

Innovation series

No. 7

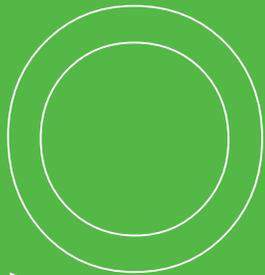
Participatory, Accountable, and Inclusive Governance in Practice:

A Collection of *Participedia* Case Studies
by Coady Graduates

Edited by Julien Landry

October, 2018

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE



COADY

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
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The Coady International Institute's Innovation series, launched in 2015, showcases the work of Coady faculty, associates, and partners. Acting as a bridge between academic and practitioner worlds, the Coady Institute contributes new ideas, new ways of putting ideas into practice and innovative ways of creating transformative experiences in our educational programs. The publications in this series are colour coded to identify these three aspects of innovation using the "Coady colours" : blue for "innovative thinking", green for "innovative practice" and orange for "innovative teaching".

ISSN 1701-1590

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Acknowledgement

The stories featured in this collection would not have come to light without the initiative of Dr. John Gaventa, Former Director of the Coady International Institute, and the trust of the Participedia Executive Committee—particularly Professor Mark Warren, Dr. Patrick Scully, and Professor Bettina von Lieres—who saw value in partnering with the Coady International Institute and in our approach to engaging practitioners to contribute to the Participedia project. I also acknowledge Dr. June Webber, Vice President, Coady International Institute and Extension Department, for her willingness to engage the Institute in this partnership and her support throughout.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Rachel Garbary for her diligent work and key role in supporting Coady graduates in developing their initial ideas into full case studies. To the graduates and authors, my full acknowledgement and appreciation of their patience, perseverance, and responsiveness as we worked together to craft their considerable experiences into brief capsules. To my numerous colleagues who have served as advisors, co-facilitators, co-developers, co-designers, and editors along the way, thank you: Wendy Kraglund-Gauthier, Catherine Irving, Molly den Heyer, Gord Cunningham, and Susan Hawkes. To Colleen Cameron and Olga Gladkikh, thank you for your sage advice.

Finally, the Coady International Institute could not have produced this work without the financial support received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (through Participedia) as well as Global Affairs Canada.

Introduction and Rationale

Citizen-led development and innovation in the areas of democracy, governance, and accountability is one of the Coady International Institute's (Coady) core areas of programming. In recent years, civic space and traditional democratic institutions have been under threat globally (CIVICUS, 2018) with some experts pointing to a "democracy in crisis" (Freedom House, 2018), coupled with a rise in authoritarian (Burrows & Stephan, 2015) and populist politics and civic illiteracy (Giroux, 2016). Yet, at the same time, the world is witnessing a transformation of democracy through "thousands of new channels of citizen involvement in government, often outside of the more visible politics of electoral representation, and occurring in most countries in the world" (Participedia, 2014, p.9). In communities around the world, citizens – including many Coady graduates – are re-imagining and re-inventing democracy by creating and claiming new spaces for citizen voice and participation. It is this type of civic and democratic innovation, led by Coady graduates around the world, which is showcased in this collection of case studies.

Since 2015, the Coady International Institute has been partnered with Participedia, a global initiative aimed at harnessing "the power of collaboration to respond to [this] recent global phenomenon [by engaging] hundreds of researchers and practitioners from across the globe to catalogue and compare the performance of participatory political processes" (Participedia, 2018a). Coady graduates are making unique contributions to this knowledge mobilization effort and in doing so, are strengthening a global community of practice on democratic innovation (Participedia, 2018b).

As of May 2018, the Coady has mobilized and supported 22 graduates to reflect on and document their experiences in leading democratic innovation and participatory governance processes in their own diverse contexts. This collection features the first 12 case studies published by Coady graduates on the Participedia platform as part of this ongoing effort. The rationale for this collection is twofold. First, it showcases a body of work that may offer insights into the contributions the Coady is making—through its graduates—in governance systems and structures around the world. The Analysis and Discussion section at the end of this volume offers some thoughts on these contributions, while recognizing that this is but a small cross-section of Coady graduate experiences. Second, this publication captures the cases studies in their original form; that is, the versions herein are those initially submitted to Participedia.¹ Cases compiled here reflect the impressions and accounts of individuals directly involved in the experiences documented and capture the original voice behind the story.

¹ As a wiki platform and one that seeks to be as dynamic as the participatory political processes it documents, Participedia is constantly evolving through the contributions of editors and other online contributors in an effort to have cases be as complete and current as possible (think: Wikipedia of public participation).

Graduates developed their contribution using a template that follows Participedia’s standard narrative structure for case studies. However, the specific questions addressed within that structure were adapted by Coady staff to ensure that cases appeal to:

- the interests of Participedia’s audiences;
- the needs of researchers using the platform for their data; and
- the learning intentions and reflective practice of graduates contributing their stories.

To support contributors in achieving this goal, the Coady Institute hired a part-time editor to work with the lead Program Staff on supporting graduates with the writing and editing process. Over periods ranging from 5 to 18 months, each graduate developed and revised numerous drafts based on rounds of feedback and comments from Coady staff and editors.

What has emerged is a collection of documented practice in democratic innovation and participatory governance which reflects both the diversity of Coady participants and graduates from around the world (see Figure 1).

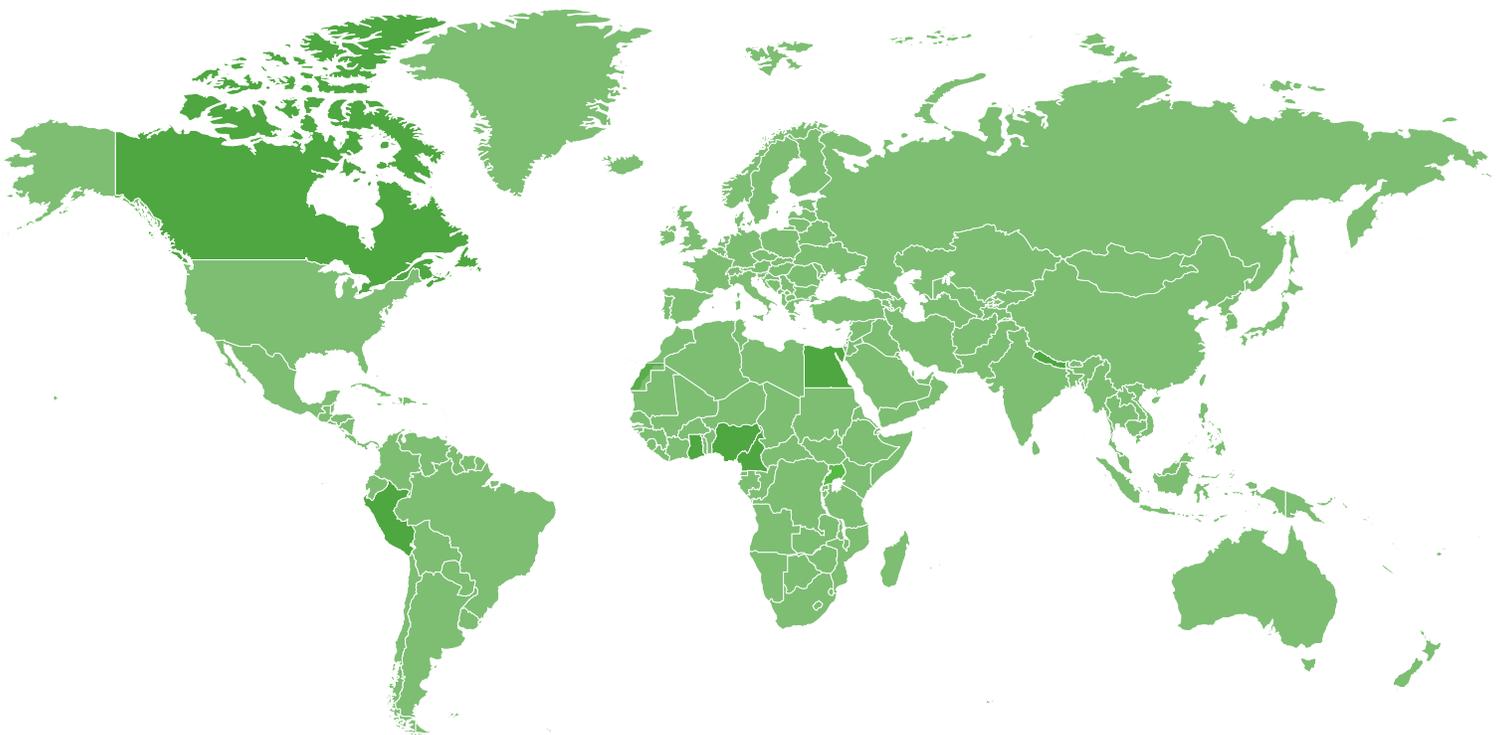


Figure 1. Location map of case study locations

In this collection, graduates describe participatory processes that focus on addressing diverse issues and that have impact on multiple fronts. Attempting to classify or label them is, therefore, challenging and could be done along many dimensions. To guide readers

interested in particular sub-areas of democratic practice and governance, the following four categories are proposed: pathways for participatory development; participation for meaningful inclusion; participation for advocacy and policy influence; and participation for transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery.

Pathways for participatory development

A number of cases reflect the diversity of pathways and channels for citizen participation and community engagement. In these cases, citizens contribute to and expand the public conversation, they partake directly in public actions that benefit the collective, and they connect these local actions to global efforts aimed at promoting sustainable community development. **Bhumiraj Chapagain** describes how Sharecast Initiative used audience surveys and participatory workshops to increase people's participation in local radio, improve radio sustainability, and strengthen the role of local radio as a forum for democratic engagement in Nepal. **Hany Ghaly** documents the work of a community committee in El-kfoor village (Egypt), who acted as a key channel between the El-kfoor Community Development Association (CDA) and community members as they sought to improve government transparency and accountability in order to solve pressing environmental sanitation and waste management issues. Also in Egypt, **Aliaa Saber Hussein** explains how Omaar, a grassroots youth group created as a result of the Social Contract Centre's civic education programs, engaged over 500 children, youth, and community members in leadership, soft skills training, and collective actions to reduce poverty in the community of Zakazik. Connecting local participation to global development efforts, **Rosario del Pilar Díaz Garavito** outlines how the 2030 Agenda Ambassadors Program engaged Peruvian civil society organizations and citizen groups in implementing and monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their communities.

Participation for meaningful inclusion

A second set of cases have a particular focus on enhancing the participation of individuals and groups who have typically been excluded from governance structures and decision-making processes that directly impact on their rights and their lives. At the organizational level, **Asia van Buuren** describes how L'Arche Antigonish (Canada), a community of people living with and without intellectual disabilities, used a tool called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) to rethink their arts program and to move to more accessible community discussions that intentionally engage people living with disabilities in decisions that impact community life. In Uganda, **Betty Cheptoek** recounts how NUDIPU-Youth used advocacy training, media engagement, and dialogue and deliberation with multiple stakeholders to mobilize up to 1,000 youth with disabilities to advocate for their inclusion and participation in economic and political life in their communities. Still in that country, **Peter Ochieng** expands on the marginalization that exists within the national disability movement in his account

of how persons with cerebral palsy led awareness campaigns, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement to collectively mobilize for inclusion and representation.

Participation for advocacy and policy influence

A third set of cases document broader mobilization and advocacy efforts to influence policy and decision-making bodies for greater voice and representation. **Patricia Blankson Akakpo** documents the experience of NETRIGHT in 2013, who facilitated the creation of the Women's Advocacy Platform by training and supporting women in the Juaboso District (Ghana) to lead advocacy for greater representation and gender responsiveness in local and district-level governance and development planning. **Patience Agwenjang** outlines the experiences of youth leaders who, between 2010 and 2015, were engaged in a process to develop a Municipal Youth Policy in Santa (Cameroon) as a means to promote greater youth voice and participation in municipal governance and decision making. **Jannika Nyberg** discusses The Democracy Project, a youth-led program at Byrne Creek High School in Burnaby (Canada) that used participatory education to empower students to make student representation more inclusive through district-wide policy change.

Participation for transparency, accountability and effective service delivery

Finally, another set of cases achieve impact on the quality, transparency, and accountability of public service delivery by enhancing the voice and agency of service users, monitoring delivery and providing oversight, or effectively using social accountability tools. **Barbara Shitnaan Maigari** documents how citizens directly engaged in court observation in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory and Kano State improved transparency, accountability, and integrity in the Nigerian judiciary. **Moshira Zeidan** explains how a public hearing was used as part of a social accountability initiative, bringing together citizens, service providers, and government officials to resolve issues in the education sector and improve the quality of education in Ba-Ziyd, Egypt.

While these categories may be helpful to some, many cases extend beyond a single category. For this reason, they are presented in alphabetical order of the authors' names. To further assist readers in navigating the collection, Table 1 identifies some of the common issues addressed through citizen participation in each case,² and maps out cases where particular groups (or constituencies) played a key role in leading or engaging in participatory practices and methods.

² These issues of focus are in part drawn from Participedia's classifications of General Issues, as part of their case study categorization system.

Table 1. Issues of Focus and Key Constituencies

	Issues of Focus				Key Constituencies		
	Accountability and transparency	Community Development	Identity and Diversity	Institutions and political representation	Youth	Women	PWDs
Agwenjang (Cameroon)				X	X		
Akakpo (Ghana)				X		X	
Chapagain (Nepal)	X						
Cheptoek (Uganda)			X	X	X		X
Garavito (Peru)		X			X		
Ghaly (Egypt)	X	X					
Hussein (Egypt)		X			X		
Maigari (Nigeria)	X			X			
Nyberg (Canada)				X	X		
Ochieng (Uganda)			X	X			X
van Buuren (Canada)		X	X				X
Zeidan (Egypt)	X				X		

Beyond capturing and documenting innovative practice, the Coady's partnership with Participedia is also designed to strengthen the ongoing learning of graduates once they return to their practice after participating in Coady educational programs. As discussed briefly in the conclusion to this volume, a proposed *Innovation in Teaching (Ongoing Learning)* will focus on this component.

Engaging Youth in Municipal Youth Policy Development (Santa, Northwest Cameroon)

Patience Agwenjang, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

After 21 years (1996–2017), the process of decentralization in Cameroon still remains blurred by complex legal, administrative, institutional, managerial, and governance frameworks. The laws on decentralisation prescribed in the Constitution of 1996 and the 2004 Law (Cheka, 2007) provide for an unclear financial system for local authorities, as well as for a local tax system that is not managed directly by the central government. Furthermore, the absence of an Information Act in Cameroon has significant implications for public disclosures. Financial disclosure by public officials is particularly limited, while concerned citizens and the general public have limited access to, and use of, public data.

In Santa, a peri-urban town in northwest Cameroon comprised of 10 villages (Akum, Alahteneng, Awing, Baba II, Baligham, Mbu, Mbei, Njong, Pinyin, and Santa), young people aged 15–35 had little knowledge about the activities, functions, and responsibilities of their municipal council and officials. This reflected a widening communication gap between councils and other policy-making bodies and young people. It equally posed a challenge to the integration of youth into decision-making on key issues that affect their wellbeing in society, such as employment, education, health, agriculture, environment, and the like. Hence, there was a need to strengthen youth awareness and advocacy for the development, adoption, implementation, and monitoring of a municipal youth policy that would aim to address these very challenges around youth participation in governance and decision-making. To do this, a series of deliberative processes were held between 2010 and 2015 to enable youth to voice their opinions, to monitor decisions affecting them, and to develop strategies to overcome barriers to their integration in decision-making structures. Given that young people constitute a new generation of social, political, and economic leaders, their participation in decision-making and governance was imperative for inclusive policy making and community development.

History

A variety of attempts have been made to address youth voicelessness and lack of participation in decision-making and governance in Cameroon. In 2012, the government adopted the *Politique Nationale de la Jeunesse*—or National Youth Policy—that was drafted in 2006 to encourage, among other aspects, youth participation in governance and democracy. Young people, and youth leaders in particular, were unaware of the policy's existence and content

and of how they could engage to facilitate its implementation in their communities. Meanwhile, adults remained reticent to involve youth in decision-making bodies such as councils and Parliament.

Further, the prevailing socio-economic conditions of youth, characterised by poverty and unemployment, has often posed a challenge to peace in communities. Politically, the community of Santa has represented a unique constituency in Cameroon since the inception of multi-party democracy in the early 1990s, as it has remained a centre of political confrontations between militants of the ruling party, the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (C.P.D.M.) and the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (S.D.F.). This has often led to the political manipulation of youth, as well as subsequent arrests, assaults, and killings. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that the current S.D.F. leader originates from Santa. During the 2004 and 2011 elections, Santa had been a hot spot for both parties, who have accused one another of using youth to influence electoral outcomes through malpractices such as “ghost voting,” and who have left Santa’s youth vulnerable to political confrontations.

In 2008, in order to empower and include youth in community governance, Santa’s Municipal Council strategically partnered with the Youth Outreach Programme (YOP), the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Cuso International (Cuso), and other development actors to develop a National Youth Volunteering Scheme aimed at recruiting and training young people in professional development and at boosting their employability within and beyond Santa. The Mayor at the time, Mr. Atanga Clement, had been enthusiastic about youth empowerment and often claimed that persons over the age of 40 still experienced youth-related challenges such as unemployment and low participation in decision-making. Hence, he often disbursed funds to sponsor youth activities and invited YOP volunteers to train youth in Santa. These efforts attracted external support and funding; for example, YOP and VSO-Cuso responded by providing several trainings on project management to councillors and to youth on good governance, advocacy, human rights, entrepreneurship, life skills, and behaviour change.

However, after the 2013 municipal elections, Santa’s Council was led by Pastor Khan Elroy Moses, the first C.P.D.M. Mayor since the advent of a multi-party system in Cameroon. Hence, all attempts to regenerate the Council’s enthusiasm to establish youth-oriented actions were met with several challenges.

