strengths and obstacles characterizing

Photo 8: Citizen leader reports to the Azangaro health authorities and the Puno region's Peru Ombudsman on the findings of the citizen monitoring. Credit: Ariel Frisancho

vertical integration through the experiences of Textbook Count in the Philippines and PEKKA in Indonesia, "Textbook Count had the incredible strength of its great breadth of geographical coverage of policy monitoring, covering up to 80% of distribution points, because it tapped into existing civic networks and social organizations to create a vast network for oversight. But this strength was also a limitation. The network of monitors cared about textbook delivery, but most did not go deeper into the level of *why* the education system has problems, toward greater public accountability. Going to the other extreme of the PEKKA case, its broad membership base took a low profile approach to addressing the underlying causes of social exclusion… challenging a hegemonic system of gender roles - and the state."

A consensus emerged among some in the group that vertical integration is fundamentally a "coordinated" and "multi-actor" process, but does not necessarily require a "named coalition." The appropriate strategy may depend on the way the state is organized and on the specific issue area, and may either be employed by a single agency or group or rely on different alliances at different times.

3. Engaging checks and balances institutions can be strategic, but building and sustaining partnerships is a challenge

Integrated accountability strategies also involve CSO efforts to get the government's own checks and balances institutions to do a better job of public sector oversight. Approaches to leveraging (or engaging) checks and balances institutions emerged as a distinct category of public interest advocacy, warranting separate consideration from policy dialogue, protest, or pressure aimed at other institutions. Such efforts can be very strategic, but seem to be less common.

Albert reported from a smaller group discussion on this topic that, "Not all the cases [presented in this workshop] included information or examples of engaging accountability institutions. I didn't see in all the cases how they are engaging with horizontal accountability institutions. When it was there, it was usually in isolation – it was with one specific institution. Not looking at linkages between those institutions, ombudsmen, parliament and media." This suggests potential room for approaches that try to trigger mutually reinforcing efforts by different actors in the "accountability ecosystem."

Overall, participants identified three significant constraints to partnerships with checks and balances institutions: the difficulty of sustaining the informal ties needed to enable insider/outsider coalitions, high staff turnover, and the institutional imperative of these institutions to maintain the appearance of independence. During his report back from a small group discussion, Albert noted, "One of the other huge challenges and limits is that you can understand the mandates, but 99.6% of the time it's about building human relationships with individuals at these institutions, which is time sensitive and challenging and sometimes not possible." Informal relationships constituted an opportunity, but paired with high turnover inside checks and balances institutions, the effort taken to garner these relationships may not be relevant for long. A sub-group concluded that this "is an incredibly unstable way of having to operate because you cultivate a relationship, there is an election, they get replaced and they are back to square zero. CSOs need relationships with the entire pipeline of accountability stakeholders, not just one institution."

Others noted that formal alliances are difficult to form with these institutions, as they often need to maintain either a real or perceived sense of independence from CSOs (or other supposedly "special interests"). These institutions can easily cite perceived CSO or grassroots agendas as a reason for these institutions not to advance dialogue or engagement with these same groups on accountability related issues.

Obstacles to establishing these relationships and uncertainty about what they would yield means that they are frequently underutilized in CSO or advocacy efforts, "The analysis and time needed to determine what accountability institutions can provide or entry points to building direct interaction, and what strategic opportunities there are is extremely time consuming," noted Albert. Other participants acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining these relationships, but insisted on their importance and named several strategies for effective engagement.
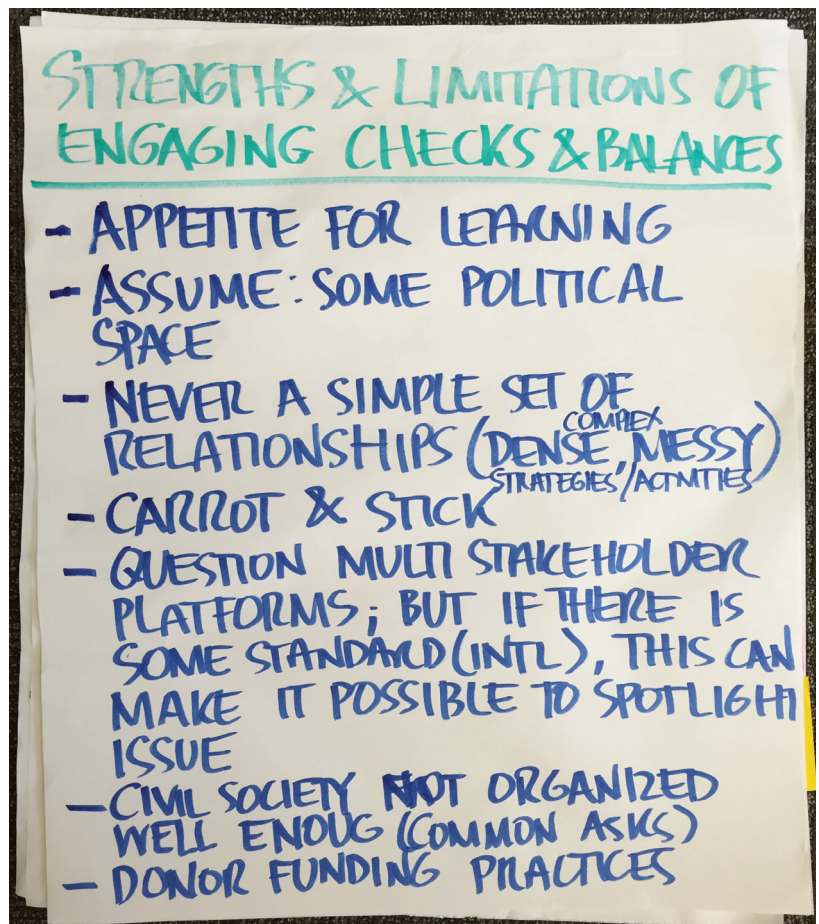
Photo 9: Workshop discussion group summary. Credit: Jonathan Fox

One strategy was to build relationships with checks and balances institutions on less contentious topics; establishing norms of interaction on mundane issues may make it easier to build on when more divisive or politically difficult issues arise. A second approach focused on leveraging the on-the-ground presence represented by grassroots groups, which are often disconnected from public oversight institutions. In recounting the small group discussion, Albert highlighted, "If working directly with accountability institutions, 'reach' at the grassroots level can be seen as an opportunity. Similarly, working at the grassroots level and "integrating" up can strengthen social accountability on single issues otherwise brushed aside or uninteresting to accountability institutions."