Originating Entities and Funding

Youth engagement in Santa was led by the Municipal Council in collaboration with YOP and VSO-Cuso. From 2010 to 2015, Santa received financial, institutional, and technical support for this initiative from diverse sources. VSO-Cuso consistently provided short-term and long-term institutional development advisors to the Council, and financed strategic planning meetings, training workshops, and micro-grants to single mothers, while the Welsh Assembly

and YOP provided technical support. Other funding came from the 10th and 11th European Development Fund through two national programs in Cameroon: the Support Programme for the Structuring of Civil Society (PASOC) and the Civil Society Strengthening Programme (PASC), of which YOP was a beneficiary. UN-HABITAT also funded entrepreneurship training and micro-grants to youth farmers through YOP. Santa Council provided space for meetings, while YOP and VSO-Cuso provided volunteer facilitators and training materials and coordinated content development for the youth policy documents. Over 50 youth leaders volunteered their time and personal resources to mobilise youth participants for their engagement.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The youth leaders involved in advocating for a youth policy were members of the Santa Youth Council, identified and screened through the joint efforts of the Youth Council President and the Youth Officer for Santa Municipal Council, Mbuh Derick Ticha. Socio-demographically, the group was composed of female and male youth aged 18–35, representing all 10 villages of Santa and including ethnic minorities, students and non-students, skilled and unskilled workers, single mothers, youth with physical disabilities, and youth with different religious affiliations. Other participants included hundreds of community leaders, including traditional authorities, government officials, and concerned community members from all 10 villages invited by Santa Council to take part in the deliberations on issues concerning them and their children.

Methods and Tools Used

A succession of deliberative methods, including workshops, dialogue forums, action-learning and planning meetings, and town hall meetings were used to facilitate youth engagement around policy development in Santa.

Workshops: Over 20 workshops were held on various themes with different youth groups, council workers, and councillors to boost youth leadership, facilitate inter-generational dialogue, and boost the technical skills of council workers, councillors, and youth alike.



Figure 2. Workshop on advocating for the inclusion of youth in municipal decision making

Have Your Say dialogue forums: This social accountability tool was used to bridge the communication gap between Council, youth, and community members, as well as to reinforce mutual trust amongst them.

Action-Learning and Planning meetings: These meetings focused on using a Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) framework to prioritise the implementation of projects in the Local Economic Development Plan of Santa, and to reinforce the project management skills of council workers, councillors, and youth leaders.

Town Hall meetings: These were youth-centred forums to deliberate on key issues to include in the Municipal Youth Policy, to define the implementation plan, and to determine progress and evaluate successes.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Deliberations during this succession of workshops, dialogue forums, action-learning and planning meetings, and town hall meetings influenced the development of the Municipal Youth Policy of Santa.

Workshops

Over 20 workshops were held with different groups of youth leaders, council workers, and councillors. In 2010, a Good Governance workshop organized by the Council's Youth Officer provided youth leaders with knowledge on governance concepts and practices, which they used to demand better governance during the periodic *Have Your Say* meetings with councillors and constituents in the villages.

In August 2012, 12 youth leaders and 12 community leaders attended a Joint Youth Action-Planning workshop with their counterparts from neighbouring Tubah Council where they elaborated a two-year Youth Action Plan (2012-2014) for Santa's and Tubah's respective youth policies.

In 2012 and 2014, 20 youth leaders joined a group of 330 participants in a series of advocacy workshops focused on Youth Policy Development and Implementation in 15 municipal councils organized by YOP. During these workshops, participants engaged in open, frank, and respectful discussions, and often sought collaboration to address the issues raised. Decisions were made through consensus with participants, occasionally with reservations pending the opinion of non-participants.



Figure 3. Youth participants at an advocacy workshop

Have Your Say dialogue forums

In 2010, Santa Council organized periodic youth-led social accountability meetings with over 1,000 participants, including youth, community members, and traditional authorities. These meetings were either held at the community market square or in of councillors' respective villages (i.e., constituencies). The forums allowed youth and community members to evaluate what the Council was doing well and how it could improve the lives of citizens. Youth participated in three ways: (a) students were engaged in a drawing competition based on their vision for Santa; (b) some youth submitted written suggestions for improvements to Santa Council; and (c) others shared their suggestions using the microphone. Santa Council received a great deal of criticism, particularly concerning the absence of good farm-to-market roads, fertilizer factories, streetlights (solar panels) for security, and youth employment. Council, on its part, justified its choices and explained budgetary realities. These demands were later deliberated upon during council sessions, but most projects were rejected as implementation costs would exceed Council's budget.

Action-Learning and Planning (ALP) meetings

Upon developing the 2010 Local Economic Development (LED) Plan for Santa, the Council appointed councillors, council workers, and youth leaders from the *Have Your Say* team to participate in action-learning and planning sessions focused on Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) in the management of community projects. This exercise aimed at reviewing the council budget and re-prioritizing activities for implementation. Deep reflection led the team to determine which projects could help alleviate poverty in the municipality, which could yield income for the Council, which would be sustainable, and how to ensure adequate budgeting for educational purposes. Most of the selected projects aimed to improve natural resource management in Santa. Youth leaders presented the youths' concerns and ensured that the priority activities selected addressed these. Overall, these reflections enabled participants to improve their ability to plan, execute, evaluate, draw lessons, and use learnings from community actions.

Town Hall meetings

Two major town hall meetings were held in 2012 and 2015, with youth and community leaders deliberating on key issues to include in the Municipal Youth Policy and to ensure it follows the spirit of the National Youth Policy adopted in 2012. The 2015 meeting was a review session that incorporated emerging concerns and actions into the Youth Policy drafted in 2012. The meeting was attended by a diverse group of female and male youth leaders from all 10 villages, as well as community leaders such as the Mayor, Councillors, council workers, the Delegate of the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education, and the Director of the Community Education and Action Centre, a development agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and

Rural Development. The cohesion among different stakeholders was remarkable, as both the youth and community leaders took turns to make presentations and receive feedback on their proposed actions, perspectives, and prospects. Deliberations were quite lengthy and differences were resolved, but the post-2013 Council did not maintain their predecessor's commitment to adopt the Municipal Youth Policy developed in 2012.



Figure 4. Town hall meeting with youth leaders

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The goal of developing and implementing a Municipal Youth Policy in Santa was partially achieved, as the Youth Policy Framework and Youth Action Plan were developed and reviewed twice. While the Municipal Youth Policy was not formally adopted, given that it was not a priority for the post-2013 council leadership, various aspects of the Municipal Youth Action Plan were implemented, leading to a number of key outcomes. These include increased employment, entrepreneurship, and volunteering in the communities, as well as a stronger perception of youth as credible and legitimate voices in community development conversations.



Figure 5. Presentation of draft youth policy

Increased entrepreneurship and employment

The pre-2013 Council often sponsored youth-oriented actions, and paid volunteer allowances under the Santa Youth Volunteering Scheme, adopted and implemented in 2011 as a response to demands for increased promotion of youth employment and employability. It successfully recruited over 50 volunteer nurses and teachers who later gained employment with the government. The scheme has remained functional in Santa since then, enabling an increasing number of young farmers and single mothers to gain entrepreneurial skills and obtain micro-grants from YOP and VSO-Cuso International.

A strengthened culture of volunteering

This initiative equally inspired youth and adults to embrace volunteering as a way of sustaining community development programmes. It has also fostered a culture whereby individuals and groups are happy to dedicate their time and effort to realise various tasks in support of development in Santa.

Increased youth visibility and credibility for public participation

Youth leaders gained visibility and credibility as they were invited to join public deliberations. After the adoption of the National Youth Policy in 2012, Santa's youth leaders joined their counterparts across Northwest Cameroon to compile youth signatures to petition the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education and the National Assembly of Cameroon to translate the National Youth Policy and adopt a text of application to speed up the adoption of their Municipal Youth Policy.



Figure 6. Youth policy deliberations with Council

A significant number of youth now thirsted for engagement

Repeated pushback from Council caused a significant number of youth to shift their engagement through other channels and to mobilise for demonstrations and civil disobedience. Since 2016, many youth have joined a broad movement (Ambazonia) in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon to demand for an end to widespread human rights violations and poor governance at both municipal and national levels. However, their actions have been plagued by violence (destruction of property, assaults, and killing) perpetrated by both the youth and the military. In this context, the local economy is stagnating, as businesses, banks, and public transactions are closed up to three days a week, and lawyers have been on strike since October 2016. Students have lost two academic years due to threats of violence by angry youth who are resolute to push forward the Ambazonian agenda, given that municipal and national governments have consistently disregarded their demands and no concrete step has been taken to open up dialogue to address their issues.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

Several lessons emerge as a result of Santa's experience with engaging youth in policy development. These centre on the long-term nature of political change, the implications of leadership change for political space, policy priorities and advocacy approaches, as well as the tenacity of mobilized youth to push for change over time.

Building momentum over time

Changes in policy and practice often occur over long periods of time. The sustained engagement of youth through multiple channels of public deliberation fostered a longer-term outlook for engagement. For Santa Council, it allowed for a broader understanding of youth priorities and actions, and, over time, greater social accountability. Continuous engagement in training workshops and public deliberations over the period also fostered solidarity among the youth, which in turn has reinforced their resolve to demand for more effective political accountability and youth integration in decision-making.

The challenges of leadership changes

After the National Youth Policy was adopted in 2012, there was an expectation in Santa that a Municipal Youth Policy would likewise be adopted. Yet the latter was halted by the council leadership elected in 2013. This is a reminder that political processes are in no small part affected by the will of those in positions of power and authority. In a context as highly politicized as Santa, a change in leadership meant a significant change of direction and priority for the Municipal Youth Policy. This dynamic continues with the recent death of Mayor Khan in September 2017, and his replacement in November 2017 by Fon Samkie Elvis Ganyam to complete his term of office. While Ganyam comes with priorities that offer little hope of renewed collaboration and integration of youth in decision-making processes, political will for the Municipal Youth Policy may be rekindled after the 2018 Municipal elections.

The challenge of turnover and external dependency

In 2014, VSO-Cuso closed down its operations in Cameroon, bringing to an end the institutional development partnership in Santa and to the accompanying financing and facilitation of social accountability meetings. One year later, YOP eliminated its support for Youth Policy Advocacy. This, along with the departure of the Santa Council's volunteer Youth Officer in 2013, left Council with no direct youth involvement in council management. This marked reduction in support posed a challenge for meaningful youth participation in municipal governance in Santa, as this type of engagement often requires dedicated human resources and financial commitment to succeed.

Closing political space and shifting youth advocacy

The post-2013 era in Santa has been marked with youth discontent and poor governance practices expressed through an authoritative style of municipal leadership. Council has been disengaged and generally unavailable and unresponsive to citizens. Youth have clamoured for the adoption of the Municipal Youth Policy, but have been neglected by Council. They have instead been met with barriers to accessing Council and to influencing its institutional development strategy in any way. In this climate, the fact that youth in Santa have joined the Ambazonia movement speaks to their continued engagement. Even though Santa has become heavily militarised, youth are maintaining their involvement in their struggle to have a voice by participating in demonstrations and civil disobedience, despite the risk of assault, arrest, and even death or exile. Perhaps an illustration of youth passion and determination, it is noteworthy that as the political and civic space in Santa has shrunk with the new administration, youth are adapting and finding different ways to maintain pressure and carry the struggle for youth voice forward.

Building on a foundation of mobilized youth

The use of multiple deliberative processes in Santa did ignite youth engagement as it expanded their voices and choices. Their engagement with Council in support of a Municipal Youth Policy equally fostered the Council's use of citizen-centred and youth-inclusive approaches in their decision-making mechanism—at least until 2013. Thus, the adoption and partial implementation of the Municipal Youth Policy constitutes a solid foundation upon which to continue efforts towards building peace, reducing violent conflict, facilitating dialogue, creating economic opportunities, and promoting good governance practices in Santa such that youth are meaningfully included in the public decisions that affect their lives.

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External Links

Santa Council Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Santa.Council/>

Youth Outreach Programme blog <https://yopcam.wordpress.com/>

Youth Outreach Programme Facebook pages

<https://www.facebook.com/YOPCam/>, <https://www.facebook.com/yop.cameroon>

Santa Town Hall Meetings with Youth Leaders <https://www.facebook.com/YOPCam/photos/a.10151545769148764.1073741828.277875203763/10153214697558764/?type=3&theater>

Youth Policy Deliberation https://www.facebook.com/yop.cameroon/media_set?set=a.1695132110009.88153.1589036416&type=3

<https://www.facebook.com/YOPCam/photos/a.10151545769148764.1073741828.277875203763/10153214697253764/?type=3&theater>

Joint Youth Action Planning Workshop <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151027037171497&set=t.1589036416&type=3&theater>

Workshop on Youth Policy advocacy, implementation and monitoring <https://www.facebook.com/YOPCam/photos/a.10151545769148764.1073741828.277875203763/10152524476338764/?type=3&theater>

The Women's Advocacy Platform: Promoting Gender-inclusive Governance in Juaboso District (Ghana)

Patricia Blankson Akakpo, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

The Juaboso District is located in the northern part of the Western Region of Ghana. Even though 30% of government appointees to district assemblies are reserved for women, in 2012 a recognizance survey by the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) revealed a low representation of women in the assembly. Out of 23 assembly members, including five government appointees, only three (or 13%) were women: two elected and one appointed (Nunoo, 2013).

The situation was further compounded by women's low socio-economic status. According to the Ghana Statistical Report (2014), literacy rates is higher among males (75%) than females (61.9%), in part due to high school dropout rates due to teenage pregnancy. Many women in the District had low incomes and insecure livelihoods, dependent on the cocoa seasons. The main economic activity in the district is agriculture, which engages about 76.2% of the workforce. And while the majority of them are women, only a few women owned cash crop farms. There was therefore a need for women in Juaboso District to strengthen their collective voice and push for gender-responsive local governance structures and processes that promote women's rights, women's empowerment, and gender equality.

The *'Empowering women to effectively engage in local governance and development planning'* project (WE4LGDP) was one of NETRIGHT's responses to these challenges. The project aimed at strengthening the agency of women and their groups in Juaboso District to effectively engage in local governance and development planning at the community and district levels.

WE4LGDP led to the creation of the Women's Advisory Platform (WAP), a collective platform made up of women's groups in the communities. The WAP showcases how empowered collective voice enhances citizens' democratic participation in local governance and development.

History

Ghanaian women have been active in politics and have contributed to the social, economic, and political life of Ghana since independence. They have also participated in policy-making on women's issues and gender equity, both nationally and internationally. In spite of this long history of engagement, women are largely absent from mainstream policy-making and political decision-making processes (Tsikata, 2009).

Women make up 51.2% of the Ghanaian population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014); however, their participation in politics, public life, and decision-making processes is abysmally low. This can be attributed to several reasons, including deep-seated patriarchal norms, which impact stereotypes and influence perceptions of women and girls' roles and capabilities in the political arena. The Government of Ghana (GOG) has worked at providing the legal and policy frameworks for the promotion and protection of women's rights at all levels. However, serious challenges remain due to a lack of implementation of these policies, arising from the lack of political will, insufficient directives to the relevant agencies, and logistical and human resource challenges among other reasons. Consequently, Ghanaian women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in several spheres of social, political, and economic endeavours (NETRIGHT, 2013).

The Western Region of Ghana continues to register low female representation and participation rates in local government, particularly in the northern districts. A preliminary study by NETRIGHT in 2012 revealed that women and women's groups in these districts had limited capacity to engage duty bearers and other local actors to consider the gender implications of development planning and public policy in order to address the gender inequalities that abound in the area and to promote women and girls' human rights.

As a women's rights and economic justice advocacy organization, NETRIGHT is interested in contributing to civil society's engagement to enhance citizen participation in public policy. It therefore designed the WE4LGDP project to contribute towards facilitating citizen engagement, and in particular the participation of women, in local governance and development planning in Juaboso District.

The project was based on the premise that informed participation, a key ingredient for addressing the paucity of gender considerations in Ghana's local governance and development agenda, can only be achieved by strengthening the capacity of women at the local level to engage with their local government officials. The project equipped women with skills and tools to advocate for a development agenda directed towards the elimination of gender inequalities in their communities.

Originating Entities and Funding

In 2013, under USAID-funded NETRIGHT's WE4LGDP programme, in which women leaders and groups in Juaboso District led a 7-month advocacy intervention enabling them to increase their voice in local governance, development planning and budgeting processes. The intervention led to the creation of the Women's Advisory Platform (WAP), a collective platform made up of women in the communities. WAP engaged with traditional leaders, local government officials, and assembly members and other key local actors to discuss livelihood issues and the development agenda of the District. NETRIGHT provided the technical expertise

and human resource with the Juaboso District Assembly offered logistical support to facilitate the work of WAP.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

In order to increase the participation of women in governance and the responsiveness of local government to the needs of women, NETRIGHT, with support from its Western Regional focal point,³ a local contact, and the District Assembly identified and selected 35 women leaders. The leaders, representing at least 15 communities in Juaboso District, participated in a 2-day workshop on gender analysis, leadership, and advocacy skills. Participants were selected based on their leadership roles in their communities and/or groups and their capacity to serve as change agents and facilitators once trained.

The training enabled women to assess the District's medium-term development plan and to engage duty bearers on matters of gender inequalities, women's livelihoods, and the District's development agenda. Further, it was the trained beneficiaries who established the WAP, which led advocacy initiatives in the communities, created awareness on gender inequalities, and called on traditional leaders and local authorities to address the needs of women and girls.

Methods and Tools Used

A number of participatory methods were employed to empower women to engage effectively with duty bearers and in local governance generally. Methods included gender and advocacy training for women, consultations with key stakeholder groups, network building, advocacy, and gender-responsive budget analysis. A participatory and gender-responsive approach was adopted throughout all activities to allow for interactive discussion of critical gender issues in the District.

Gender and Advocacy training: This promoted an enabling and empowering atmosphere for learning and sharing about effective advocacy around gender equality and development issues. Tools used included focus group discussions, presentations, role plays, and open discussions. Facilitators ensured that all participants had an equal chance to participate actively and contribute their views and perspectives in the discussions.

Consultations: These included women-only meetings to encourage those who had challenges raising critical issues in the midst of their male counterparts to free feel to express their opinions without any fear of victimization. General meetings attended by both women and men were also organised to discuss gender inequalities in the District. Further, to encourage

³ Advocates and Trainers of Children, and Women's Advancement and Rights (ATCWAR) is NETRIGHT's Regional Focal Point in the Western Region.

acceptance and ownership of the project in the District, NETRIGHT held consultations with District Assembly officials, assembly members, queen mothers, traditional rulers, and opinion leaders in the district to introduce the project and solicit inputs from the communities.

Network building: An inclusive and participatory platform was created to enable mutual interactions among the different stakeholders, with each being recognized as a critical actor in their own right. These efforts led to the formation of WAPs across the District.

Advocacy: The WAPs were used as a space to engage decision makers and duty bearers, and to seek to influence their priorities and decisions around matters pertaining to gender representation and equality. Key tactics included:

- convening stakeholders to secure commitments;
- joint strategy development;
- community engagement; and
- public awareness raising through community radio and *durbars*.

Participatory budget analysis: Citizens and government officials jointly analyzed the district budget, assessing its gender responsiveness.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

The trained women leaders brought together leaders of existing women’s groups to form Women’s Advocacy Platforms (WAPs) in their communities. Leaders of the community-level platforms then formed the district-level WAP, holding roundtable discussions with district officials and traditional authorities on gender issues in the local government planning and budgeting processes. The WAP explored entry points and built relationships with local duty bearers and community leaders. It provided communities with the opportunity to voice their concerns about gender issues through community engagements such as *durbars*—public events to engage an audience—and community radio call-in programmes, described on the following pages.

In order to enhance interaction among participants at each meeting, a facilitation team ensured an enabling atmosphere for interaction by using the local language and allowing participants to openly discuss



Figure 7. Women leaders in Juaboso district

critical issues of concern in their communities and to demand accountability from duty bearers. Individuals from the communities were identified as focal persons to coordinate the various activities that would come out of the discussions. Key points in the process included meetings aimed at getting mutual commitment, roundtables for strategy development, community engagement, and public awareness raising.

Securing commitments from duty bearers and stakeholders

The Women's Advocacy Platform (WAP) identified and compiled key issues of concern in the communities which perpetuate gender inequalities, including:

- gender-based violence;
- non-involvement of women in the District's development agenda; and
- discriminatory religious and cultural practices.

The WAP then focused on these issues to engage different actors in the communities, to demand accountability, transparency, and greater gender responsiveness. In doing so, they secured the commitment of traditional leaders, the District Assembly and other key local actors around:

- accepting and supporting WAP;
- working as non-partisan collective to ensure the sustainability of WAP;
- promoting gender equality and equitable local resource distribution;
- supporting gender-inclusive and accountable governance;
- collaborating with the District Assembly to undertake gender-responsive planning and budgeting; and
- challenging WAP to lead advocacy initiatives. (NETRIGHT, 2013)

The WAP then tracked progress on these commitments and followed up on pending issues.

Roundtables: Strategy development with duty bearers and key actors

Roundtable discussions were held with District Assembly members and officials, traditional and opinion leaders in the communities to discuss issues compiled and to collectively brainstorm on strategies to address these. The strategy, further developed by WAP, provided in-depth insight into gender gaps in the communities. It proposed a way forward for communities to work together to address these gaps and to facilitate a gender-responsive development agenda in the District.

Community engagement: Durbars and community radio

Community *durbars*—public gatherings of traditional leaders, state and non-state actors, and the general public—were held to educate the local population on the gender gaps in the communities and its adverse impact on community development. The WAP also reached out to a wider local audience through community radio programs to increase awareness of the needs of women and girls in the communities. This contributed to engaging the local population in calling for a gender-responsive development plan and budget in the District.



Figure 8. Woman speaks during a district durbar

Engaging the community in this way also contributed to getting support from the District Assembly, traditional leaders, in particular the queen mothers and opinion leaders.

Community radio phone-in programs

The WAP, with the support of the District Assembly, hosted a weekly call-in radio program to discuss specific development issues in a selected community through a gender lens. As the lead facilitator, WAP matched radio hosts with resource persons from institutions working on the weekly topic and who could respond to listeners' questions. The radio program helped create public awareness and increase demands on duty bearers to take actions addressing community needs within the District.

Participation in budget analysis and gender audit

The dual approach of establishing relationships with local government officials and fostering community engagement around gender issues was consolidated with a multi-stakeholder meeting in the District. This meeting brought together local government officials and their constituents—including women who were now equipped to interrogate development plans and budgets—to conduct a gender responsiveness audit of District development plans and budgets.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

Generally, the intended outcomes for the WE4LGDP project was achieved, based on the objectives set and the final evaluation. Results included:

Community acceptance and ownership

The community entry—which involved meeting different actors prior to project implementation—created awareness and built the needed support among key actors for project acceptance and ownership by the District. This broad buy-in created a stronger collective voice and more compelling demands for accountability, which led to the success of WAP’s activities.



Figure 9. Women organizing during the Juaboso community entry

Evidence-based advocacy

The WAP’s 7-month advocacy interventions resulted in the compilation of critical gender issues in the District, which were presented as credible data to the District Assembly, traditional leaders, and other local actors such as the district offices of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) for redress.

The evidence collected formed a basis on which the WAP could make a series of concrete demands, including:

- the provision of good drinking water;
- the institution of girl-child education fund;
- sponsorship packages for female students;
- an Employable Skills Fund for women;
- the extension of a school feeding program to all communities;
- the establishment of daycare centers;
- the extension of an ongoing market project; and
- the provision of electricity to all communities.

Members of the WAP were assigned specific demands to follow up on, and at the end of the project, most demands had either been met or measures were being taken to meet them (NETRIGHT, 2013).

Collective responsibility

Key actors in the District, including traditional leaders, signed a statement prepared in collaboration with WAP indicating their support for gender-responsive local governance and development planning for the District. At one of the *durbars*, the heads of institutions, the District Chief Executive (DCE), and representatives from traditional authorities and religious bodies pledged to work with the WAP on a non-partisan basis. They challenged the WAP to actively engage the existing allies, while exploring new entry points to enhance community engagement. The signed commitment statement provided an effective guidepost for the District Assembly's support to WAP's work.

Juaboso District Assembly's plans and policies for gender reforms

As part of measures to address gender inequalities, the Juaboso District Assembly put in place plans to reactivate, empower, and ensure the effective functioning of Unit Committees and Area Councils at the community level.⁴ The purpose of these bodies was to enhance community engagement, and, in particular, women's participation in local governance and development processes in the District. The measures included setting up offices for Area Councils in the communities where citizens could go to discuss issues confronting them. In addition, the District Assembly contacted the Institute of Local Governance Studies (ILGS) to provide training for Unit Committee and Area Council members, and plans were developed to reconstitute all committees to ensure women's representation through the provision of quotas.

Furthermore, the District Assembly developed a gender policy to guide its operations and serve as a framework to assess its own gender responsiveness. WAP also worked with the District Planning and Budget Officers and queen mothers to influence community development from a gendered perspective.

Challenges

In spite of achieving the intended outcomes, WAP encountered some challenges that helped in sharpening their focus on achieving the gains made. Challenges included:

- overcoming timing issues for meetings, which had to be scheduled to early mornings and evenings because farming is the main occupation in the District;

⁴ These bodies are part of the District Assembly (DA) structure at the community level. Unit committees are formed at the lowest level of the local government structure and make up that area's Area Council. Their mandate is to bring governance closer to the people by mobilizing the people for the implementation of self-help and development projects. They also educate the people on their rights and responsibilities. A unit is normally a settlement or group of settlements with not more than 1000 people for rural areas and 1500 for urban areas (ILGS, 2010).

- a lack of funds for mobilization, due to meeting times and the required logistics to mobilize the focal persons;
- unstable power supply and outages that interrupted evening meetings and other WAP activities. This was overcome by calling on the District Assembly to provide alternative power sources (e.g., generators) during outages;
- progressive gender reform plans that were not matched with dedicated funds from the District Assembly; and
- the lack of funds to support the WAP's work in the communities, which was overcome in part by WAP's approach of working through the existing community groups that made up the platform.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

A number of lessons can be drawn from this experience that pertain to enhancing citizen participation, and, in particular, empowering women for increased collective voice in community development and governance processes. The lessons may also offer important considerations around designing advocacy projects to promote democratic citizen participation, gender equality, and accountable and transparent governance. These include lessons on:

Securing commitment

The initial community entry—which involved discussing the project and soliciting inputs from different community actors—contributed immensely to the commitment shown by the stakeholders. WAP engaged various bodies such as traditional leaders, state and non-state institutions, formal and informal workers, persons with disabilities, and religious leaders among



Figure 10. *Bringing stakeholders together during the Juaboso community entry*

others. Engaging these specific groups was key in getting all stakeholders on board to support its activities and in developing actions that would benefit a diverse cross-section of community members. Furthermore, identifying well-known and well-respected local contacts in the communities helped secure the commitment required for implementation and to achieve results. This broad commitment and engagement allowed for NETRIGHT to play a facilitating role.

Establishing good rapport

Good rapport between WAP and stakeholders enhanced successful project implementation and the latter's commitment to achieving project outcomes. This created a harmonious working relationship for project implementation.

Delegation and inclusiveness

Due to the project's scope, WAP and NETRIGHT developed a work plan jointly with key stakeholders, identifying roles and responsibilities for specific tasks. This ensured the inclusion and a deepened knowledge base among local organisers and actors involved, both in terms of project content and expected outcomes.

Scheduling activities

It was important to take the occupation of target populations into account when scheduling activities. Mostly farmers, traders and other self-employed persons, community members were preoccupied with their work during daytime; therefore, evening programmes were better attended. Activities that coincided with market days were poorly attended by communities, especially women.

Media involvement

Media involvement is key to effective advocacy and project implementation. The media was identified as a key actor, and the project established a relationship with a core group of local media houses. WAP then created awareness among the core media group to facilitate a better understanding of the project focus. This enhanced the dissemination of information and generated public discourse on issues confronting women in the communities. The media also served as a watchdog in getting duty bearers to respond to gender and development issues raised.

On working towards gender equality

Because gender equality involves working to shift power relations, quantifying results and attributing outcomes can be complex. However, the ability that women acquired to interrogate

the development agenda suggests an increased awareness of their rights. This is an indication that deep-seated change is gradual. It is clear that WAP's efforts—and the resulting actions from other actors such as the District Assembly and traditional authorities—have contributed to the promotion of women's engagement in local governance processes, and that these are important steps on the path to gender equality.

Conclusion

WAP's activities in Juaboso District not only increased women's voice in community development, it also increased awareness of the need for broader citizen engagement. The local population, in particular women, became more interested in governance and demanded greater accountability, equity, and transparency from the District Assembly and other duty bearers. In leading their own intervention through WAP, community women provided the evidence that they were ready to engage in district development processes and must be supported to do so. Finally, this type of women-led, collaborative advocacy for more inclusive and gender-responsive local governance represents a step in closing the ongoing gender gaps in political representation in this region of Ghana.

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External Links

NETRIGHT: Link to the *Strengthening Women's Agency for Effective Engagement in Local Governance and Development* project: <http://netrightghana.org/economicjustics.html>

Enhancing People’s Participation in Local Radio in Nepal

Bhumiraj Chapagain, with Julien Landry, Catherine Irving and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

In Nepal, local radio has a key role in providing free and easy access to information. It has been an effective communication medium to exchange information, ideas, and opinion to every sector of society. Key to the democratic space, local radio provides a venue for citizens’ voices to express opinions and share culturally relevant information.

Radio is still an essential medium of information in Nepal, with a literacy rate at 65.9% and 39% attaining primary level education (CBS, 2011). For many populations in remote areas, local radio is the only medium for expression and source of information. However, a 2016 survey of media and democracy in Nepal tracked declining rates of participation and smaller audiences (Sharecast, 2016). In a country that has 123 languages, 125 castes/ethnic groups, 10 religions, and many social classes (CBS, 2011), this trend is all the more concerning in terms of connecting citizens to information and to each other.

Participation in radio, for example, through letter writing, phones calls, emails, SMS or social media engagement, had decreased to 3.4% of respondents by 2017 (Sharecast, 2017). Listening pattern were declining since 2013. With many local radios broadcasting centrally-produced content, the space for such local content and participation has been further reduced: from 92% total, and 60% daily listeners in September 2013 (Internews-Nepal, 2013) to 72% total, and 35% daily listeners in 2016 (Sharecast, 2016). The same survey further revealed that people want to listen to their own voices, stories, and local news and programming on local radio.

There was a concern that local radio stations lack audience demographic information to inform program content and ensure relevance to the community they serve. Local radios—both commercial and community-based⁵—were found to have insufficient social and demographic information on their audiences. Very few project-based studies on the media landscape, and a lack of internal status tools for radios to understand and diagnose their internal health, left the radio sector’s management, audience, and resources in a poor state. For instance, a senior leader in the community radio acknowledged in 2018 that 18 stations were shut down and another 27 failed to renew their FM license (A. Giri, personal communication, March 2018).⁶

⁵ The Nepalese government has similar provisions and regulations for commercial and community-based radios in terms of licensing, taxation, and regulation. For this reason, Sharecast targets both community and commercial radios (as a local radio) in its work, focusing on improving content and engagement in programming, regardless of radio ownership.

⁶ Mr. Arjun Giri is the senior vice-president of Association of Community Radio Broadcaster (ACORAB). ACORAB is a national umbrella association of community radios in Nepal.

In the commercial radio sector, 14 stations shut down and 20 failed to renew licenses (C. Neupane, personal communication, March 2018),⁷ pointing to sustainability challenges.

To confront these challenges, starting in 2015, Sharecast Initiative Nepal (Sharecast) sought to strengthen local radio by bridging audiences with local radios through data transparency, and engaging radio operators and staff in participatory processes aimed at responding to listeners' priorities.

History

Nepal is a pioneer in the FM radio broadcasting sector in South Asia and has had over 740 FM licenses issued by 2017 (MOIC, 2017). There is no policy governing community or commercial as distinct functions, and any company or organization can get an FM license without providing any feasibility study or needs assessment. This has resulted in an overcrowded radio sector, with a majority going on air without an understanding of their audience's profile, interests, or needs.

Radio is widely credited with improving political participation and deepening democracy in Nepal. When it comes to holding government to account, several observers have also argued that it is possible to achieve the most impact at the local level (BBC Media Action, 2016, pp. 12–13). Based on results from one study, radios that do not involve community people in preparation and implementation of their radio programs are weaker (ACORAB, 2012, p. 53). This is further illustration of the importance of an engaged relationship between radio and its audience.

Despite a history of strong public engagement in independent radio in earlier decades and “people [in Nepal who are not] afraid to speak on air” (Onta, 2008, p. 343), more than 75% of local radio stations are now in crisis (BBC Media Action, 2016). It is in this context that Sharecast engaged with local radio and their audiences in 2015.

Originating Entities and Funding

Sharecast, a not-for-profit distributing company established in 2013, is a new media organization focused on promoting digital content sharing and distribution online and through local radios in Nepal. It believes that audience data, innovation, and institutionalization can build a strong foundation for sustainable local media. It has been working to strengthen

⁷ Mr. Chandra Neupane is the Secretary General of the Broadcasting Association of Nepal (BAN). BAN is a national umbrella association of commercial radios in Nepal.

local radio since 2015. Their work has been funded by National Endowment for Democracy and Open Society Foundation.

Eighteen local radios participated in the audience survey initiative, which was funded through multiple partners through various Kathmandu-based media companies. Participating local radios also contributed logistical and transportation resources for trainings and workshops. Other media organizations and production houses contributed funds for the audience data initiative.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

A pilot project was done with 10 local radio stations that were selected based on their location (covering seven provinces), population distribution, and their willingness and commitment to participate.

The Media and Democracy Survey was the major component used to engage local citizens and collect their opinion. Sharecast had been doing regular annual media surveys since 2015. This survey was done using a random sampling (probability sampling) method in each stage of sampling. That is:

- First, wards were selected using a probability proportion to population size (PPS) sampling method.
- Second, households were selected using systematic random sampling.
- Third, respondents from the sample household were selected using the KISH Grid Method.

There were equal chances for all citizens to be selected as respondents. The survey methodology selected respondents from across the country. Once identified, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 4535 respondents from 301 wards in the first wave and 5555 respondents from 370 wards in the second wave. The interview length was about 40 minutes, in which respondents provided their opinions on local radio content, democracy, and local governance. The demographic profile of respondents was closely matched to census data in the same areas.

Workshops and trainings were held entirely in-house within radio stations. Thus, participants were radio members and board and staff members because they are the key informant and players for internal enhancement. Local people who were members of local radio and in the board and entire staff members participated in SWOT and ABCD analyses of the media and radio in the region.

Methods and Tools Used

Multiple methods were used during this initiative.

Audience surveys: Citizens were surveyed and asked to express their views on current radio programs, desired content, and perceptions about local government and democracy.

Strengths-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis: This was applied to analyze the situation of local radio as part of a workshop.

Asset Based Community Development: ABCD analysis was applied as part of a workshop to understand, map, and document resources around what the local community has pertaining to local radios.

Programme Re-designing Workshops: These were organized to analyze current programs and in response to people's need.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Citizens and radio operators participated and interacted in different ways during the various activities.

During audience surveys

The national Media and Democracy survey was conducted to understand citizens' perspectives, opinions, and perceptions on media and democracy in Nepal. An initial consultation workshop with radio experts and radio managers was carried out while developing the questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was designed and uploaded to mobile-based survey software and face-to-face interviews were conducted using the mobile devices (with field GPS location). Data corresponding to respondent's names, contact and GPS location were destroyed just after the fieldwork. The survey is done annually, with reports published.

In April 2016 and in March 2017, survey findings were shared as part of an interactive workshop bringing together media organizations, radio managers, and donors supporting the media sector. The data and findings were then disseminated for public consumption via social media.