The third strategy underscored how analysis of legal, legislative and oversight powers can inform entry points and sustained strategies of engagement. Participants focused on starting with the mandates of these institutions to understand their potential contribution to accountability. As Albert put it, "CSOs should look at [their potential] power to sanction, and how they can use these institutions to access the data, whether they can get the information, and share the data that the campaigns are generating. It's about civil society organizations understanding what accountability institutions can be used for."

4. Civil society-led accountability initiatives are inherently political, so language, strategies and external support should address this reality

Throughout the workshop, participants frequently referred to the term "social accountability" – some for the first time - even though the workshop conveners deliberately abstained from using it. This usage showed how, just in the past half-decade or so, a donor-driven term has influenced the discourse of a community of practice that was explicitly seeking an autonomous vocabulary. Many social accountability initiatives, often presented as a set of activities seeking to link transparency to accountability via the engagement of individuals or groups of citizens, tend to emphasize a technical, tool-led approach to monitoring - frequently divorced from the broader social and political challenges associated with independent advocacy. Participants expressed concern that 'social accountability' agendas are depoliticized, and focus more on symptoms than underlying causes of accountability failures. Jeff Hall, an independent consultant and former director of Local Accountability for World Vision, further added that these conceptual discussions are important because they help us understand accountability to whom and for whom, both in strategy and practice.

In contrast to what were seen as donor-led approaches, Walter supported citizen-led accountability strategies, explaining that while you can advocate for a group without truly representing them, it has consequences for legitimacy (see more on citizen-led organizations and movements for accountability here). In South Africa, Axolile Notywala from the Social Justice Coalition, connected this discussion to the sustainability of initiatives, "In terms of participation [CSO- or citizen-led], which comes first? Which supports the other? In the communities we're working in, what happens when the funding runs out? We're trying to get citizens [to take this on], so that when our jobs all end, we know that the work is going to continue." He emphasized that for ongoing accountability, citizen-led efforts become even more important as individuals and grassroots organizations then become a permanent part of the equation on agenda-setting as well.

Thamy prompted the group to consider the merits of considering greater citizen participation as an end on its own and cautioned against overlooking (or underestimating) its centrality to political change. She highlighted that current portrayals of social accountability tend primarily to assign value to the results of these processes, instrumentalizing citizen participation "as a means and not an end." Thamy posited that the civic exercise associated with [some of] these processes rendered them useful and productive, even if particular accountability outcomes hadn't been achieved, "It struck me that this component comes as a secondary thing."

Building on Thamy's point stating that social accountability initiatives are only effective when inextricably linked to sustained civic and political engagement, Yogesh Kumar of Samarthan in India described the importance of coalition building in these terms: "Coming together is necessary; there is no choice if we are really interested in making large changes. There is no substitute for building trust and coalitions. We are talking about macro structure systemic changes that require numbers, capacities." Bringing more people in to democratic acts, added Axolile, is a success whether or not it leads to the specific goal associated with a campaign or mandate. How does this get counted? External criteria and pressure, and the funding tied to it, may undermine the very organizations it is intended to support when oversimplified or standardized metrics prioritize short-term gains or change that ignores longer-term considerations.

How do broad-based, scaled-up grassroots organizations represent their members?: Social Justice Coalition, Cape Town, South Africa

"We have branches, and work in a township of around 5-7,000 people. There are about 55 communities within the township and we are working in 12 of them. This is where we have branches. A branch can be of 10 or more people. Each branch has the responsibility of electing its own leadership and they are called the secretariat of about 5 people. The higher structure, an executive forum, is made up of branch leaders. The executive forum doesn't have a big role in terms of making core decisions, but makes sure that branches are functioning well (organized, taking minutes, having events). Sister organizations, think tanks, provide us with research, legal, and leadership program assistance. They take some of our members, and for three months, train those members in activism history, leadership, and training. They assist us as well when we have to make legal choices."

Axolile, Social Justice Coalition, South Africa

Some participants observed that the donors they are familiar with fund change in a way that leaves little space for those doing the work to address underlying roots of inequality and corruption. Richard Mugenyi of Reproductive Health Uganda shared an example, "In our work, most of our interventions and accountability are project-based...the interests of donors or funders leads to a focus on one aspect, for example, citizen engagement, but not many link to national accountability mechanisms, let's say members of parliament or inspectors, etc." Yogesh suggested a shift from funding approaches that favor project-focused models to those that favor community-focused models, "Communities have to be in the center if the movements can be sustained beyond the funding." He continued that what is needed is to, "Invest more in community-based organizations. Social capital can provide more dividends in time to come."

The question and role of donors and funders arose frequently regarding the politics of social accountability initiatives, who leads on change, and in particular, in the discussion about metrics. At present, participants expressed a sentiment that donor funding models often fragment organizations along "project", "output", and "performance" based lines, favoring specific activities seen to produce more transparent and accountable systems in technical terms. Funding models can thus fracture, or undermine the formation of, the type of movements, loose coalitions, and multi-part efforts that are needed to shift power structures.

Alia Khan, from Just Associates (JASS), provided an example from the Malawi case presented at the workshop, which explicitly drew on a power analysis to go beyond single-activity interventions or single-issue approaches: "Within this power analysis, a lot of different agendas are revealed. A lot of things that women were identifying were things like access to land, access to fertilizers. Because of their gender or health situation, they were denied things like fertilizers." This analysis centered questions of [accountability of] health policy and access to more appropriate anti-retroviral medicines in the larger context of women's mobility, civic access, livelihoods and rights. One could not be separated from the others. In contrast to project-led frames, Malawi's 'Our Bodies, Our Lives' campaign in Malawi took a *movement-building* approach (see case study).