During SWOT and ABCD workshop

This set of 3-day workshops was carried out to diagnose the internal health of local radios and to identify possible solutions to identified issues, building on local assets. Sharecast

has facilitated both SWOT and ABCD workshop. Journalists, radio members from the local community, and the radio board participated in the SWOT analysis and asset-mapping sessions. The same group continued through a data-sharing discussion and later participated in the programme re-design workshop. In-house SWOT and ABCD sessions were done within piloted 10-radio stations locally. At this point, local radios had never explored what community assets they could potentially mobilize to benefit both the radio and their community.

During programme re-designing workshops

Based on the survey data and the outcomes from the SWOT and ABCD sessions, 10 programme re-design workshops were held between 2016 and 2017 with individual radio stations., these workshops were conducted. Radio members, representatives from radio board of directors, and entire staff gathered to re-think their programming. They identified how their radio could address peoples' needs and respond to their interests and concerns by shifting programs, timing, format, etc. They discussed both the current programmes and those audiences would prefer. Discussion were centered how radio can open multiple doors to ensure greater participation and address local problems through radio content. Different programme timetables were developed to fit listeners' concerns. In these ways, local radios were re-designed and programming revised to incorporate health, education, personal finances, issues around accountability, and good governance to ensure responsive local governments. Radios also added more Vox pop, reports, interviews, and local news.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The initiative led to significant changes to people-centric programming, increases in the size of audiences, improved participation in programming, and improved internal management.

Shedding light on local radio audiences' interests and priorities

Audience data was the entry point for this initiative, which provided an evidence base for local radios to build on. The audience survey uncovered broader audience perspectives and demonstrated what people really want to hear on their local radio. This information became an eye-opener to local radios to move forward for further community engagement. The data, made publicly available, was also useful to other media houses who have used it to redesign their own programmes.

Collective analysis for more responsive and sustainable local radio

As a pilot, this was the first time that radio operators had performed a SWOT analysis. It allowed them to look at their work critically and to analyze the situation together with board members

and staff to understand and diagnose a way forward. As a participatory process (as opposed to a donor requirement) it helped participants know their context and how to navigate it to the benefit of communities and radios. Common realizations from all piloted radios included:

- There was not enough programming for citizen participation;
- Marked very few programmes in which people have more need and interest and really want to listen;
- Identification and realization of the deeper gap and crisis in internal management in staff, programmes, and networking; and
- Understanding of very weak promotional activities about radio programme and poor branding.

Facing these realizations enabled radios to develop and implement plans of action to overcome identified problems, gaps, and crises. Workshops also prompted actions by some managers, department heads, and other staff that were undertaken with community support. These were aimed at developing strategies and plans and setting goals for future direction.

Mobilizing assets for greater citizen engagement in local media

ABCD was applied for the first time in the Nepalese radio sector to understand local assets and opportunities and possible allies and collaborators around local radios. ABCD not only showed the citizens' contribution to local radio, but also furthered ideas for collaboration with local agencies and associations. Radios identified long lists of possible community contributors on content for programming. This has increased both citizen engagement and other collaborations with local agencies in content, information, and resource production.

Increase in community-centered programming

Local radios have been broadcasting more public interest programming, with many making it available to their audiences anytime using website and other mobile-based applications. Alongside more local reports, content includes Vox pop music and issue-based interviews and programmes. Some radios have been incorporating social media channels such as Facebook, Viber, and Twitter to increase people's participation and as feedback mechanisms for listeners. This has significantly increased public interactivity and engagement in local radio content.

Growing audiences and sustainability

At a follow-up review workshop done in February 2018, two years after the successful pilot, radio managers claimed that the initiative has helped to increase both the size and participation of audiences. Sharecast has also identified good connections between the

audience size and members' levels of engagement, revealed in the audience survey and review workshop. Radios increased their audience size by 20% on average, between 2015 and 2017 (Sharecast, 2017). The initiative has also contributed to strengthening radios' internal management and thereby improving sustainability.

Increased transparency and access to information

Through this initiative, local radios also began archiving local news stories and programmes, making it available on websites and podcast platform such as *Shubhayatra* and *Hamro patro* mobile applications. To make information even more accessible, Sharecast recently launched its own *Nepali Podcast* app, in order to empower audiences to create demand based on the quality and diversity of content. These measures all contribute to increasing transparency and to enabling people to access the information they require as active citizens. In this respect, radios have also been covering news from local governments and organizing small public hearings in the community to ensure local government is accountable.

Analysis and Lessons Learned:

A number of lessons can be identified from this experience.

Democratizing the flow of information

The most powerful component on this initiative was information. Data generated about local radio audiences' preferences, priorities, and perceptions set off a process of transformation in local radios seeking to be responsive. In doing so, the facilitated process enabled information about the radio to surface for collective analysis and action planning. This is an illustration of how transparency can often influence other elements of good governance, such as responsiveness, participation, and accountability.

Making local radio a platform for citizen voice

A key learning for radio operators was that without people-centric content and sound management, local radio could not survive. For this, local participation was discovered as a pre-requisite, harkening back to the early days of Nepalese radio when this was the case. This current focus reinforces the need for a strong link between local radio and a local community.

Local radio as a local democratic space

The role of local radio as a forum for local democratic engagement was reinforced during the programme review meeting in 2018, where people still expressed unease at complaining directly to elected representatives, public officials, or service providers, yet felt very comfortable to talk through their local radio and express their opinions.

Using multiple approaches to enhance local radio responsiveness

Through a series of ongoing activities engaging both audiences and local radios, Sharecast built the confidence and capacity of local radios to respond to and engage their audiences. While the actions undertaken as part of this initiative were being piloted in this sector, the sequencing of methods was effective in enhancing local radio responsiveness.

Importance of internal sustainability

A key learning for many local radios was that the performance and sustainability of their internal management and systems were completely linked to their ability and willingness to adapt to the needs of their audiences. A key way forward, then, is to continually assess the relationship with the audience and the quality of their engagement.

Overcoming challenges

Some of the challenges experienced through this initiative included:

- Turnover due to high external migration;
- Requirement for continuous and close follow-up and monitoring;
- Expectation of monetary or technical support, both of which were not available;
- Insufficient skilled human resource for some radios to execute their plan of action on time; and
- Generating funds for project activities.

To overcome these, Sharecast partnered with various media agencies and generated the survey costs locally. To help the local radios, Sharecast waived the survey cost for the 2018 survey. In return, radios agreed to contribute towards logistical, travel, and training expenses, further attesting to the level of buy-in and commitment on their part.

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Youth with Disabilities' Advocacy for Inclusion and Participation in Uganda

Betty Cheptoek, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problem and Purpose

Cultural beliefs and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities (PWDs) in Uganda make it difficult for them to participate in socio-political life. This is especially true for youth living with disabilities (YWDs), many who also experience gender-based violence and discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Since the formation of the disability movement in Uganda in 1960, particular issues facing YWDs have been overlooked. Worse still, within the mainstream youth movement, the exclusion of YWDs is especially pronounced.

As a result, YWDs are rarely given the opportunity to stand up against discrimination and injustice in a supportive social structure. Likewise, the broader organizational environment is not fully supportive of bringing YWDs on board as agents of change. YWDs are, therefore, left out of decision-making processes that could improve their quality of life.

In 2003, to address these challenges, the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) organized a national conference for youth with disabilities, with one result being the formation of a youth committee: NUDIPU-Youth. The group has since worked towards enhancing the participation of YWDs in the Ugandan disability movement, as well as in government and civil society organization (CSO) programs such as employment, youth livelihood programs, women's entrepreneurship, special grants for persons with disabilities, and community driven development.

To this end, in 2016, a NUDIPU-Youth project aimed at engaging 1,000 young males and females with disabilities was launched to influence decisions and promote equal participation in programs at both national and district level, and across all regions. The direct involvement of YWDs would provide a platform for collective demands for more inclusive development at local and national levels through the Department of Youth and Children Affairs in the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (GLSD).

History

In 2016, NUDIPU conducted a survey in Mpigi and Mbarara districts to establish the level of inclusion of YWDs in government poverty reduction programs (i.e., Operation Wealth Creation, Youth Livelihood, and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program). Based on survey results, 76% of the YWDs interviewed had attained at most a primary-level education, whereas the non-disabled youth were better-educated and more competitive (Ssenoga, 2016). Also, YWDs

were not aware of the different programs existing within their communities and, thus, were not accessing them (Yedo, 2016, p. 33). This represented a challenge for NUDIPU to ensure that it capacitates YWDs through its advocacy in order to create openings within the mainstream youth movement, in the community, and in organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

Prior to the 2016 general elections, the broader Ugandan youth movement and CSOs launched the *National Youth Manifesto 2016–2021* as a youth agenda with key demands directed at various political leaders. However, YWDs were only mentioned in one of the demands, despite their needs cutting across all five priority areas: health, participation, education, unemployment, and sports and culture (YCED, n.d.). Many of CSO's youth-focused programming as well as government programs for non-disabled youth have also side-lined the YWD movement, often inviting just one or two representatives for meetings.

Facing exclusion from both the youth movement and the disability movement, NUDIPU-Youth sought to support YWDs with spaces to meaningfully participate. In doing so, it would be crucial to ensure a balance between the types of disabilities.

Originating Entities and Funding

NUDIPU-Youth is an umbrella organisation of YWDs initiated in 2003. It is part of the NUDIPU umbrella organisation and was established to build capacity and tap the potential of YWDs in Uganda. That year, NUDIPU-Youth partnered with the Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD) and since 2011, with the Danish Association of Youth with Disabilities (DAYWD), who both funded projects aimed at to build the capacity of YWDs in Uganda and promote their inclusion. Building on this and subsequent YWD-focused projects, the *Empowerment of Youth with Disabilities in Uganda 2016–2019* project has benefitted from ongoing funding by DAYWD.

Participant Selection

Within NUDIPU-Youth

Participants were selected through nine OPDs representing different disability categories and based on their leadership capacity. Each OPD was asked to invite eight YWDs to participate in NUDIPU-Youth's General Assembly, helping the OPDs to understand the work of NUDIPU-Youth and to commit support for the mobilization. Emphasis was put on a gender and disability balance, and 80 delegates aged 16–30 were selected. Marginalized categories of disabilities were given priority (e.g., deaf-blind, albino).

These delegates then elected 11 members to form the NUDIPU Youth Committee, composed of four regional representatives, youth with different disability categories (e.g., dwarfism,

epilepsy, cerebral palsy, and deaf-blind) and one female representative. The Committee has two ex-officio members, one representing the government's National Youth Council and the other a youth representative on NUDIPU's Board of Directors. This composition has fostered support from both the disability movement and the government its promotion of inclusion. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to receive reports and make recommendations on issues pertaining to YWDs; it monitors and supervises all youth activities at the NUDIPU Secretariat and community levels. It also monitors youth involvement OPDs and lobbies stakeholders to include YWD issues in their programs.

In communities

Home visits helped identify role models who used their own life experiences to mobilize, encourage, and motivate others to be part of the program. This approach was effective, reaching 796 YWDs—including some not reached by previous development programs—who were trained between March 2016 and September 2017. The approach also helped the caretakers, leaders, and community members to understand that YWDs are key in development and must be included at all levels.

Method(s)

Several methods were employed to enable the YWDs to actively participate in decision making:

- *Advocacy and gender trainings:* Ten district-based advocacy trainings were conducted, focused on life skills, leadership, advocacy, volunteerism, communication, and fundraising among others.
- *Media advocacy:* NUDIPU-Youth used press releases, press conferences, and public events to make their demands.
- *Dialogue meetings:* Sixteen dialogue meetings were conducted that targeted decision makers, parents, caretakers, community volunteers, police, and opinion leaders in the four districts and at the national level.
- *Deliberative meetings:* Partners and network members were convened to deliberate on mainstreaming inclusionary measures in their respective organizations.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Advocacy and gender trainings

Ten trainings were conducted in the four districts—two in Lira and Sironko districts and three in Mbarara and Mpigi—bringing together a total of 500 YWDs. Young women were separated from the men to discuss gender and advocacy issues, creating an open and conducive environment for the participants to freely share and learn about advocacy around gender equality and development issues. Through a mix of presentations, role plays, and open discussions, facilitators ensured that all participants had equal chance to actively contribute ideas, opinions, and experiences.

Further, the 80 delegates from NUDIPU-Youth's General Assembly and 16 non-disabled youth underwent a 4-day intensive training before the elections on leadership, fundraising, volunteerism, gender mainstreaming, advocacy, economic empowerment, sexual reproductive health, and civic education skills. This was done to prepare them to understand that YWDs have the potential to take up leadership and community leaders to be mindful of inclusion of different disability categories.



Figure 11. A moment of reflection and meditation during one of the trainings for YWDs from various parts of the country.

Media and public advocacy

A total of 72 journalists and reporters from various national media houses were trained to more effectively report on disability issues. These actors were thus more responsive and effectively reported YWDs' key advocacy issues on accessibility in health facilities and in education, on employment, as well as on unequal participation vis-à-vis non-disabled youth. YWDs put forth their issues through press releases, demonstrations, and press conferences and used public events such as International Youth Day celebrations to attract the attention of the President and other decision makers towards the inclusion of YWDs.



Figure 12. Radio talk show with community volunteers in Northern Uganda on the need for inclusion of YWDs in communities to display their capabilities and potentials.

Radio and TV talk shows featuring YWDs were used to sensitizing the public about their needs and potentials and the importance to include them in government and CSO programs.

National and district-level dialogue meetings

Four national dialogue meetings were held between 2016 and 2017 bringing together YWDs spokespersons, youth Members of Parliament and other legislators, non-disabled youth leaders, Councilors, and youth-focused CSOs. YWDs themselves presented the needs and realities of living with disabilities, along with an inclusive guide that gave insight into how they have been marginalized. Interactions between YWDs and authorities enabled stakeholders without disabilities to understand the importance of involving YWDs and to recognize gaps in how budgeting processes had been contributing to the exclusion of YWDs.

In district-level dialogues, facilitators used a number of tools to convey the message to stakeholders: demonstration through role plays, group discussions, brainstorming, and use of volunteer role models to share their experiences in the meetings. This fostered open discussions, learning, and understanding that yielded commitments and favorable attitudes from decision makers with regards to the inclusion and mainstreaming of YWDs.

Deliberative partner network meetings

Three partnership network meetings were held at 6-month intervals and included the Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commissioner for Youth and Children (Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development), youth-led CSOs, and other development partners. Nearly 50 CSOs and government agencies deliberated on the development of inclusive guides for YWDs in their respective organizations as a means for YWD inclusion.

Consultations were continued on an ongoing basis following the meetings to ensure implementation. Further, the NUDIPU Youth Committee, along with the Project Management Committee and community volunteers, conducted routine monitoring field visits with stakeholders in the four districts.

To complement these efforts, eight meetings were held with executives and chairpersons of national OPDs to lobby for mechanisms for YWDs inclusion in their organizations (e.g., a youth policy, youth project, or youth wings at the community level). Similarly, a meeting with the Ministry of Youth and Children Affairs was aimed at lobbying for the mainstreaming of YWDs in their structures and activities. This included YWD representation on National Youth Councils, from the village to national levels, for government representation on the Project Management Committee of NUDIPU, which would enable YWDs to display their potentials and capabilities.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The initiative led to many outcomes, not only affecting YWDs' lives directly, but also building momentum around their inclusion in development initiatives and social priorities in Uganda.

Enhanced YWD rights awareness, self-esteem, and voice

In the spaces where YWDs engaged, their participation enabled them to recognize the importance of identifying problems through sharing experiences and finding their own solutions. Participants clearly understood that they are the resource people with the potential and power to demand and advocate for their rights. For example, exchange learning visits between YWDs from different districts revealed that the issues they face are common across jurisdictions and there is value in learning from each other's experiences to replicate best practices in their respective communities.

Similarly, peer learning was encouraged during the advocacy trainings, providing YWDs with an opportunity to freely discuss and interact. Through dialogue with others, many YWDs became hopeful to go back to school or realized that their disability was less of a limitation than for others living with different disabilities (e.g., in terms of discrimination around marriage or in romantic relationships).

Sessions for young women with disabilities motivated them to speak up in the absence of the young men with disabilities. As they gained self-esteem, the women began debating with the men without the fear or hesitation they previously felt.

Increased engagement of YWDs in economic activity and development

Following the trainings, many YWDs came to understand their rights and recognize opportunities available to them in their communities. Increased confidence led many to look for places to intern and volunteer in OPDs and in other CSOs or government organizations. Some participants secured jobs, hence promoting independent living within their communities.

By early 2018, 28 YWDs were engaged in the workforce, either as volunteers with different national or district-level organizations, with 12 being formally employed, and six receiving further skills training in Uganda and abroad (Iceland, Denmark, UK). Ten YWDs were working private businesses and livelihood activities to improve their standards of living.

Increased access to rights and resources

As an example, one male youth with cerebral palsy used his advocacy skills to address a grievance about land that had been denied to him by family members due to his disability. He

called a family and community meeting to claim his right and ultimately won the case. He is since practicing farming and other income-generating activities as an independent person.

As perception of YWDs began to shift in communities, parents committed to keep their children—in particular girls with disabilities—in school, protecting their right to education and further increasing their likelihood of accessing resources in the future. A similar shift, many YWDs are seeking information from NUDIPU about how to join university through affirmative action.



Figure 13. Young man on his piece of land where he cultivates ginger and organic coffee.

YWDs claiming space in organizations and government bodies

As a result of deliberations and discussions hosted by NUDIPU-Youth, five CSOs have mainstreamed YWDs in their activities, hence increasing awareness about disability needs and visibility of YWDs among the constituencies of mainstream organizations.

Lobbying OPDs led to the development of five strong Youth Wings as well as increased representation of YWDs on boards of directors. This also opened space for YWDs to volunteer in their organizations.

Engagement with government led to securing a space for one representative on the Committee for National Youth Council (a government body), as well as a representative from the Ministry of Gender to sit on the NUDIPU Project Management Committee. This resulted in securing space from the government side to have four YWDs participate in the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Ministers forum.

Political engagement and representation of YWDs

YWDs who benefited from the leadership and capacity building trainings took over leadership positions as Councilors representing persons with disabilities. This has translated into more accessible service delivery to YWDs in the community as a result of their influence.

Policy change and political inclusion

NUDIPU-Youth used made deliberate efforts to reach out to marginalized youth, guardians, and policy makers through community dialogue meetings, sub-county sensitization meetings, and networks of community volunteer ambassadors. Their advocacy for the inclusion of YWDs led to a number of changes and development in district- and national-level policies.

First, the national dialogues secured commitments by policymakers to include YWDs in public planning processes. For example, four districts developed District Operation Plans (DOPs) that are YWDs and PWDs sensitive and have supported the work of CSOs and OPDs working towards the inclusion of YWDs in their organizations and programming.

The YWDs' advocacy also led to the revision of the National Youth Policy guideline relating to the Youth Livelihood Fund, which now provides for inclusion of YWDs in the grant (MGLSD, 2013, p. 11). At the district level, community development officers and district chairpersons now enforce the implementation of the policy guideline in all programs.

The initiative worked with 21 CSOs to generate an inclusive guide to mainstreaming all categories of disabilities in national and district level programs, as well as in CSOs. As a result, six youth-led CSOs have developed mainstreaming mechanisms for YWDs in their programming, strategic plans, governance structures, or volunteer policies.

Finally, as a result of the deliberations, youth are increasingly invited into policy discussions and forums where decisions on disability matters are being made and increasingly solicited for input on these issues.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

Many lessons were drawn from this experience, including the following:

Self-reflection as a step towards empowerment

In most activities, YWDs engaged in reflection and meditation sessions, which gave them an opportunity to think through both difficult and positive experience they have had, as well as turning points. This approach helped YWDs to realize their weaknesses and strengths as leaders, to transform their self-perception as agents of change, and to make commitments towards the changes they were going to make. This self-reflection was key to empowering YWDs, whose marginalization in their communities clouded their self-perception as leaders.

Community outreach and engagement for collective accountability

Community outreach and family visits were effective means to involve many community stakeholders, including parents, councilors of persons with disabilities, local and district councils, and CSOs. These intermediaries were effective in reaching the most marginalized YWDs (e.g., those living in remote, mountainous areas). All parties engaged were responsible for identifying a YWD within their community, for supporting their participation in the project, and for following up and reporting on their well-being. This allowed many girls with disabilities, whose parents pulled them out of schools to give boys access to study, to get involved. These

girls learned their rights and, with support from different local leaders, demanded to go back to school. Engaging multiple stakeholders and holding them accountable to a YWD created a sense of collective responsibility for YWDs at the community level.

YWD volunteers changing community perceptions of disability

The establishment of community volunteer networks, connecting villages to the national level, broadened the reach and changed local perceptions of people with disabilities. As YWDs began volunteering as vocal youth leaders in their communities, local councils, opinion leaders, religious leaders, and parents witnessed YWDs displaying new and different behaviors. This changed their mindset and enhanced community support for the initiative, as people recognized that YWDs can play a leadership role and contribute to decision making.

Media involvement creating opportunities for YWDs

Media involvement was key in effective advocacy of the project because it enabled the message to be spread far and loud. Most media campaigns run through local radio stations yielded positive results, especially those targeted to district-level decision makers. Media involvement meant that the project objectives could be clearly understood by community members, further enhancing their support and participation. As YWDs began exercising their voice, communities responded by enabling many of them to volunteer or by offering support for the initiative.

Challenges

Some of the challenges encountered include:

- *Ongoing resistance to inclusion in CSOs and OPDs.* Despite ongoing advocacy by YWDs, a number of OPDs continue to resist developing mechanisms for YWDs inclusion and are reluctant to fundraise for projects tailored towards youth empowerment. While over 50% of OPDs have created a space through a youth policy and/or board representation, many CSOs are still slow to respond to issues of YWDs inclusion. Lobbying and engagement with these CSOs and OPDs is ongoing in an effort to close this gap.
- *Limited accessibility.* Participation of YWDs in programs was often limited by the lack of assistive devices such as wheelchairs or canes and insufficient access to information. This was mitigated by organizing activities targeting the most rural communities and hiring local language translators and sign language interpreters.

- *Negative attitudes and discrimination.* At the community level, stigma and isolation is highly pronounced. To change this, NUDIPU-Youth established networks of community volunteers, including community leaders in mapping out and sensitizing the public on the challenges, potentials, and the need to empower YWDs in all spheres of life. Through these efforts, some of these mindsets and perceptions are beginning to change, thereby creating a more enabling environment for YWDs to participate meaningfully in political and economic life.

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External Links

National Union of Disabled Persons <http://nudipu.org/>

NUDIPU- Youth (Facebook page) <https://www.facebook.com/nudipuyouth/>

Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org>

Youth Livelihoods Programme ylp.mglsd.go.ug

Light for the World <https://www.light-for-the-world.org>

Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs <http://upfya.or.ug/>

African Youth Development Link www.aydl.org

Engaging Local CSOs to Achieve Sustainable Development: the Peru 2030 Agenda Ambassadors Program

Rosario del Pilar Díaz Garavito, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which contains 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), was adopted by UN member states (United Nations, 2015). It came into force in 2016, providing a global framework to “end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind” (United Nations, 2018). To achieve the SDGs, global citizen engagement is crucial, as is local involvement in these global efforts. Engaging and empowering citizens with a sense of ownership over sustainable development processes is, therefore, key to ensuring that this global action plan is locally relevant.

In Peru, The Millennials Movement (TMM) has recognized the importance of ensuring development outcomes are validated by grassroots organizations and citizens through inclusive and participatory processes. In 2016, it launched the Peru 2030 Agenda Ambassadors Program (the Program) to promote a sense of empowerment and ownership among local civil society organizations of the sustainable development processes in their communities.

The purpose of the Program has been to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to effectively involve local citizens to support the 2030 Agenda. Through capacity building, the implementation of actions and citizen monitoring processes, the Program has sought to:

- gather relevant data to understand the contributions made by CSOs at the national level;
- help CSOs align their institutional goals and actions with the SDGs;
- promote the educated and empowered participation of CSOs on Peru’s development process to 2030; and
- promote the engagement of citizens through concrete actions delivered by local CSOs in their communities.

History

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have long been major contributors to community development processes in Peru and in other communities globally—addressing unattended needs and aspirations of citizens with innovative responses and promoting active citizenship and community engagement.

A precursor to the 2030 Agenda, the Millennium Development Agenda was adopted in 2000 and provided a 15-year action plan for global development. It was the first global effort to articulate and define goals to tackle poverty. However, direct citizen and local CSOs engagement in defining, implementing, and measuring these goals was limited. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted post-2015 through a process that included a series of consultations and surveys to gather opinions and aspirations in hopes of making the new Agenda meaningfully inclusive. As part of this process, TMM surveyed over 38,000 Peruvians, adding their voices to the 9 million people surveyed globally through the *UN My World 2015 Survey*.

In 2016, the 2030 Agenda ushered in a new era of global development. In contrast to its predecessor, this call for global action relies on the engagement of citizens and local actors as development enablers in open participatory processes to bridge local challenges with global action.

The 2030 Agenda calls for CSOs to actively contribute to the implementation of the SDGs by:

- contextualizing the Agenda's principles, goals, and targets for their local reality;
- sensitizing citizens about its scope;
- facilitating inter-agency local alliances for development; and
- carrying out concrete actions to promote, implement, and monitor the Agenda.

In this context, TMM launched the *Peru 2030 Agenda Ambassadors Program* to engage Peruvian civil society in pursuing this 2030 Agenda.

Originating Entities and Funding

The Millennials Movement (TMM) is a Peruvian civil society organization that promotes citizen engagement in the sustainable development of their communities, advocating for open democracies and community action. It operates through volunteer-led effort and finances its programs through a "Project Budget Zero" partnership strategy, which is based on first developing project proposal and subsequently identifying partners that can contribute the required resources and logistical support.

The partnerships supporting the *Peru 2030 Agenda Ambassadors Program* came about through this strategy and include strategic alliance with The World We Want platform, the UN Inter Agency Network for Youth Development Working Group on Youth and Gender Equality, the UN SDG Action Campaign for My World 2030, The Young Americas Business Trust, and Project Everyone–The World's Largest Lesson.

The Program has also benefitted from collaborations with the UN Information Center CINU LIMA, the Interquorum Network, and the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Peru.

Participant Selection

The 2030 Agenda Ambassadors Program engaged members of Peruvian CSOs as participants in a 6-month initiative encompassing six stages:

1. recruitment through a call for participation;
2. participant selection;
3. capacity building;
4. implementation of community actions;
5. systematization; and,
6. certification.

The recruitment and selection stages were critical to promote inclusive participation in the program. A call for participation was made through email, Facebook, and Twitter and was disseminated through databases of current allies and through partnering with key organizations with national networks to ensure a relevant reach and significant geographical coverage. This way, TMM was able to reach organizations with no Internet connectivity or that were beyond their main group of allies.

The call included a list of eligibility requirements for prospective participants. While there was no restriction regarding CSOs members' spheres of action, gender, or sector of work, the organizations needed to:

- have a proven record of at least 2 years of operation;
- enroll a minimum of three members to participate in the full Program;
- enroll members who were at least 18 years of age;
- have previously participated in volunteering activities; and
- have no affiliation with any political party.

Open calls were active for 3-week periods in June 2016 and in April 2017 for the program's first and second phases, respectively. The calls yielded 38 applications from 16 geographical regions in 2016, and over 100 applications from 21 regions in 2017.

The selection process included confirmation of eligibility and background research through social media on candidate organizations' previous activities. Twenty-two CSOs were selected for the first phase, representing 16 regions, and 80 CSOs from 21 regions were selected in the second phase. In both, CSOs mandates focused on diverse issues, including religious freedom, gender, environmental preservation and sustainability, and human rights to name a few. Selected CSOs were notified through their "Team Focal Person," as designated in the application as the key contact for communication with TMM.

Methods and Tools Used

The *Peru Ambassadors 2030 Program* is designed around the "molecular approach for local sustainable development theory," developed by Rosario Diaz Garavito, the Millennials Movement Founder and Executive Director (see Diaz Garavito, 2017). The theory implies that each action individuals take every day can either contribute to sustainable development in their community or work against it. Based on this, there is a need to work with "enablers"—local actors who can catalyze local citizen engagement in the types of daily actions that promote sustainable development. The program, thus, supports the participating members of CSOs (i.e., the "Ambassadors") to be those enablers through the following methods:

Civic capacity building: a sensitization and educational program aimed at building the knowledge of Ambassadors around the 2030 Agenda and increasing their capacity to deliver actions that engage local citizens to promote sustainable development.

As a result of these capacity-building sessions, Ambassadors were equipped to lead a series of six activities, many of which focused on participatory citizen engagement, particularly through the use of the following methods:

Public interventions: using public spaces as meeting and discussion points to sensitize and involve individuals in the achievement of the SDGs through actions on local issues and challenges.

Awareness raising and education: a number of actions aimed at enhancing the public's awareness of the SDGs and connecting them to their own daily lives and actions, including workshops, conferences, and public school engagement.

Participatory monitoring: surveying citizens to identify the most important SDGs for their community, and engaging them in monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.



Figure 14. Ambassador surveying community member

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

In the capacity-building stage

Following participant recruitment and selection, the capacity-building process was undertaken in July 2016 and in May 2017 for each respective phase. The aim was to create possibilities for participants (Ambassadors) to become “enablers” and to be empowered as citizens. With the information, knowledge, and tools provided, it was anticipated that the Ambassadors would develop a sense of ownership of the community development process and foster civic actions in their communities.

To this end, three online training sessions with 36 participants (in 2016) and five online sessions for 58 participants (in 2017) were delivered through a strategic alliance with the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), who provided the online platform for session delivery, and facilitated the human resources needed to cover the logistics. The 90-minute sessions covered the implementation and monitoring processes for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, gender equality as a crosscutting approach, the role of CSOs and youth in the achieving the SDGs, and the importance of inclusive approaches to “leave no one behind” in this process. Sessions were led by experts representing diverse sectors such as government, CSOs, academia, research, and youth leadership in the Americas.

In order to ensure commitment beyond the capacity-building process, participants conducted a follow-up evaluation seven days after the sessions, and recordings of all sessions were made available for future reference. Finally, each team leader assessed their team members’ performance as part of the evaluation for certification.

In the implementation stage

In the four months following the trainings, Ambassadors implemented a series of six actions in their communities, putting into practice the knowledge and skills acquired.

Ambassadors also had access to an Action Toolkit developed by TMM and its strategic allies, which provided guidance and support in planning and implementing actions to engage citizens in the sustainable development agenda in their communities. Activities varied from community to community, and included the following:

- Community 2030
- My Most Important SDG



Figure 15. Student participating in School 2030 activity

- School 2030
- Conferences and Workshops
- My World 2030 UN Survey
- Impacting from my Sphere of Action

Through this suite of activities, Ambassadors engaged citizens through public interventions and dialogues, awareness raising and education, and participatory monitoring.

Public interventions:

Through Community 2030 activities, Ambassadors used public spaces as a meeting point and engaged citizens in discussions aimed at sensitizing and involving them in the achievement of the SDGs. In 26 communities, 30 public dialogues were held with 2465 local citizens, many of whom made personal commitments for sustainability. These interventions mobilized 42 CSOs and 40 local alliances.

My Most Important SDG activities encouraged 2781 citizens to select the SDG they felt was most relevant to their daily lives and to make a commitment to personal action— either at work, at home, or at school—that would contribute to achieving that SDG by 2030. For example, people committed to separating their reusable household waste and to disconnect phones chargers at the office when not in use.



Figure 16. Ambassadors leading public action

Awareness raising and education:

Ambassadors engaged 902 students in 32 schools across 14 regions through School 2030 activities. Aimed at raising young people’s awareness about the 2030 Agenda, educational activities in led in schools connect the SDGs to students’ daily lives. Four sessions were delivered with each group of students, each one examining a topic of relevance to the national context (see World’s Largest Lesson in the External Links section below).



Figure 17. Group of students participation in School 2030 activities

To raise public awareness more broadly, 151 Ambassadors from 69 local alliances organized and facilitated 35 conferences and workshops. Over 1200 citizens participated in these events, which were aimed at educating the public about the 2030 Agenda and specific, related topics.

Participatory monitoring:

The My World 2030 survey—conducted through a partnership with the UN SDG Action Campaign—allowed people worldwide to select the six most important SDGs for their communities and to evaluate their implementation at the local level. In Peru, Ambassadors mobilized local constituencies, engaging people in a citizen-led monitoring process that fed into the global survey. The survey was administered to 1540 local citizens.

Beyond providing a set of platforms for CSOs to interface with citizens and other stakeholders, the Ambassadors Program also contributed to deliberations and decisions within the participating organizations, particularly by supporting them to align their work with the SDGs. Through the *Impacting from my Sphere of Action* activities, CSOs were encouraged and guided to articulate their organizational goals in explicit alignment with the SDGs. Ambassadors delivered 40 activities, such as engaging citizens in planting over 400 trees in Junin, within their spheres of action, resulting in engaging over 2520 people. Many CSOs realized how their work already contributes to the sustainable development of their communities.

In the systematization and certification stages

During and following the implementation, Ambassadors reported on the actions they undertook as part of the program. TMM was, thus, able to measure the progress and outcomes, as well as to get data indicators related to the gender, age, location, and nature of citizen and volunteer engagement. This further informed the partnerships that TMM maintained with participating CSOs. Finally, the data collected was included in the systematization of the *UN My World 2030* survey at the global level.

Certification was issued in recognition of the individual and collective efforts of all CSOs who delivered the six program activities in their communities within established timelines. Individual participation was also recognized, as each member of participating CSOs who supported the program obtained a certificate.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

As a cumulative result of the 2016 and 2017 phases, the Peru 2030 Ambassadors Program has achieved a number of outcomes, including the following.

Building capacity for engagement at a national scale

The Program has built the capacity of 362 members of CSOs and has supported the full participation of 55 CSOs in 21 regions of Peru. Overall, these participants have reached over 10,000 Peruvian citizens, increasing their awareness of the 2030 Agenda and their willingness to engage in actions in support of it. Additionally, more than 60 local allies—including local authorities, other CSOs, and academic and private sector actors—participated in the implementation of the activities by facilitating spaces or providing institutional support and funding.

Connecting local and global sustainable development

The Program's partnership strategy helped connect local action to a global process for sustainable development, providing an opportunity to local CSOs to actively contribute to a global effort. In a 2017 consultation of Peruvian CSOs, 90% of respondents reported that the Program represented a relevant space not only to contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but also for building and strengthening their own work as local CSOs working towards sustainable development in their communities (The Millennials Movement, 2017). Local CSOs also participated in a consultation on the frame of the United Nations High Level Political Forum, providing input on challenges and opportunities for CSOs participation in the implementation of 2030 Agenda.



Figure 18. Local action for sustainable development

Organizational learning, capacity and profile

Following the program, some of the participating CSOs included approaches consistent with the 2030 Agenda in their organizational plans or launched their own initiatives in support of those. Through the program, participating CSOs accessed trainings with experts, received tools to bring about actions in their communities, contributed to international publications, showcased the work they do in their communities, joined a network of CSOs committed to sustainable development, reinforced relationships within their teams, and have been considered for future opportunities.

Increased collaboration and greater access to decision makers

In leading their community initiatives, many Ambassadors partnered with other (non-participating) local actors and organizations—with the exception of partisan organizations

or political activities. This allowed organizations to engage their local governments and mobilize resources in support of the 2030 Agenda. In some cases, partnerships with other local organizations gave Ambassadors access to spaces where decision-makers were active and to opportunities to gain their support.

Influence and engagement of decision makers

The capacity-building program increased the ability of Ambassadors to engage in political advocacy and to influence decision-making processes in their communities from the bottom up. Once the actions were delivered and local authorities sensitized, a number of Ambassadors were able to put their concerns and relevant data—such as the results of the *My World 2030* survey—to decision makers and to follow up on policy development and public processes.