Just as rigid adherence to project modalities or log-frame understandings of change are often at odds with the nature of dynamic civil society engagement and campaigns, so too are the means used to measure these. Too often the indicators and instruments do not reflect an understanding of the change pathways citizen-led efforts must navigate. Further, these are often tools of accountability upwards to donors, and seldom feed relevant and actionable intelligence into organizational decision-making processes. Despite a shared goal of achieving (or contributing) to impacts relevant to citizens and communities, there is often a tension between the accountability and learning functions of monitoring and evaluation (for more on this see here and here).

Ultimately, as Albert recalled, advocacy for accountability "Remains deeply political work. It's not just smiling politely, but knowing and making it clear that you can 'bite' even if you choose not to. You have to have multiple tactical approaches. Cooperation is one. Naming and shaming is another." Axolile added that risks and challenges come with political nature of engaging citizens around accountability issues, "One big challenge we've had, in terms of the political spheres we work in, is how do you move forward when there are party politics wherever you go? When you're advocating for different things, you then get assigned to party politics, and in turn receive pushback for party reasons more than platform reasons. It also speaks to the legitimacy of your organization, of the membership-based organization."

Power dynamics and power analysis repeatedly stood at the center of reflections on what is inherently political work. Participants shared (and sought) lessons on strategies or funding models that do not separate specific policy change goals from the broader challenges of political accountability.

5. While confrontational and collaborative approaches to promoting accountable governance are often seen as mutually exclusive, they can also reinforce each other

"Constructive engagement" strategies provided the frame for one sub-group discussion during the workshop. The term was immediately contested. Nikhil posed the question: "If you say constructive engagement to the exclusion of pressure politics, you get into the space of cooptation. Constructive engagement on whose terms?" He felt that constructive engagement implied a space where the terms were set by government, whereas pressure tactics allow civil society to determine the nature of their engagement. In the Philippines, Joy explained

> "If you fight with your friend, is it engagement? Yes. Protest is a form of engagement. The issue is there are different means of engagement. Is protest constructive? That's where the name/words questions comes in."
>
> Joy Aceron

that mass civic mobilization has to be phrased a certain way, commenting that "you'll never have Boy and Girl Scouts protesting" in reference to ways in which mass citizen action in the Philippines can employ other avenues (and language) aside from protest. Highlighting context as a key difference, Nikhil added that, "In India, we've mobilized Boy Scouts in protest."

Photo 10: Serikat PEKKA's parade in Brebes, Central Java, announcing the PEKKA program and activities throughout their village. Credit: Seknas PEKKA, and Serikat PEKKA Indonesia.

The experience of PEKKA, Indonesia's Women Headed Households movement, presented additional nuance in considering the role of protest and pressure politics in its work, since they work with insider-outsider coalitions. Nani Zulminarni from PEKKA, explained, "Women champions [in government] have had the same experience of oppression. We still do political pressure and some of these women really support our protests. They'll even sneak data out to us, telling us what's in the budget, etc." She also clarified that the backlash PEKKA faces is often greater from non-government groups, "Usually the pressure is not from the government officials, it's from other civil society groups", because of PEKKA's work to reduce social and legal stigmas facing different groups of women. Nani further explained that in Indonesia, the strategy taken really depends on the issue, "For the women's movement, we are very much using constructive engagement, trying to find champions. For example, to support advocacy for abortion, we can't really use political pressure. It's not one or another, it depends on circumstances."

Joy clarified that while constructive engagement may be (or be seen as) depoliticizing, as a strategy, it "…came about because that's your opening, because that's the best strategy for engaging government; and that is precisely political." She noted that moving from protest politics to pressure politics to more subtle strategies of engagement are all still strategies, suggesting that calling it cooptation is simplistic.

Pressure politics comes in at the international and regional level as well. Workshop participants highlighted the stark imbalance between the capacity for international organizations and agencies to exert pressure on national governments, while civil society and grassroots organizations have comparatively little or no capacity to influence the agendas of international organizations or agencies. Yet international organizations that pressure officials or agencies in a certain direction – such as opening up budgets to the public - may facilitate openings or alliances among CSOs and grassroots organizations in country. The sentiment Ariel shared from Peru was not uncommon, "When civil society organizations are linked with international organizations, at least in Peru" the benefits of those alliances for
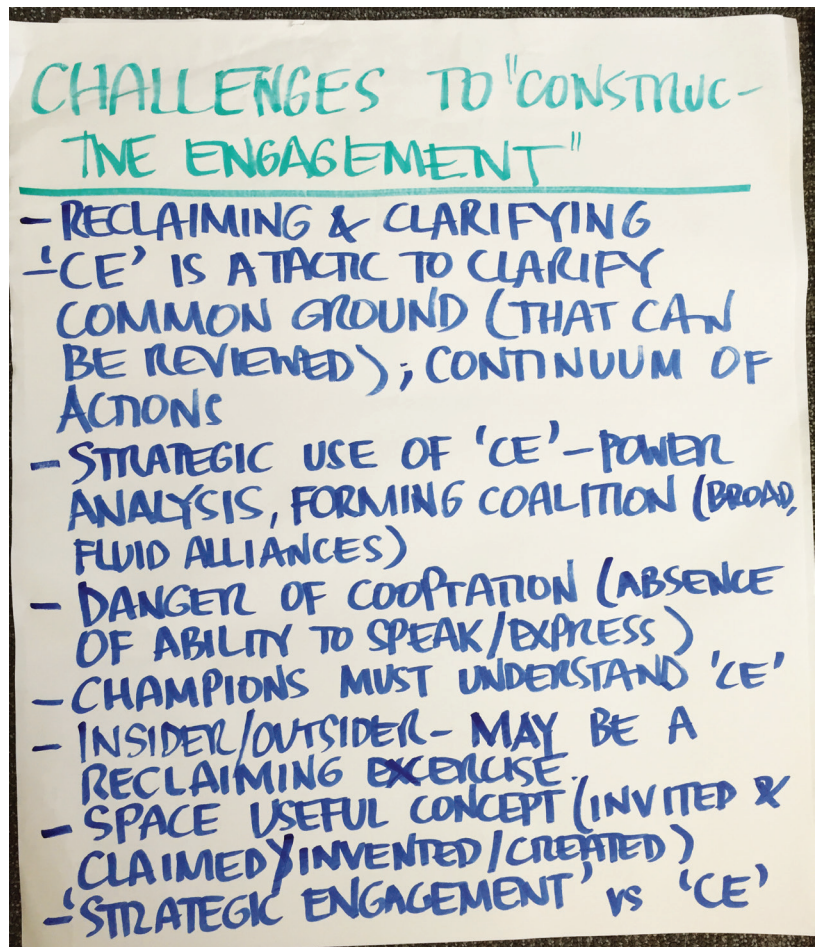
Photo 11: Workshop discussion group summary points. Credit: Jonathan Fox

domestic actors operating at a national level also involve a "search for legitimacy without being accused of being a foreign actor." International alliances and pressure, in this way, simultaneously reflected strategic advocacy opportunities and the risk of undermining or delegitimizing grassroots organizations' efforts.

At all levels, from grassroots to international, constructive engagement, pressure politics, and protest tend to frame government on one side and civil society on the other, in dichotomous terms. Albert blurred the lines a bit in clarifying, "This to me isn't about constructive/non-constructive, it's about insider/outsider." He returned to the question of strategy, and posited, "It seems that insider strategies, almost by definition, have a shelf life. Whatever you do has a cost. I'm raising this because of a lot of the work we're doing in South Africa. IBP has in many ways been cast as an insider. People are waiting. They are curious to see what comes of it. This insider-outsider thing, there is a time-horizon that runs through it."

Champions inside government, as well as some leaders' revolving door between civil society and government, provoked additional reflection about divergent experiences. A key question focused on balancing allies in government and champions within state institutions with the ability to speak freely on policies undertaken by those same institutions. One participant clarified that, "Allies in government and champions in government are not the same thing." Allies are strategic for particular advocacy issues; champions are strategic because of their influence in government. Others focused on the need to know the messengers through political transitions, "You have to identify the messengers and chart a path of opinion leaders and influencers in order to push it through and reach the high-level decision makers", an approach shared by Richard which gained vocal support from Victoria, citing that the Peasant Farmers' Association does the same thing in Ghana, using this approach as a lobbying tool. Though, this attitude and approach becomes much more difficult in nominally democratic states, when the same families or same groups essentially run the state.

Joy summarized the debate on constructive engagement, pressure and protest politics, with a practical question and challenge, "One of the challenges now is how do you keep your champion, while still being able to keep your protests? What if you have to protest his or her agency or office?"

6. Policy wins or movement building? Balanced CSO-grassroots partnerships and strategies find ways to bridge differences and fragmentation

Membership-based grassroots and professional civil society organization employ different tactics, often appeal to different constituencies, and harness a wide range of differing skills to accomplish monitoring and advocacy goals. Among the five cases presented, from Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Peru, and the Philippines, several dynamics such as funding sources, relationships with the government, and organizational structures shaped both tensions within and resilience of collaboration over the course of organizing, advocacy, and monitoring efforts

Hierarchies in access to state influence and power among organization characterized one of the main sources of tension in CSO-grassroots relations. As Lisa VeneKlasen from JASS put it, "In political organizing work, there is a fight that happens between organizers and NGOs that have access to state power. It is 'winning' versus 'building'. This is a struggle between making moves at the right time and building more support for goals." In other words, when compromise favors short-term advocacy wins championed by professionalized civil society organizations, long-term power shifts sought by membership- and grassroots-organizations seem to get sidelined. Others chimed in to elaborate on hierarchies and different kinds of power within and across civil-society and grassroots efforts. Alia elaborated, "Within civil society, there are hierarchies, and the groups that are visibly
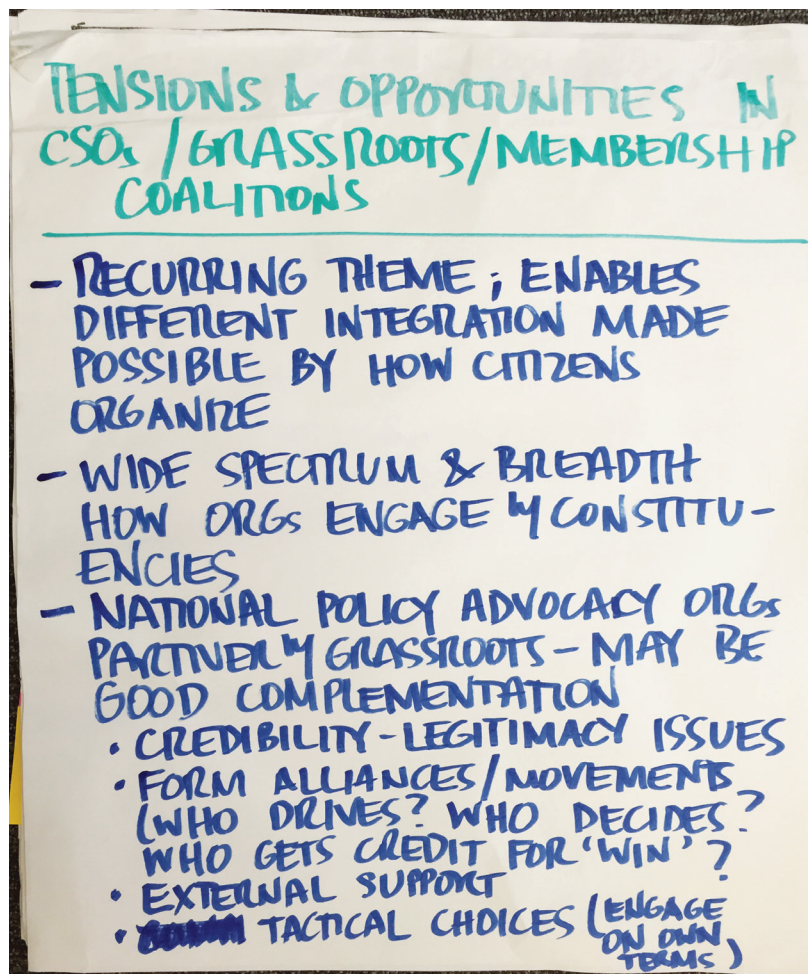
Photo 12: Workshop discussion group summary points. Credit: Jonathan Fox

closer to power have more influence than the membership-based groups. Influence meaning legitimacy and credibility within elite circles." How can the voices of those doing the day-to-day work on these issues be counted among the voices of the experts who are often several steps removed from the front-lines?