Further, local authorities showed great interest during the actions in knowing more about the 2030 Agenda and in engaging in this process. Their engagement was important, since governments are responsible to lead the public process to implement the Agenda in their constituencies. Sensitizing and engaging them in actions towards the achievement of the SDGs alongside CSOs contributed to their accountability to deliver on sustainable development.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

Over the program's two phases, a number of challenges and lessons emerged, including the following:

Limited funding

As a youth-led organization in a developing country, funding is an ongoing issue for the Millennials Movement. To overcome this challenge, the organization has found strategic partnerships as a means to avoid limiting its actions because of a lack of funding. The use of free and low-cost existing ICT tools, for example, webinar platforms and graphic design and data analysis software, was also part of the strategy to overcome the challenge of supporting participating CSOs in more distant regions.

Data management

As a program that generates a high volume of data and connects to global efforts to generate and monitor progress on SDG indicators, data management is critical and challenging. For example, a high volume of responses needs to be filtered, reviewed, and systematized. Once again, the use of ICTs such as Google Drive and the PSPP app was crucial, as was the participation of a volunteer team specialized in data systematization who managed the

program data and reporting on outcomes. In elaborating these instruments, it was important to provide clear and user-friendly resources to the participating CSOs, as many were unfamiliar with these kinds of tools. This fostered greater uptake from CSOs and, in some cases, citizens who themselves were collecting data.

CSO retention

While 80 CSOs were selected to participate in the program's second phase, only 38 successfully completed the process. Nonetheless, members from 56 participating CSOs completed the online trainings and were awarded an online certificate of participation. Though participation through to completion was a challenge, this still represents an achievement, given that a key program goal is to promote the informed participation of CSOs in implementing citizen-led monitoring processes of the 2030 SDGs. This learning reinforces the importance of having online training sessions that are sufficiently creative to keep the training dynamic and engaging throughout the capacity-building process.

Publicizing activities and disseminating results

It was important for the participating CSOs to publicize their activities and the outcomes achieved, as well as to obtain more followers. Yet, The Millennials Movement's existing platform proved to be ill-suited as for this. To resolve this, a new online platform was created to showcase the achievements of participating CSOs, which required additional human resources to effectively manage the platform and to encourage participants to share this space and build an audience.

Balancing ownership of the process with support

To respond to citizens' and communities' expressed desire to learn and access information during the implementation of local activities, it proved important for Ambassadors to adapt the information and knowledge to their local context and to the particular groups with which they were engaging. To effectively engage local citizens and communities through their activities, CSOs were left with some freedom to plan and deliver the program in a way they judged locally-appropriate, rather than being tied to following rigid instructions. The role of TMM was, therefore, one of support, rather than direction.

Importance of recognizing achievement

Finally, the activities recognizing outstanding participation have contributed further to empowering participant CSOs.

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External Links

2030 Peru Ambassadors Program Social Media platform: <https://www.facebook.com/Embajadores.Peru.Agenda2030>

2030 Peru Ambassadors Program Full Report (2016): <https://sdgactioncampaign.org/2017/03/16/programa-de-embajadores-peru-agenda-2030-por-el-desarrollo-sostenible-y-el-mundo-que-queremos/>

SDG Action Campaign <http://sdgactioncampaign.org/>

Young Americas Business Trust <http://yabt.net/>

The World's Largest Lesson <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/partners/>

World's Largest Lesson: Scope and Outcomes of Schools 2030: <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/map/index.html>

The World We Want platform <http://www.worldwewant2030.org/>

The Shams El-Bir Association Community Committee in El-kfoor Village, El-Minia, Upper Egypt

Hany Ghaly, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

Community development associations (CDAs), established by the Egyptian NGO Law 84 (2002), are typically founded by at least 10 community members and aim to contribute to development within their geographical area (“Law on Non-Governmental Organizations,” 2002, Article 1). To this end, CDAs lead projects that seek to improve living conditions, including community development activities that engage community members in a participatory and inclusive way.

To address these problems, a community committee was established in El-kfoor in 2010 to act as a channel for greater dialogue between the CDA and community members and, ultimately, to improve civic engagement in CDA activities. The ultimate aim was to enhance the role of CDAs in El-Minia Governorate, enabling them to more effectively lead their communities through development processes that are transparent, accountable, and participatory. The Community Committee in El-kfoor achieved this objective in part through engaging community members in participatory discussions about development plans and processes.

History

The period leading up to Egypt’s 2011 revolution was difficult. There was an overall feeling in the country that government officials were not taking people’s socio-economic issues seriously. Due to social unrest over a lack of economic opportunities and political exclusion, political upheaval ensued. There was an overall sense of frustration among Egyptians that political accountability and transparency were undermined by corruption, the backdrop of social issues such as poor public infrastructure and sanitation. Also, there was little money for CDAs to carry out community projects effectively, and the lack of communication and transparency between Egyptian citizens and the government was reflected in strained community relations in places like El-kfoor.

In El-Minia Governorate, where the community of El-kfoor is located, community development associations were established in 2007. El-Minia Governorate rests along the banks of the Nile River in central Egypt and is one of the most highly populated governorates of Upper Egypt as well as an important agricultural and industrial region. El-kfoor is one of over 3,000 villages in the governorate, with a population of roughly 13,000 (“Minya Governorate,” n.d.). In this village, community members had little trust in their CDA, while CDA members lamented poor civic engagement in development processes. Aside from the lack of transparency and accountability

within the CDA, El-kfoor also faced issues resulting from poor sanitation infrastructure and poor waste management systems. Village members were unhappy about the presence of rubbish in the streets and the lack of public infrastructure or systems to dispose of waste safely and effectively. This poor relationship between the CDA and residents created negative conditions for participatory development processes in El-kfoor. At the center of this was a sense from community members that the CDA was not working well and was not acting accountably or transparently with the people of El-kfoor.

The circumstances were ripe for the involvement of San Mark, a non-governmental organization (NGO) committed to achieving strong, dynamic, and sustainable civil society sectors in El-Minia Governorate by helping people to depend upon themselves and work together as a collective community. Between 2010 and 2014, San Mark implemented two projects: Promoting Communal Participation and Active Civil Society in El-Minia Governorate (San Mark NGO for Development [San Mark], 2012). Working with 25 CDAs in the region, these projects were designed to facilitate participatory rural appraisal (PRA) processes and to work with community members to enhance civic engagement in CDA activities. Twelve of these partnerships, including El-kfoor, led to the emergence of comprehensive community committees, made up of a cross-section of community members mandated to work with the local CDA to deepen community engagement and participation in development processes and decision-making.

Originating Entities and Funding

Two organizational entities worked together to facilitate the emergence of the El-kfoor Community Committee, and the participatory community sanitation project that ensued: San Mark NGO for Development (San Mark), founded in 1980 and working with local CDAs for integrated rural development in El-Minia Governorate, and Shams El-Bir Association, El-kfoor CDA (El-kfoor CDA).

A key element of San Mark's work has focused on promoting transparency and accountability at the local level by strengthening communal participation and enhancing the capacity of CDAs in rural communities. In 2010, it put out a region-wide call to local CDAs to apply to partner with them. The El-kfoor CDA was successful in meeting the project criteria (San Mark, 2012).

San Mark and the El-kfoor CDA facilitated a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) process, whereby community members were able to discuss local issues of concern and prioritize areas for development. Through the process, people identified solid and liquid waste management and sanitation as top priorities: the mixing of sewage with irrigation water was damaging crops, posing challenges to local livelihoods in animal husbandry and agriculture, as well as to a healthy community environment. To address this problem, the CDA designed a project and accessed a sub-grant from San Mark, which was financed by a German funder, to work with

community members to find solutions. At this stage, the Community Committee was formed to work with the CDA to engage community members in this development process.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Candidates for membership to the Community Committee were identified during the PRA process and subsequently elected as members during a general assembly of the El-kfoor CDA, where votes were cast at a public meeting. The committee has averaged between 7 and 11 volunteer members, including board members of the El-kfoor CDA, religious leaders, women and youth representatives, as well as a project accountant. The Community Committee's mandate was oversight and accountability of CDA activities, as well as being a liaison between the CDA and community members to ensure development processes were participatory and transparent.

In selecting members of the Community Committee, consideration was given for a balanced representation of men, women, and youth. In many rural communities in Egypt, the importance of women's contribution in civic engagement is often ignored. To ensure women's equal representation, San Mark has a gender-balance policy, whereby women must be included in decision-making and represent at least 25% of Community Committee members. As a project policy, this was met with little to no resistance from community members.

Methods and Tools Used

There are three primary methods at play in this case study – Community Development Associations, participatory rural appraisal, and community committees– each of which use various other methods and tools to accomplish their goals.

Community Development Associations

In the Egyptian context, CDAs are officially recognized as NGOs but their members tend to come from the middle to upper class and have connections with the government. Officially, their mandate is to provide various social services within their catchment area; however, how (or even whether) they carry out this obligation is not heavily regulated. Thus, the problems in El-kfoor around transparency and lack of local participation are likely widespread.

Participatory Rural Appraisal

As its name suggests, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a form of rural development which aims to engage and empower the local population in the identification and resolution of community problems. In this case, however, it appears that the residents were only involved in

the identification of problems (waste management and sanitation) while the CDA took charge of developing a solution. That being said, the participatory aspect was redeemed with the establishment of the community committee.

Community Committees

Also known as 'ward' or 'popular' committees, community committees are intermediary bodies between the local residents of an area and the higher level of government (in this case, the CDA, in other cases, the municipal government). In this case, the community committee was established as part of the participatory rural appraisal – ostensibly as a means by which to ensure the *participatory* aspect was maintained. While it apparently did not have any sway over the project decisions, the committee was involved in various capacity-building seminars and courses and subsequently undertook the tasks of opening a channel of communication between the public and the CDA; mobilizing residents to implement and monitor the projects selected by the CDA; informing the public on the various community-related issues such as environmental impact awareness; and ensuring the CDA was more transparent and accountable in its dealing with the community.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Once the Community Committee was established, San Mark facilitated training courses and capacity-building workshops for the CDA and the Community Committee on topics including leadership, teamwork, volunteerism, internal governance structures, strategic planning and budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation. These workshops contributed greater community participation in decision-making around the sanitation project and to more transparent project planning.

During the project (2010–2012), the Community Committee met almost monthly with employees of San Mark as partners. It conducted periodical and continuous field visits to monitor activities determine whether the project implementation was effective.

The Community Committee also played a leading role in communicating with the local village council and in raising awareness among village members. Because of the ongoing engagement between the Community Committee and village members, a strong communication channel was opened between the local CDA and the people, and the community started vocalizing their needs and participating in the development process.

From the first meeting, the Community Committee discussed the importance of raising awareness in the community about the community sanitation project, trying to reach an agreement with tractor drivers who would work on waste removal and on how to best monitor the project performance.

The Community Committee, with fieldworkers from the El-kfoor CDA held monthly public seminars and weekly focus group discussions open to community members. This enabled them to channel the needs and voices of the constituency back to the CDA on topics such as environmental sanitation, including the sources and causes of pollution, the detrimental effects of human behaviour on the environment, and harmful human diseases that emerge from poor environmental sanitation. Other focus groups discussed protecting the environment by reusing and recycling old materials to minimize the creation of waste and creating innovative accessories and decorations from repurposed materials.

Approximately 500 families participated regularly in the awareness-raising seminars and focus group discussions. Inspired by these focus group discussions, 100 families became active participants in the garbage collection initiatives that the CDA coordinated monthly until 2012.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

Created through the intervention of San Mark, the Community Committee acted as a key communication channel between the El-kfoor Community Development Association and community members, thereby improving transparency and accountability. When liaising between community members and the association, the Community Committee was engaged directly with the CDA and extended their engagement outwards to the community at large. Through a number of awareness-raising and participatory processes, the Community Committee and San Mark supported the CDA and community members in their mutual engagement to solve pressing environmental sanitation and waste management issues.



Figure 19. San Marks workshop with El-kfoor Community Committee and CDA board members

Increased environmental awareness

Public outreach and engagement led to a notable increase in people's awareness of the importance of maintaining a clean environment. Resulting from these awareness-building seminars and focus group discussions, village members gained greater knowledge and became more conscious of the impact their behaviours have on the environment around them.

Increased citizen voice

Village members felt they were included in the development process and that they had a clear line of communication with the CDA. Therefore, they were able to communicate their ideas and needs to the CDA and have their voices included in decision-making processes.

Greater civic engagement

Village members developed a stronger sense of volunteerism and civic engagement in their communities; as a result, they were more inclined to get involved and participate in CDA activities. Moreover, this civic engagement was a means of bringing people together across religious and political beliefs. Young people who did not talk to each other before the project were organizing events together and working together in community engagement. The following anecdote illustrates how this type of engagement for problem solving is linked to a greater awareness of shared problems:

Following the awareness-raising seminars and focus group discussions, a group of citizens decided to help the CDA in their sanitation project work by organizing a communal collection of funds, as an Islamic form of loan, to purchase a tractor and trailer for the project. The tractor and trailer were seen as useful technology to collect refuse in the community and contribute to the cleanliness of the village. Prior to the awareness-raising seminars, community members did not take up this kind of active engagement. This suggests that through the awareness-raising process, community members felt inclined to take greater ownership over community issues engage with the CDA to find solutions.

Increased accountability and transparency

Because of the PRA and other participatory processes, community members felt they were consulted as stakeholders. Through being engaged in dialogue around community development issues and having their ideas included in decision-making and project implementation, village members felt there was greater transparency and accountability in the CDA's work and in local development. Community members were, therefore, more inclined to participate and work with the CDA, contributing to a growing momentum in El-kfoor towards a culture of participation in local development.

Improved environment

Following the initial two-year engagement with the Community Committee and the monthly community waste removal teams, village members felt that streets of El-kfoor were visibly cleaner than prior to the intervention.

A model for other CDAs

The engagement facilitated by the Community Committee in El-kfoor was seen as a success, so much that CDA members from other localities in El-Minia Governorate came to El-kfoor to learn how they had implemented the project.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

Overcoming challenges

While the community engagement of the Community Committee was highly effective in creating a transparent channel for dialogue between the local CDA and community members, there were several challenges that needed to be overcome throughout the process.

Scheduling meetings. Some members of the Community Committee initially were unable to attend the scheduled monthly meeting times with San Mark. In response to this, San Mark offered alternative meeting times to enable participation of all members. This demonstrates the importance of flexibility in creating and sustaining community-NGO relations.

Issues of safety. The social unrest brought on by the 2011 revolution created a sense of unease, and community members felt unsafe to move freely throughout their communities. Political and religious factions were under constant stress and had the potential to exacerbate divisions or disagreements in the community. Without a doubt, these tensions carried over into the project, as some people tried to bring their own political and religious beliefs into the process. For example, some people used the awareness-raising seminars and focus group discussions as spaces to discuss their religious and political beliefs. But the Community Committee members were able to diffuse the situations and maintain the meeting spaces as politically and religiously neutral spaces.

Focusing on the collective benefits of a community project as a unifying force, the sanitation project brought people together around a common cause. The fact that the Community Committee and CDA positioned the sanitation project in this way further minimized tensions in the community and brought people together.

Ensuring gender-balanced representation. Ensuring the continuous participation of women in awareness-raising seminars and focus group discussions was challenging. Women were reluctant to participate in the seminars, as the CDA was located far from their homes, and they did not feel safe travelling away from their neighborhoods. As a response, some of the women taking part in the seminars offered to use their homes as a neighborhood hub for further seminars. This enabled greater participation from women in the activities.

Lessons Learned

There are lessons from this experience that can be applied to other community committees within the El-Minia Governorate, relating to women's participation, partnership and cooperation within community stakeholders, and flexibility of NGO involvement in community change processes.



Figure 20. Learning exchange between five CDAs on El-kfoor's experience

First, women's participation must be integrated into project development. Women's participation holds the power to transform a community perception of women from passive recipients to active agents of social change. Also, women's voices can deepen a gender-based analysis to project design and implementation, thus increasing the likelihood that project outcomes positively impact all community members, not just those in positions of power.

Second, the impacts of NGO interventions are likely to be stronger and more positive where they create space for dialogue amongst different community entities and interests. As promoters of inclusion, NGOs are able to encourage and forge partnerships with local government, civil society organizations, and community members. In El-kfoor, by creating an intermediary community committee, San Mark was able to support spaces for relationships of trust to develop and be strengthened between the local CDA and village members.

Finally, another important facet of the role of NGOs in community development processes is to know when to lead and when not to. Every project and situation warrants a different kind of leadership, and NGOs must be able to discern when to play a more hands-on role and when to step back. In this case, seeing the youth and CDA members take charge of the sanitation project was the signal to San Mark that they were ready to continue on their own.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of civil society accountability, and strengthening organizational transparency and accountability (see Chene, 2013; Lawrence & Nezhad, 2009). For the El-kfoor CDA, the creation of a community committee to liaise between with the community and to open a space for dialogue was a central contributor to this process. Partnering with an external NGO to facilitate this process is useful where community tensions exist, as entities perceived to be neutral can bring together opposing sides or ideas to reach a collective decision.

While CDAs hold the potential to facilitate positive social change and community development processes in Egypt, it is unlikely to happen without accountable and transparent relationships with its constituencies that are established through continued civic engagement and participation from community members. By engaging village members in awareness-raising

seminars and focus group discussions, the Community Committee of El-kfoor was able to increase public consciousness of CDA activities and best practices in environmental sanitation, foster civic engagement in CDA development processes, and improve relationships between the CDA and village members.

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Omaar: Civic Education to Mobilize Youth in Community Engagement in Zakazik (Sharquia, Egypt)

Aliaa Saber, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

Leading up to the 2011 revolution, Egypt faced immense challenges related to poverty and inequality. High rates of youth unemployment, few educational opportunities, and a general sense of mistrust between citizens and the state resulted in low levels of community engagement, especially among youth. Like many in Egypt, youth in the city of Zakazik suffered from the fear of arrest without cause, frustration at the lack of employment opportunities, and limited access to healthy food.