How do broad-based, scaled-up grassroots organizations represent their members?: Peasant Farmers' Association of Ghana

"The general assembly is highest point, made up of farmer leaders and representatives of all districts. Next is the Board, farmer leaders from each of the regions and including women. The next level is the national secretariat, which is managing administrative issues and programs. We also have ancillary support, the community mobilizers, all farmers; they mobilize the farmers at the community level. Then every district has one person who is the focal point, and a regional coordinator who sometimes is a board member. Information is passed through the national president, who is chair of the board."

Victoria Adongo

Victoria added that grassroots organizations are often only seen as instruments for mobilizing large numbers, "Grassroots organizations have to prove themselves. Donors don't like to deal directly with grassroots organizations, and prefer that they partner with civil society organizations or non-government organizations. They go to the grassroots to mobilize numbers, but they don't for documentation and organization and technical implementation. Documentation means NGOs and CSOs are talking 'on behalf [of grassroots].'" She then provided a few examples of grassroots documentation and research undertaken by PFAG, "We call it action research. It starts with anecdotal evidence. We go into action research. Sometimes the consultants do this with the farmers. Sometimes the farmers themselves are going out with questionnaires to other farmers. When the consultant goes back to the other farmers, they have to bring final feedback. It has to be reviewed by the farmers themselves."

Mass mobilizing for different kinds of social audits involved various mutual benefits and skills-sharing. The long-term gains in each case seemed to include an aspect of sustained capacity or skills that outlived single campaigns or funding cycles. Several examples cited also involved unintended marginalization in the process of grassroots-CSO cooperation, for example the gender dimensions of citizen-led accountability. As Sowmya Kidambi of India's Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency explained, "I have 1,200 people [working as social auditors] across state, when you look at the number of women, it's 5% to 10%. When you have to do audits for 26 days, or 15 days, and you're going from one village to another, for a woman who is married, there is just no way. Sometimes women will bring their children along, it's that much more difficult for women, but you also give them ways to go back and engage." The conversation about how participation in accountability initiatives may be gendered remained incipient.

As captured in the larger continuous thread of conversation on integrated accountability strategies, questions of legitimacy and cooptation of voice remained concerns, particularly at the grassroots. Axolile summarized some of the dynamics giving rise to these concerns: "NGOs are more prone to use 'invited spaces,' and grassroots movements tend to use 'invented spaces'. There is a difference in how those two spaces get attention, one is seen as legitimate and the other illegitimate. It's about getting some coordination between those kinds of spaces, and some more legitimacy for the invented spaces."

7. Policy advocacy and policy monitoring often draw on different skills, coalitions, and political considerations

Over the course of the workshop, CSO policy monitoring and advocacy were increasingly recognized as distinct processes, each with their own dynamics. In closing one day, Jonathan reflected, "When the advocacy groups are using pressure politics to influence national policy decisions, they don't necessarily have the policy monitoring tools to know whether what get called rights are actually *enforceable claims* (which is what's needed to really call it a win). How do national capital advocacy groups know whether what they thought they won with a new law was actually carried out by government agencies in practice? On the other hand," he continued, "those who are doing policy monitoring through a classic collaborative approach with government, may only focus on implementation issues rather than consider the actual policy goals – limiting themselves to questions that are acceptable to their partners in government. There is potential for synergy between monitoring and advocacy, but it is often untapped."

In many of the cases discussed, vertical integration strategies for bringing together monitoring and advocacy emerged 'organically' as a loop, rather than a linear set of activities, starting with one and ending with the other. Integrated approaches take on different forms when used in advocacy efforts, for monitoring commitments and subsequent policy implementation. Political will is necessary at all three phases, but the motivations, skills, capacities, and styles involved are often different.

The group discussed whether there are really just two types of vertical integration: (1) bottom-up and (2) coalition/alliance formation when local groups don't have the capacity to scale up on their own, or whether there are actually many different models. Almudena Oceja of the Center for Social Accountability and Democratic Consolidation Studies shared an example from Mexico, where local groups primarily monitor how money is *spent* in municipalities, but also have CSO partners who keep an eye on things at the national and state level to see how the money is being *allocated*. Several participants approached the discussion in terms of 'scaling' efforts that reflect multiple, continuous kinds of advocacy and oversight, as opposed to the growth and replication of a single initiative.

Photo 13: Rose Nierras, from the International Budget Partnership, workshop facilitator. Credit: Jonathan Fox

In India, Yogesh explained that skills training and mobilization for public oversight of the government's right to work programs addressed a larger issue of unemployment, which stood at the very heart of the organizational effort. "How do we do this and what are the steps to build a group of social auditors?" He continued on to explain how it eventually worked, "Youth from workers' families can conduct social audits. One thousand villages could then social audit with help from youth." The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act explicitly encourages community-based social audits, but in practice the process faces logistical and political challenges. "The *Panchayat* [local government] do not want to share data, but some data is open. We explained to the youth how to print out that data. This was the power in handing people information about how to get information." Yogesh concluded, "Besides creating more social auditors, we must build associations of workers in order to sustain them."

The conversation similarly raised the distinction between the different approaches to accountability needed at different levels, as implementation of government programs gets underway. Ariel discussed the challenges of follow-through from government agencies in Peru, "Sometimes some officials make a decision, and then ministers come and ignore it. Worse, officials make decisions at upper levels, but there are no institutional arrangements for others to even know that the decisions have been taken. It's a long process, it's not straightforward." In the Textbook Count experience in the Philippines, information on whether or not books were actually being delivered to schools came from a variety of levels, but the CSO work to get the government to address the problems detected by the monitoring was done at the national level. Local-level CSO monitoring was continuous and directly connected to the national-level advocacy for problem-solving.

Another thread of discussion focused on the difference between monitoring of policy implementation that is oriented to *respond* to problems that have already happened, in contrast to other approaches to oversight that try to *prevent* problems in the first place, "Some kinds of monitoring are reactive. They look at numbers. Another [kind] is to check whether standards and duty bearers have been compliant – it's a preventive form of compliance.

So either agencies perform better or advocacy efforts benefit from greater information," noted Joy. Ariel asked, framing oversight and scale in legal terms, "When does the scaling up process finish? You can have a legal decision, but the implementation of that legal decision and norm is the next step. But for some new issues that deal with relations of new actors, there are also challenges of scaling down decisions (not just scaling up)."

Practical considerations for 'scaling up' inevitably circled back to time and resources, and weighing the costs and benefits of mobilizing new skills alongside devising strategies to expand from advocacy into monitoring or vice versa. Yogesh provided an example of these considerations related to India's Rural Employment Guarantee Act: "The implementation of these acts is to be done by the *Panchayat*; they are to plan and implement. Initially we were working more on building awareness of rights under this act, but gradually we realized that more funds are coming to this scheme and funds must also be audited; The provision is that workers can do a social audit of this act." Seeing an opportunity and a challenge, Yogesh explained, "Society doesn't know how to conduct a social audit, the rules, details, or strategies. We can provide that kind of support, but now our scale of work is ten times more…" reflecting a common experience among the group of balancing the speed of scaling efforts with resource constraints in sustaining them.

Advocacy efforts that lead to policy change rely on different skills, timelines and strategies than the monitoring efforts necessary to track policy implementation and integrity over time. Yet the coalitions surrounding both are often overlapping, and at times, same as they mobilize around the same issues. Participants described varied 'scaling up' processes, attempting to connect the dots across the types and timing of different advocacy and monitoring efforts.

8. Research needs within and across accountability initiatives are growing and often unmet, yet balanced researcher-grassroots-strategist partnerships are few and far between

Most of the public interest organizations that participated in the workshop had direct experience with research, either by conducting their own studies, hosting researchers, or participating in larger research efforts conducted by others. Questions about the role of researchers (and research) led to discussion of power dynamics, objectivity, cooptation of narratives, debates over the role of evidence for advocacy, and research conducted to detect trends across different types of movements, accountability efforts and contexts.

Participants emphasized the political nature of research, or rather, how research is procured and used, emphasizing the strong "…relationship between research findings and political power." A second connected question touched on the role of research in addressing power imbalances. Francis Isaac, from De la Salle University, offered an example, "In the Philippines, the usual lament is that there is only one kind of research that politicians listen to. The kind of [voter opinion] surveys that are done, a year before the election, so what I'm saying is, how do we make our research findings politically relevant?"

Sowmya, whose experience involves leading the process that convenes community social audits involving millions of people in the state of Andhra Pradesh, continued, "In a lot of countries, governments are happy to bring in researchers that prove government's own hypothesis. You have high powered research agencies affirming the logic and hypothesis of government. The government can then reference expert researchers to combat activist claims and demands around things happening at the grassroots. She noted that, "one irresponsible statement by a researcher can set back an agenda 20 years." From the perspective of strategy, it then "becomes a matter of having to fight government and also disprove 'expert research'."

One feeling among participants, as expressed by Francis, was that, "There are very few researchers who are interested in social movement actions. If we say social movement actions are siloed, so is the work of researchers." For example, Victoria illustrated the disconnect in her own experience, highlighting the usefulness of academic research for grassroots activists' work and simultaneously asking for it to be informed by the reality faced by the grassroots, "Sometimes academics don't go along with the activists to do the work, to do the advocacy or campaigning. They do the research, but joining the activists, they shy away from doing that." For an example of a learning agenda that reflects a grassroots perspective, see here.

This sentiment recalled earlier discussions on power over language and funding. Lisa addressed the politics between donor funding trends and research, "They (donors) decide everything based on the research. Is our suggestion (from activist/CSO perspective) of actually being at the center of knowledge production realistic? One of the things we learned from Nani and PEKKA", is that if consultants write about the women's organizing work that's been done for decades or longer, the documentation "is now going to become owned by the World Bank and you're going to have to ask permission to use it."

Other participants discussed the practical contributions of research to action (and action to research), traded strategies and approaches for drawing on research for better and more timely political analysis, for reflecting on internal strategies and in understanding trends far larger than individual organizations or efforts. One group discussion how checks and balances institution elicited a similar sentiment, "Researchers can be useful here in providing analysis and mapping based on different issues, regions, and types of organizations."

Walter drew a distinction between research for [his organization's] internal implementation and research asking about the external impact of [their] different efforts, he distinguished "between research that is part of implementation, and research [that contributes] toward case studies, with the incentive of improving the work," whose goal is to inform the broader field. He then explained how this distinction contributes to different functions of organizational planning and analysis: "We then have the external evaluation and external impact evaluation, to find out what our impact is. We use participatory research and participatory ethnography, rather than only randomized controlled trials (RCTs). We are now part of an RCT, [but] we don't have any say in the design that they are using, we don't even have access to the instruments."

The analytical role of researchers can contribute by clarifying the relationship between organizational agendas, skills, power dynamics, and goals. Directly or indirectly, research and analysis across efforts moving in tandem could be very useful information for organizational directors and movement leaders in potentially cooperating, or at least accessing information about overlapping strategies.