From within this context, the Social Contract Center (SCC) focused on training and supporting groups of youth to engage in their communities to overcome some of these challenges. The SCC's initiatives in Zakazik led to the formation of Omaar, a group of youth leaders who wanted to take responsibility in helping their community, as they too suffered from these concerns. The youth were convinced that community participation would help them achieve these goals more effectively.

History

Following a decade of economic reforms, the Egyptian government faced a dire situation in the early 2000s, in which large segments of the population were affected by poverty and inequality. Despite government attempts at reducing poverty, increasing levels of inequality led the people of Egypt to act on their discontent in the 2011 revolution.

This period saw a drastic increase in the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt, growing from 16,600 in 2011 to 46,700 by the end of 2015 (Kandeel, 2015, p. 69).⁸ This rise in NGO activity was indicative of citizens' desire to participate in the development of a new social order in Egypt. Having largely led the changes that occurred during the revolution in January 2011, youth in particular had a heightened sense of their ability to effect change and of their own value in society.

It was in this context that the Social Contract Center (SCC) made use of a growing space in civil society to engage both state and civil society actors in forging new relationships built on mutual accountability. Engaging youth was central to this process.

⁸ Translated by author.

Originating Entities and Funding

The Social Contract Center

The Social Contract Center (SCC) was established in 2007 as a joint initiative between the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) at the Egyptian Cabinet and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (SCC, 2015). It operates with support from the Italian Cooperation Corporation and the Government of Japan.

At the time, the SCC sought to identify and monitor poverty reduction efforts, work towards the Millennium Development Goals, and build national consensus on the concept of a social contract and its implications. It also focused on rebuilding trust between government and citizens and contributing to efforts seeking to better enable civil society to participate in decision-making.

The SCC worked at strengthening the state's ability to respond to the needs of citizens through the principles of good governance, supporting state-led efforts to reduce poverty. At the same time, it aimed to empower women, youth, and civil society actors. These capacity-strengthening efforts sought to build effective partners in decision-making processes and community service. As part of this agenda, the SCC provided training to over 3,500 university students throughout Egypt between 2007 and 2014 (SCC, 2015).

Omaar

Omaar emerged as a result of SCC training in the city of Zakazik, located in Sharquia Governorate, as a grassroots youth group aiming to address issues facing other children and youth in their community. Their overall purpose was to help young people and children live a happy life in their community. As an informal group, they were funded only through their own fundraising campaigns and personal resources according to individual financial capabilities. In the initial stages, other associations also provided resources such as meeting halls free of charge, and members acted on a voluntary basis. Funds required for additional activities were collected from families and friends as well as from local business owners and wealthier community members in Zakazik.

Method and Tools Used

Civic education

The SCC used civic education in their youth training to foster learning around key concept and skills that are foundational for civic engagement. These included:

- exploring different understandings and styles of community leadership;
- practicing teamwork;
- setting goals;
- understanding the stages of community growth and development;
- learning and practicing effective communication; and
- developing effective negotiation skills.

To instill these qualities in young Egyptians, SCC training used a rights-based development lens and focused on governance, citizenship, and developing abilities for democratic engagement with each other. Youth were introduced to the concept of the social contract and explored their own roles in enhancing it. The sessions used participatory techniques such as open discussions to draw and build on the experiences of youth and to enable different points of view to emerge around community issues in the post-revolution period.

From the civic education training held in Zakazik, a group of youth formed Omaar (meaning “*construction*”) to continue using civic education to mobilize more children, youth and families around these and other community issues.

As part of their civic education efforts, Omaar also used participatory discussions as well as group work, creative expression (e.g., drawing), storytelling, films, games, music, brainstorming sessions using cards, and debates. They ensured a diversity of activities, methods and age-appropriate techniques to engage in children and youth in dialogue.

Community gatherings and meetings

Omaar mobilized the public by hosting community events (e.g., celebrations), holding meetings and lobbying influential and wealthy community members. They also brought families together for follow-up discussion based on the learning and actions agreed upon in the training sessions. As with their training, dialogue was at the center of these activities aimed at mobilizing people to act together.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The Social Contract Center

In March 2011, the SCC implemented a series of training sessions with Sharqia University students in Zakazik. Approximately 300 youth completed the training in groups of up to 30 participants. Participants were selected so that each cohort had a gender balance and diversity in geographic backgrounds and interest. To be eligible, participants had to be enrolled in

a public university and to have never attended SCC training. Some universities conducted selection interviews with youth to ensure criteria were met. Preference was given to youth who had no prior participation in similar training.

Omaar

For its youth training, Omaar selected participants who were between 9 and 16 years of age. They advertised the opportunity to the entire community of Zakazik, welcoming the participation of all interested children and youth.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

With the Social Contract Center

The 5-day training program that the SCC led with youth in Zakazik was entitled *Youth Capacity Building for a Deeper Understanding of their Communities and for Enhancing their Participation*. It aimed at building knowledge around the concept of a “social contract,” as well as to develop skills in communicating, delivering presentations, working in teams, and exercising leadership.

Following the training, 30 participants established an initiative called *Omaar*. Because the SCC training did not explicitly include the development of action plans for community initiatives, this was indicative of a heightened sense of agency and strong desire for community engagement among these particular youth. The fact that these youth initiated the community action was also perceived as a transfer of capacity by the SCC facilitators, who had maintained contact with the young men and women in Zakazik.

Inside Omaar

Omaar included a cross-section of participants from all the groups trained by the SCC in Zakazik. They met regularly to identify what they could provide for the community and were intentional about having rotating meeting locations: these were held at Community Development Associations (CDAs), at private residences and academies and at clubs. By remaining independent and refusing to formally join existing associations, Omaar remained focused on its own vision of helping their community—especially children and youth—by fostering relationships and providing skills, knowledge, and resources.

Internally, Omaar members shared responsibilities between individual members and established clear roles: leader, assistant, secretary, and treasurer. Responsibilities were assigned to small sub-groups, each tasked with preparing training materials, contacting additional trainers for support, leading the training itself, and liaising with the media.

Omaar and the community

Omaar initially targeted groups of 50 children (aged 9 to 13) or youth (aged 14 to 16) for skills-building workshops on topics such as time management, creative thinking, group work, leadership, and setting a personal vision. They led a free, two-day training themed “*Geel waaied*” (Hopeful Generation) with an additional 200 children (divided in six groups) and eventually went on to train over 500 children and youth in total.

Parents were engaged during closing celebrations and thereby exposed to their children’s hopes and aspirations. As a result, many families were also mobilized to engage with Omaar and contributed to the group’s work by assisting in recruiting neighbors’ and friends’ children to participate in subsequent training.

As part of their initiative, Omaar also involved children and youth through several issue-specific gatherings and meetings. There, key community problems were identified and potential solutions were discussed, including the resources and capabilities available to address the problems. Decisions were made collectively and the children appreciated the youth trainers because they gave them a chance to talk, play, and engage directly in the community.

Influence, Outcome, and Effects

The creation of Omaar is itself a direct result of the SCC’s work in Zakazik. Motivated youth had the support required to self-organize and apply many of the skills and knowledge gained through the civic education program.

Once active, Omaar sought to support children in their pursuit of a good and happy life. They were now equipped to analyze their community and identified a gap they would strive to fill: there were no opportunities for children in Sharquia governorate for this kind of capacity building and engagement. The school curriculum and learning activities, for instance, did not provide any of the skills necessary for collective engagement. Omaar then set out to work with children to develop these through the civic education program.

Beyond addressing this gap, Omaar’s initiatives brought about a change in the relationships children maintained with their families, as children became better communicators and gained in confidence. During end-of-training evaluations and other community celebrations, parents also recognized their children’s increased self-reliance, organizational abilities, and time-management skills.

Another set of outcomes related to the children and youth’s increased sense of agency, as they began engaging with different groups in their community and offering various kinds of support through collective volunteer efforts. These included:

- supporting youth to engage in a variety of community outreach activities;
- visiting local orphanages and distributing gifts paid for through Omaar’s own funding efforts;
- supporting non-able brides (i.e., girls who were financially unable to prepare for marriage) to buy supplies for marriage, such as household appliances;
- preparing and distributing food packs during Ramadan at the community feast;
- donating monthly salaries to needy families; and
- visiting cancer patients in the hospital.

The total number of individuals reached through their activities is estimated at over 500.

Altogether, Omaar’s engagement with children and youth in Zakazik through civic education and training, as well as ongoing support in community engagement, contributed to:

- creating a space for children to learn from their peers;
- creating opportunities for youth and children to work together on projects that benefitted the community;
- instilling the concept of citizenship and citizen engagement in hundreds of youth and children;
- prompting a change in adults’ and parents’ perspectives of youth and children, who were now seen as active, contributing members of society;
- strengthening linkages between generations; and
- providing charitable services and channeling community resources to some of its least privileged members.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

The creation and accomplishments of Omaar—as well as the outcomes from the SCC’s training program—provide an example of how Egyptian youth were inspired and mobilized through civic education at a key moment in the country’s recent history. Several lessons can be drawn from this experience.

Informality and non-partisanship as assets

The informal structure of Omaar and its non-alignment with official organizations in Zakazik gave them flexibility to direct their energy towards their own priorities and community issues. It also enabled a broad spectrum of participation from community members, rather than being associated to one specific religious or political affiliation. This created invaluable

opportunities for children and youth to practice respect for people with different experiences and backgrounds from their own.

Integrated needs assessment and reflection for learning

To mobilize citizens, civic education programs are effective when they start from participants' learning needs. At the outset, the SCC identified participants' training needs and tailored the methodologies used to these. For Omaar, members conducted interviews with prospective participants prior to the training as a needs assessment exercise. This enabled them to identify suitable training methodologies and to focus on relevant topics and skills.

Reflection on past experiences and learning is also important for success. With this in mind, Omaar sought to build reflection into the training, including for evaluation purposes.

Mentoring and ongoing relationships as part of civic education

The SCC participated in Omaar's meetings, observed, and supported their training halls, sessions, and provided continuous feedback to enrich the training. The relationship between the youth of Omaar and the SCC trainers are ongoing. This support encouraged Omaar to keep moving forward, who knew they were not alone should they need guidance and mentorship in their initiatives. This type of follow-up and ongoing support encourages further learning among participants and greater engagement by trainees as they move to apply their learning into civic actions.

Collective problem solving at a crucial time

Children and youth know many of the solutions to the problems they face. It is important to value the perspectives of groups affected by a problem in coming up with solutions. Working as a team, Omaar and the children they mobilized gained a sense of achievement, not only as a result of participating—often for the first time—in collective problem-solving actions, but also in recognizing the tangible impacts of these efforts on other people in the community.

Engaging children and youth in a new social contract

Considering the political and social climate at the time, whereby people had greater enthusiasm to work together and participate in social actions, Omaar's initiatives provided a key opportunity for children and youth to participate in new ways in an evolving social contract. In this period of social openness and collaboration, a new image of Egyptian society was being articulated. Omaar's actions were demonstrating the key role these children and youth can play in this social contract, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities they have to do so.

Overcoming challenges

Alongside the accomplishments, Omaar faced challenges when they started because they were unable to influence any public decision around any of the issues they were engaging in with participants. While their work did not target policy or political engagement directly, their influence on the children, youth, and community members involved addressed in part how the poverty and inequality affected a number of individuals and groups in Zakazik.

To minimize challenges related to financial management, funds were kept in possession of Omaar, and meetings were held after each activity to review the transactions and disbursements carried out. The team coordinated around this aspect in an effort to promote trust and transparency.

A related challenge for the SCC was balancing the significant time and support they were offering Omaar during this period with the other commitments and training they were offering across Egypt. To overcome this challenge, SCC facilitators used multiple channels to communicate with Omaar, including by telephone and through Facebook, which facilitated contact at a distance.

Conclusion

Civic education can be an effective entry point in mobilizing groups to participate in their communities and in fulfilling their responsibilities as part of a society's social contract. The SCC mobilized a group of youth in Zakazik, who were in turn able to organize and engage hundreds of children, youth, and families in civic education and community action. Omaar is an example of the determination of Egyptian youth to engage in community life and exercise their civic responsibilities in the post-revolution period. With ongoing support and mentoring, Omaar applied knowledge and skills learned through civic education to achieve change in and around Zakazik. The actions spurred by Omaar represent steps towards a new social contract in Egypt, as articulated and supported by the SCC, and contribute to addressing some of the challenges that have faced Egyptian society since before the 2011 revolution.

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Citizen Observers: Social Accountability in Nigeria’s Judicial Sector

Barbara S. Maigari, with Julien Landry, Catherine Irving and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

For years, the Nigerian judicial system has experienced challenges that have been barriers to its effectiveness. The system has become opaque, often limiting access to information on processes and procedures. The public perceives the closed judicial system as a medium for shoddiness, ineptitude, and corrupt practices by judges and support staff. A 2002 survey revealed that 77% of lawyers and 43% of court users claimed that within the previous year, they had been approached to pay bribes with respect to court cases (Economic and Financial Crimes Commissions Nigeria, 2002). As well, it was discovered that 66% of respondents to a Transparency International (2013) survey felt the Nigerian Judiciary was corrupt, and 24% had indicated paying bribes to the system.

There is also a public perception that judges and court staff manipulate court dates and deliberately misplace files; there are also allegations that corruption cases are subject to multiple adjournments and frivolous delay tactics by defense counsels and judges. In the words of one judge, “the administration of justice in Nigeria as a whole craves for serious reform, there are so many lapses therein” (Partners West Africa-Nigeria, 2017c). Little improvement over the years has meant that many citizens have lost trust in the Nigerian court system as well in as the country’s anti-corruption agencies.

To address these challenges, the Rule of Law & Empowerment Initiative—also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN)—implemented the “Social Accountability in the Judicial Sector” project (SAJS)⁹ from June 2016 to May 2017 in two states. It aimed at improving integrity in the judicial sector by engaging citizens to carry out observation of court cases and processes. Citizen participation was vital to the strategy: it would serve as an accountability check-board for the sector to enhance transparency and access to information on judiciary’s operations, to address outdated elements in the system, and to allow for effective reform of the justice sector. To achieve this, the project focused on anti-corruption and non-anti-corruption cases, gathered and disseminated data to influence policy reform in the judicial sector.

History

The Nigerian judiciary is headed by a Chief Justice of Nigeria, while the State judiciaries are led by Chief Judges who report to the Chief Justice. The Nigerian legal system is based on

⁹ Acronym created by author for ease of reading and not commonly used to reference the project.

received English Common Law, while some states in the north also have a Sharia legal, which derives its powers from the Quran and is recognized by the Nigerian Constitution. The “Social Accountability in the Judicial Sector” (SAJS) project sought to engage judicial experts and citizens in observing court procedures and processes in both common and Sharia legal systems.

As such, SAJS targeted the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Kano state, with populations of 1.4 million and 9.4 million respectively (Nigeria Data Portal, 2006). The FCT is the capital of Nigeria, formed in 1976 from parts of Nassarawa, Niger and Kogi States, and uses a common law system. Unlike other states, which are governed by elected governors, the FCT is headed by an Administrator appointed by the President as Minister and does not have a state legislature. Conversely, Kano State, located in Northwestern Nigeria, is a commercial center for the north where a Sharia legal system is used alongside the common law system. It is headed by a duly elected state governor, legislature and a judiciary as the third arm of government.

Neglect by the executive and legislative arms of government to adequately appropriate and sustain the judiciary across the country has greatly contributed to the challenges outlined above: lack of transparency, internal irregularities, corrupt practices and bureaucratic nature. In 2015, incoming President Buhari’s government put anti-corruption on its governance agenda, leading to the arrests of allegedly corrupt judges by the Directorate of Security Services in October 2016 (Nkawanma, 2016). These developments, as well as positive support from actors in the development and justice reform sectors, encouraged Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) to implement the SAJS project in the FCT and Kano State, despite reservations from some actors based on unsuccessful previous experiences.

Originating Entities and Funding

Partners West Africa-Nigeria (PWAN), in collaboration with **PartnersGlobal**, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and over 25 civil society organizations implemented the 12-month “Social Accountability in the Judicial Sector” (SAJS) project, funded by the US Embassy to Nigeria’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

PWAN is a non-governmental organization dedicated to enhancing citizens’ participation and improving security governance in Nigeria and West Africa broadly. The organization is located in Abuja (FCT), with national and regional reach. It is part of the Partners Network around the world, united by common approaches including participatory decision making, collaborative advocacy, consensus building, and social entrepreneurship for democratic governance. The SAJS formed part of PWAN’s Rule of Law program area.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), along with 15 judicial experts from the NBA, government agencies working on justice issues, civil society organizations, and the media developed the selection criteria for court observers during a methodology workshop. These included the following requirements:

- graduate of tertiary institutions with an understanding of law, civil society, journalism, paralegal, or retired police prosecutors, youth corp members;
- good interpersonal, communication, and report writing skills;
- encouraging diversity in terms of gender, religious, and ethnic affiliation, and ability in the application process;
- lawyers and non-lawyers; and
- residence within Abuja and Kano with proximity to court premises.

Court observers were then recruited through open solicitation and recommendations by stakeholders. The project recruited 30 observers in FCT, and 47 observers in Kano. Each observer was then supported by a supervisor assigned by PWAN to ensure delegated duties be carried out effectively.

Methods and Tools Used

Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) commissioned a literature review and led a methodology workshop and observer trainings. They also developed monitoring tools for court observation, case monitoring, and court users' surveys.

Desk review: A judicial expert conducted a review of the Nigerian Judicial system from 1999–2016 to serve as literature to inform the project (see PWAN, 2017a).

Training of observers: Citizen observers were trained on the Nigerian judicial system, observation methodology, court decorum, and etiquettes. They were assigned courts and three cases each to observe. Facilitators included magistrates, NBA members, and PWAN members. The training was an opportunity for observers to ask questions about what they were to be observing.

Court observation: This approach allowed for engagement and collaboration between the judiciary and the implementing organizations and relied on citizens' active participation through daily visits to court rooms to gauge procedures and processes and to monitor cases.