The practical contributions of research raised different responses, though there was wide consensus on the need for and utility of practical research. On one hand, Jonathan pointed out that "…research and analysis in this field lags far behind the action. Plus, research that is generated by advocacy campaigns doesn't travel as far as it might. CSO-generated research can be somewhat inward looking, self-referential, and circulates mainly within our own networks." The degree to which research is practical also depends on its purpose. Jeff suggested finding ways to, "shift the balance of power so activists can take advantage of research, even though that might not be helpful for [academics] getting tenure"

Internal purposes aside, credible research is essential for legitimacy, "In all the cases, unless we do good research or effective monitoring, we will not be able to dialogue with senior policy makers." explained Yogesh, who continued

to ask, "We can see the case of oil in Ghana, the relationship between money spent on agriculture and employment, for example, is really powerful." Nani laid out a similar experience and approach, highlighting that bringing research into government dialogue significantly shifted these interactions, "One of the things that really influenced government. We don't put the government as enemy. We use an evidence-base. We use information to show what they do and don't do, to show them that 'you are missing numbers, around 11%,' so they can't come back and dismiss what we say." She added that research is not a top-down activity for PEKKA, "We build from the rural level to district level. We don't start at the national level."

The group anchored the discussion around several affirmations regarding knowledge production and capacity for research: "What kind of research, who does it, who is at the center of research? Should organizations build their own capacity to do research? Should they build capacity with research institutions? Maybe not doing their own research, but should definitely have the capacity to control the research." Researchers listened on, acknowledging there are better ways to work with grassroots and civil society organizations, while still playing the role of the "critical friend".

Photo 14: In 2009, JASS created safe spaces for positive women activists to gather in Malawi, this was where the Our Bodies, Our Lives campaign was born. Credit: JASS

V. Afterwords
January 2016

Systemic Change through Integrated Transparency-Participation-Accountability

Joy Aceron

Our work on integrated and systems approaches to accountability is a push back to the dominant paradigm in the field of transparency, participation and accountability (TPA), consisting of interventions that only scratch the surface, instrumentalize participation and turn knowledge production a top-down enterprise where a select group of people set the agenda and determine the truth. Our key proposition is that by understanding the issues and challenges that we try to address as intrinsically integrated, connected, belonging to an eco-system, we are able to go deep into the root and systemic causes of those problems and issues that perpetuate different forms of abuses of power, corruption and violation of human rights at different levels.

Though each of those who participated in the discussion differs on what specific goals and objectives their current TPA engagements are focusing on, there is an emerging consensus on how these goals and objectives are interlinked or must be interlinked to create deeper and more sustainable impacts, what was referred to throughout the workshop as 'connecting the dots'. It is clear that there is a collective appreciation of the need to reclaim the transformational goals of the field of transparency, accountability and participation because the symptomatic problems being addressed by many of today's quick-fix TPA initiatives will persist without efforts being undertaken to address the root causes as well.

Given the inherent nature of international gatherings that tackle cross-country experiences, the politics of knowledge production was an apparently common issue across the groups and sectors represented in the workshop. Knowledge production and generation in the TPA field is an arena for reimagining. Over time, certain practices of knowledge creation in TPA field have evolved that derail learning. Some of these practices are captured in usual criticisms and complaints raised in TPA workshops, such as: "modeling with no clear appreciation of context"; "replication without clear evidence of success"; "misrepresentation of success"; "hasty generalization of what led to success"; "silver bullets"/ "panacea" propositions.

Such '"malpractices" of knowledge production have direct impact on TPA practices below. This is one area where those involved in the 2015 workshop can consolidate their forces and coordinate their actions to contribute more concretely to support and advance integrated approaches in TPA. The presence of the workshop participants in various levels from grassroots to international, from three main sectors in the TPA field (researchers/ academic, donors and practitioners/ CSOs) can provide a formidable machinery of knowledge production that is more responsive to the needs of the field and can be a more reliable source of information and knowledge. Practitioners can provide the needed up-to-date information based on evolving experiences on the ground, while researchers can provide inputs to co-production of knowledge for more analytical rigor and conceptual clarity based on the research literature and other empirical evidence. Such process of knowledge production alone will be a unique 'action learning' experience that will enable a dynamic and integrated knowledge co-production.

The second area of collaboration that the group (or a subset of the group) can explore is one clear area of integration that can enhance the strategic value of civil society-led accountability initiatives: the bridging of advocacy and monitoring. Policy advocacy basically uses pressure politics and is undertaken from outside the state to influence the state. Policy monitoring, on the other hand, often happens within the system or the machinery of the state, in close coordination. When it works, policy advocacy leads to policy change or reform, while monitoring is intended to ensure effective and efficient implementation of an existing policy. Linking these two roles can ensure that policy "wins" lead up to more sustainable outcomes.

Interestingly in the Philippines, there is a divide between the groups involved predominantly in advocacy and those involved in monitoring. This divide is influenced by the groups' political persuasions and traditions. If those who mostly do advocacy work learn how to do a systematic and evidence-based monitoring of the whole policy implementation process, they can encourage follow-through on their wins, while if those who mostly do monitoring work get to link up with or learn from groups that have mastered advocacy work, they can pursue policy solutions that address more systemic issues. Central to such integration is learning from each perspective and experience.

In the case of G-Watch, for instance, policy and systems reform recommendations based on its monitoring can best be advanced through efforts that link up with advocacy groups. Meanwhile, Philippine advocacy groups that are able to push for the adoption of a progressive legislation can learn from the approach employed by Textbook Count in doing monitoring of policy implementation that covers all stages and levels, which resulted in a more efficient, responsive and accountable performance of the bureaucracy. This might be the case in other countries as well or across initiatives/ campaigns from various countries.

Surely the workshop discussion provides a lot of opportunities to deepen the work on TPA in a way that will address deep-rooted causes of the problems of governance inefficiency, corruption and abuse by 'connecting the dots' on actions, actors, levels of engagements and results. The ideas that percolated should inform action, research and learning on TPA, and will surely become clearer as the details get fleshed out in practice in each of our respective contexts and timeframes, which is the logical next step of this process. The fact remains that as we continue to problematize the issues surrounding this challenge, the flawed practices continue and get further disseminated possibly creating more harm than good. The time to show a new way of doing TPA is now.

Consensus and Ongoing Debates about Integrated Approaches to Citizen-Led Advocacy

Albert van Zyl

To me the ongoing conversation about accountability ecosystems, vertical and horizontal integration or 'connecting the dots' is a process of discovering and inventing a useful language for talking about citizen led efforts to bring about change in government behavior and institutions. The basic idea behind integrated approaches to citizen monitoring and advocacy is that if you want to bring change in complex systems, you'd better think about the incentives, power imbalances and lines of influence that structure these systems. If you want to influence the legislature, for example, it generally won't work to approach them directly. You may need to first mobilize large numbers of people and get the media to cover your issue. Why? Because members of parliament may care more about what large numbers of voters and the media have to say more than they do about your organization's position on a given issue. Such examples show that a simple intervention, that would content itself with sending a submission or analysis to parliamentarians, and pay less attention to other incentives and constraints of parliamentarians, is less likely to have an impact. But this basic idea on which a number of theorists and practitioners are now beginning to agree, still hides a number of ongoing debates and disagreements.

One of these debates is whether such integrated approaches are the same thing as efforts to make deep systemic reforms. Or whether these approaches are also used by campaigns that are not seeking systemic change, but some immediate, albeit incremental relief such as access to sanitation or water. Ultimately it may be more useful to separate out these distinctions. It is after all not too difficult to think of examples of campaigns seeking incremental reforms that use both simple and integrated approaches. And the same is true for campaigns seeking deep systemic reforms.

A second contentious area is whether the discussion about integrated approaches is normative or descriptive. Are we talking about the ways in which campaigns are organized or about the way they should be organized? If it is normative, how do we know it works? And if it is descriptive, why is it not more common, and are the few examples that we do have not the exception that proves the rule? To me the answer is that the discussion is both normative and descriptive. Integrated approaches are not based on abstract theory, but rather emerged from the painful and clumsy trial and error of CSO campaigns. And we know it works because of the documented experience of campaigns in the budget sector and elsewhere and because of the work of a few academics who have identified these trends. A few organizations have stumbled on this approach, and it is now our responsibility to spread the word. As we do, the gap between the normative and the descriptive will hopefully shrink.

Closely related to the previous discussion is the question of whether integrated approaches refer to formal, institutional arrangements or interactions that are informal, ad hoc, and often based on personal networks? While it is often true that behind every integrated approach stands a well-networked individual, it is also true that governance reforms facilitating public participation in, for example legislatures and audit institutions, can help facilitate, protect and promote interaction between government and the people. We should therefore work both on promoting such governance reforms and on teaching and supporting civic organizations to navigate the unofficial power circuits that mark every political system.

Next there has been useful debate about the intensity of the relationships that the *integrated* approach seeks to describe and promote. Words such as vertical and horizontal integration suggest a level of alignment and unity between accountability actors that often does not exist in practice. When a campaign makes progress because a sympathetic executive insider leaks a decisive document to a friend in civil society, this is not integration, but rather something akin to cooperation or collaboration. The intensity of these interactions does however vary and would require further investigation before we can speak about it meaningfully.

A last question which seems appropriate because two of the co-hosts have "learning" in their titles (TALEARN and IBP's Learning Program), is how one may learn and teach about how to work in an integrated manner. Would it be possible to develop typologies of kinds of governance systems and the kinds of integrated approaches that might be most effective within them? Or is it best to focus on toolkits or sets of questions that allow organizations themselves to develop such approaches in the very specific contexts in which they find themselves?

Annex 1: Workshop Participants
Participated in full workshop

Name	Organization
Joy Aceron	Government Watch
Victoria Adongo	Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana
Renata Aguilera-Titus	American University
Aaron Azelton	National Democratic Institute
Benjamin Boakye	Africa Centre for Energy Policy
Victoria Boydel	International Planned Parenthood Federation
Brandon Brockmyer	American University
Nikhil Dey	MKSS (Association for the Empowerment of Workers and Peasants)
Walter Flores	CEGGS (Center for the Study of Equity and Governance in Health Systems)
Jonathan Fox	American University
Ariel Frisancho	Foro Salud
Aranzazu Guillan Montero	U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre
Jeff Hall	Independent researcher
Brendan Halloran	Transparency and Accountability Initiative
Francis Isaac	Dela Salle University
Alia Khan	Just Associates
Sowmya Kidambi	Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency
Yogesh Kumar	Samarthan
Jillian Larsen	International Budget Partnership
Anna Levy	Social Impact Lab
Subarna Mathes	Open Society Foundations
Marcos Mendiburu	World Bank
Richard Mugenyi	Reproductive Health Uganda
Padmaja Nair	International Budget Partnership
Rose Nierras	International Budget Partnership
Axolile Notywala	Social Justice Coalition
Almudena Ocejo	Center for Social Accountability and Democratic Consolidation Studies
Omar Ortez	Oxfam America
Caroline Poirrier	R4D
Thamy Progebinschi	WZB Berlin Social Science Center
Marta Schaaf	Columbia University
Jessica Taylor	International Budget Partnership
Albert van Zyl	International Budget Partnership
Lisa Veneklasen	Just Associates
Nani Zulminarni	PEKKA (Women Headed Household movement)

Participated in case study discussions

Name	Organization
Katie Campbell	Action Aid
Tom Carothers	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Hazel Feiganblatt	Global Integrity
Ian Gary	Oxfam America
Nathaniel Heller	R4D
Abigail Moy	Namati
Jeremy Shiffman	American University
Waad Tammaa	Catholic Relief Services

Annex 2: Further reading

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3. **Essof, Shereen and Alia Khan. (2015).** The Our Bodies, Our Lives Campaign for Better ARVs in Malawi: Enacting Social Accountability Through Women's Activism and Organising. Washington, D.C.: Just Associates.

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Photo 15: Citizen health monitors in a participatory action research workshop in Puno, Peru. Credit: Ariel Frisancho

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