Court users' survey: This process produced an evidence-based report on happenings in the court rooms from the view of litigants, witnesses, victims, and lawyers. It served to balance observer reports.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN), NBA, and other implementing partners undertook initial advocacy visits to the judiciary in Abuja and Kano to inform and solicit collaboration on the project (Enumah, 2016). Both judiciaries supported the project, assigning 15 courts in Abuja and 47 in Kano. There, the Chief Judge assigned the Chief Registrar of the Judiciary as the point of contact, and was particularly appreciative of the opportunity (PWAN, 2016) to move towards reforming the system and changing attitudes of individuals working in the judiciary. In Abuja, the Chief Judge designated his Special Assistant as a point of contact and indicated his availability for the project.

After the advocacy visits, PWAN organized a methodology workshop where assessment criteria for court observation were established, as follows:

- *Efficiency:* The time it takes to commence and dispose of cases, as compared with policies and laws on speedy trials;¹⁰
- *Accountability:* Ensuring the judiciary is publicly accountable;
- *Accessibility:* Measuring how often the court sits in chambers as compared to open courts;
- *User Satisfaction:* Assessing equal opportunities regardless of the nature of the case or parties involved (fairness and equality); and
- *Independence of Courts and Judges:* Based solely on information from the court observer regarding comportment of judges, relations with lawyers and other parties, and level of independence in carrying out functions.

Observers in Abuja assessed Magistrate and High Courts in pairs, while those in Kano were individually assigned to Magistrate, Kano State High, Federal High, Industrial, and Sharia courts. Each observer visited assigned courts for three days a week and submitted weekly reports to PWAN. Five to seven observers were assigned to a supervisor who was responsible for the collation of completed data forms and submission to PWAN. Observers and supervisors were paid monthly stipends to assist with transportation.

¹⁰ The intent of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015 is that criminal trials would be adjudicated speedily. Section 396 of the law further mandates courts to adjourn cases on day-to-day basis.

Initially, there were reservations by judges and support staff being observed as to the intent of the project and some courts denied access to case files. However, the Chief Judges directed them to allow observers to access the case files in the spirit of transparency. Periodically, observers who were unclear about proceedings were allowed by the judges to sit in chambers for further explanations. In some situations, support staff welcomed observers and attended to inquiries requiring further clarification.

PWAN analyzed data from court observations quarterly and presented findings first to the judiciary before releasing them publicly before the judiciary, justice sector actors, civil society organizations, (PWAN, 2017d) community-based organizations, observers, supervisors, media, and funders (PWAN, 2017e).



Figure 21. Collaborative meeting with Chief Judge in FCT

Findings revealed the extent and complexity of decay in the judicial system, including the following:

- poor diligence to duty by prosecutors, defense lawyers, and litigants and sometimes administrative assignment of judges/magistrates contributing to delays in determination of cases.
- inadequate budgetary allocation to the judiciary to ensure proper facilities for discharge of duties;
- poor provision of legal aid services, particularly in the common law courts;
- more instances of speedy trials and access to justice in Sharia courts; and
- a lack of political will by the executive and legislature to address challenges in the judiciary (PWAN, 2017c).

As trust built through the project, PWAN regularly updated the Chief Judges on situations coming out of the observations, informed them of challenges faced in the course of the observation and requested that their office address the problem. In all cases, the leadership attended to these requests, which enhanced the smooth running of the observation exercise.

At the end of the project, a policy brief on the project was produced and disseminated to the relevant justice sector policy makers. PWAN also organized an award program to recognize the judges, magistrates, Sharia court khadis, and court staff who had been diligent in their duty throughout the exercise. The celebration highlighted those particular courts who improved on timely sitting, diligent case management, and persistent carrying out of duties.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The “Social Accountability in the Judicial Sector” (SAJS) project goal was to create greater incentives for sustained judicial reform through the judiciary, embodying principles of accountability, integrity, transparency, and commitment to duty. To this end, it availed Nigerians the opportunity to engage with the judiciary in an open space and shed public light on court activities. Some key outcomes included:

Increased accountability and transparency

The project enhanced accountability in the judiciary. In Kano, judges who were not sitting in time (9:00 am) started doing so by the second quarter of observation. The judiciary benefitted from this, as more cases could be attended, thus decongesting the system. Court users and NBA members also benefited from the change in behavior as their appearances to court became more timely and useful. In line with this, the Chief Justice of Nigeria has recently strengthened the inspectorate division in the judiciary to monitor and ensure judicial officers come to work and sit from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm as per civil service rules (Olowolagba, 2018).



Figure 22. PWAN Program Manager conducting media interview as part of release

Court observers also increased transparency, especially as they were granted access to case files where there was no precedent for this practice. While some courts opened up in the first attempt, others had to be compelled by the leadership of the court before access was granted.

Need for enhanced resources provided to the judiciary

Information from the findings revealed inadequate budgetary allocations to the judiciary by the executive and legislatures, resulting in poor availability of facilities, insufficient court rooms (Kano), poor power supply in the courts (Kano and Abuja), and the unavailability of electronic recording systems in the courts. The project also revealed the inadequate provision of legal aid services in courts across both states (PTV Online, 2017).

Enhanced credibility for organizations working on judicial accountability

A less predictable and quantifiable outcome has been a niche created for Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) as a pivotal organization in justice sector issues in Nigeria. For instance, the FCT judiciary has made PWAN a stakeholder in its annual prison visit exercise, where court trials are undertaken on prison premises, and persons unduly detained can be released.

Expanding reach through social media and technology

Deliberations with the NBA in Kano led to the creation of a Court Observer mobile app (PWA-Nigeria, 2017) to be used by lawyers and support staff who visit the courts. The mobile app contains an electronic version of the observation tools and allows for continued observation after the project's conclusion. Additional data is still being generated and collected by PWAN from different states across the country.

Ongoing demand from judicial actors for continued oversight

Judges, lawyers, and court staff have stated a desire to continue with the project once it has concluded. As an indicator of perceived success on the part of the public officials, many expressed a willingness and determination to continue working towards PWAN's mission to reform the judiciary, as the following quotes (PWAN, 2017b) reveal:

"The project is a very good and laudable initiative...I am really in support of any project which will transform the judiciary. I believe we need more of such initiative because it will go a long way in transforming the system."

- Judge (Kano)

"It really impresses me as a judge to be observed in my duties. [PWAN] has brought very crucial project which can reflect the present condition of judicial sector in Kano state. I wish it be here again in Kano state."

- Sharia Court Khadi (Kano)

Engaging citizens in court observation led to significant results in less than a year, leaving many involved with an appetite for greater work around judicial accountability and transparency in the country.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

A number of lessons were learned through the "Social Accountability in the Judicial Sector" (SAJS) project, including the following:

Engaging early for buy-in and constructive collaboration

Initial reservations on the part of some judges and court staff could be mitigated since Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) and the project were independent (e.g., on the arrests in the sector), while remaining intent on contributing reform to the sector in a collaborative way. The collaborative approach—whereby stakeholders were engaged early and meaningfully—proved to be more productive than other previously-attempted strategies. A history of failed

independent projects meant stakeholders had reservations at the inception. Once the judiciary recognized that the intention of the project was not to spy, but to collaborate in making the sector work, they opened their doors and allowed access to the courts and processes. The initial advocacy visits opened the doors to collaboration, support and transparent relationships with key actors in the judiciary, which set up PWAN and the citizen observers for success.

Early emphasis on getting initial buy-in and support guided the strategy for engagement and created a level of trust between PWAN and the judiciary, as evidenced by the high level of political showed by the Chief Justices in both states and other judicial actors throughout.

Improved problem analysis using data generated through social accountability

The data generated through observation and survey allowed PWAN to shed additional light on the problem and demystify assumptions and the initial view that judges are the main reason why cases are not attended to. Members of the judiciary were themselves able to identify some of these causes. According to an observer in a Magistrate court in FCT:



Figure 23. Participants engage with PWAN at FCT release of court observation data

“The Chief Magistrate (for the court I observed) after attending the second release of findings said to counsels present in court the following day: ‘I think learned counsels should also be observed as well and not just the judges alone.’ ... She...has realized that most delays in cases were usually due to avoidable adjournments on the part of lawyers.” (PWAN, 2017b)

In the end, problems in the sector were caused a number of different actors, including lawyers, prosecutors, and other parties. Corroborating the need for evidence-based data to debunk assumptions, a lawyer and regular court user had this to say:

“The court observation program is a welcome development; it could shape government policy and individuals’ opinions about the court. Most impressions are based on rumors and sentiments, but with the information-based observation program we will all have a different impression and opinion about the court.” (PWAN, 2017b)

Finally, in showing how the gaps were also due to the poor availability of court facilities and resources, the data generated through citizen engagement also draws the lines of accountability beyond the judiciary and to the executive and legislative branches responsible for adequately resourcing the sector.

The role of citizens in fostering a culture of accountability

The legal profession and civil service in Nigeria have internal and external accountability structures; however, due to the longstanding ineffectiveness of these mechanisms, citizens have tended to forget their democratic duties, allowing for impunity and corruption in the sector. The SAJS project has shown that when citizens do engage to play a watchdog role, public officials can and often do respond. In the words of a judge:

"If judges and other stakeholders know that someone somewhere is monitoring their activities, I am certain that they will sit up and do the needful and this will have a positive impact in reforming the system." (PWAN, 2017b)

While some officials work tirelessly to ensure effectiveness in the system, more need to be engaged. The observation served as an opportunity for those working with integrity and making impact to continue the good work, while allowing others who were defaulting to improve.

The participation of 'skilled citizens'

The citizens engaged in observation were Nigerian graduates with a relatively advanced level of education and skill. While perhaps limiting in terms of broader civic engagement in judicial accountability, this was seen as a necessary first step in profiling observers, given that many of the officials within the courts would not see "average citizens" as credible and legitimate observers of the courts. These "skilled citizens," whose training included information on how the judicial sector works and how to engage and interact with officers within it, as well as an opportunity to learn about the court system and Nigerian governance structure, were able to effectively navigate this environment and create a relationship between citizens and the judiciary. Again, using observers who were graduates was helpful in making recommendations on how reforms may be introduced in the sector based on skilled observations.



Figure 24. Court observers and PWAN staff

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External Links

Partners West Africa-Nigeria <http://www.partnersnigeria.org/>

PartnersGlobal <http://www.partnersglobal.org/>

PWAN: Policy Brief- Measures to Strengthen Accountability of Judicial Officials <http://www.partnersnigeria.org/policy-brief-measures-to-strengthen-accountability-of-judicial-officials/>

The Democracy Project: Youth Participation and Democratic Education (Burnaby, British Columbia)

Jannika Nyberg, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

The Democracy Project sought to address inequitable systems of representation within the school and school board of Byrne Creek, located in Burnaby, British Columbia. More precisely, it sought to address the lack of decision-making structures for students to shape their own learning. By giving students the space to re-imagine what their learning experience could be if they were to co-create it, this experience sought to empower students to participate in the governance of their own education.

This project was youth-led and explored how a youth empowerment approach could shape more democratic decision-making structures within the school board, a regional decision-making body. The goal was to provide the opportunity, resources, and structure for a group of youth to explore and experience democratic processes for themselves without the limitations of rigid course learning objectives and grades.

History

The Democracy Project emerged in 2015 as a result of two years of discussions between the project facilitator, students, and the former Community School Coordinator that were related to the broad issue of systemic student disempowerment in British Columbia (B.C.) schools.

Student organizing and participation in decision making and policy at the school board level is relatively new in Canada, dating back to the mid-1990s in Ontario (Royal Commission of Learning, 1995). More recently, the Student Voice Initiative (SVI) was founded in 2011 as a national student-led organization striving to help any Canadian school districts create a student seat on their school board (Student Voice Initiative, 2014). Inspired by Ontario's early work in student representation, SVI used that province's framework to inspire change in B.C., beginning in 2012.

While in Ontario a top-down process is used to ensure every school board create a seat and hold an election for a Student Trustee, in B.C., SVI worked with student advisory councils to initiate Student Trustee policies from the bottom up, one district at a time. SVI and the Vancouver District Student's Council joined forces to lobby for the first Student Trustee seat in the province. This bottom-up approach fostered a climate of grassroots action, notably after the first pilot Student Trustee policy gained momentum in the Vancouver School District in 2013 (Vancouver School Board, 2015), and generated interest and influenced student bodies in other districts, such as in Burnaby.

Like the majority of B.C. districts, Burnaby has a District Student Advisory Council (DSAC), a group of approximately 25 students that counsels the Board of Trustees on student matters. By provincial law, all trustees are over the age of 19 and must own property in the province. While the mandate of the DSAC is to provide a platform for student voice, its annual goals have rather focused on organizing district talent shows and providing members opportunities to receive leadership training.

Prior to 2013, there existed neither a mechanism through which student ideas, opinions, or concerns could be heard by the Board of Trustees and reviewed transparently, nor an obligation for trustees to consult students in decisions regarding pedagogy, curriculum, or school policy. The lines of accountability between students and teachers and between students and trustees had never been drawn explicitly. As a result, it was unclear how students could influence or implement change, and how they could be heard by those in decision-making positions. This led to a sense of disempowerment among the youth—a problem the Democracy Project aimed to solve using a youth-led, participatory process.

Finally, no exploration into the intersection of multiculturalism and student participation had been attempted in Burnaby. This is an important consideration, as Byrne Creek High School is located in one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Canada (Todd, 2016), and its student population reflects that diversity. Choosing a school that would address the question of civic engagement and student participation within this context of ethnic diversity was essential.

Originating Entities and Funding

Conceptualized by a non-student local youth and designed and led by student participants themselves, the Democracy Project originated as a direct result of the OceanPath Fellowship. The Oceanpath Fellowship is an experiential professional development and leadership certificate program funded by the Pathy Family Foundation and carried out by the Coady International Institute. As an OceanPath fellow, the local youth leader received leadership training, mentoring, and coaching, as well as financial support to carry out the Democracy Project from September 2015 to June 2016.

Additional resources were available thanks to Byrne Creek High School's status as a community school; that is, a school funded in part by the school board and in part by the city, and where community services such as social workers, immigration workers, and a community school coordinator are provided. The project also had access to resources provided through the Community Room, a physical space and a human resource hub in the school.

Methods and Tools Used

As a paradigm that seeks to identify and build on the strengths and opportunities of a system or community, an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) framework guided work throughout the Democracy Project (see also Coady International Institute). Within this approach, methods such as participatory project management (PPM), motivational interviewing, Deep Democracy, and storytelling were used.

Participatory project management: Students were taught an experiential, place-based curriculum that focused on celebrating their lived experience as pillars of knowledge, or assets. PPM, in other words, was used to create a space for participants to inform the direction of their learning and the overall curriculum within the Democracy Project.

Motivational interviewing: As a goal-oriented approach that seeks to inspire the interviewee to make changes in behaviours/actions, this approach was used to focus the students to identify goals and make self-directed decisions to achieve them.

The qualitative data used for this case was gathered over a 9-month period, using grounded theory to unearth key patterns. While not a participatory method, this research method seeks to identify emerging patterns in data and was used to capture data generated through participatory actions. The facilitator interpreted the qualitative data from storytelling, interviews, and participant observation into theory and relied on this to explain key findings. A mid-point survey was administered to measure learning indicators set collaboratively at the beginning of the course by both the students themselves (i.e., what skills they wanted to learn) and the facilitator's own participatory research goals. All 10 students responded to this written survey. To capture additional perspectives and outcomes after the project, Participedia surveys were used through telephone interviews with participants and observers involved directly in this process. Five of 10 students and the sole observer responded to their respective surveys.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

The Democracy Project comprised of 10 Byrne Creek High School students in Grades 11 and 12 (two young men, and eight young women). Students were informed of the opportunity to participate through school-wide announcements and in-class presentations. Students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 were targeted for participation. Interested students were invited to attend information sessions about the 9-month Independent Directed Study (IDS) course (as the project was framed) and the Oceanpath fellowship. Students were then invited to fill out an application form, aimed at gauging their expectations, passions, and level of dedication to see the course through until the end.

Responses to the application could be provided in writing, as illustrations, or verbally. Selection criteria included students' genuine concern for, and willingness to explore difficult and contentious systemic issues, and their desire to design the content and structure of the course. Students were selected based on the diverse perspectives each would bring to the class, keeping in mind gender, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Deliberations and decisions within the group

The Democracy Project group was run as an IDS course, so participants could gain school credit for their participation. Workshops were held twice a week during the lunch hour and regularly after school. Initial course content mainly focused on citizenship and democratic theory and practice. However, the students themselves collectively decided on how they wanted to learn. They experimented with peer-to-peer learning, working in pairs to teach the group on a subject of their choosing, and voted on topics and themes they wished to explore more deeply. All deliberations were done in a dialogue circle, challenging participants to listen deeply to one another.

In the third month, the group grappled with their first collective decision-making process around how to structure roles and responsibilities within the group in an effort to establish lines of accountability. Two of the students were frustrated with the lack of accountability from other members, which gave way to a week-long deliberation to determine the group's "legislation" on accountability. The students co-created their own governance rules, prompted by the facilitator with questions to frame this group mechanism.

From this point forward, all decisions were made using consensus or majority rule. When deliberating on their action project for the year (i.e., their initiative to create a Student Trustee seat at the Burnaby School Board), the students made the decision using dot-mocracy—an experiential democratic activity based on the principles of majority vote and derived from PPM.



Figure 25. Dot-mocracy exercise to rank student priorities

Deliberations, dialogue, and interaction with the administration

Once the students decided they wanted to tackle the mechanisms of student governance, the Byrne Creek Community Coordinator set up a meeting with the school administration and the District's Director of Learning. Though the Administration stated they were in support of the group's aspiration, they never publicly offered this support. The Director of Learning engaged with students through monthly meetings, in which the students were expected to present their findings and proposals. During these meeting, students used the Director of Learning's feedback to inform their own deliberations and consensus-making process. Including the Director of Learning in their decision making brought about noticeable changes to the discussion students had with their peers and teachers. Some complaints were now brought forward directly to the administration.



Figure 26. Students display their agreed-upon priority to advocate for a Student Trustee on the School Board

During this period, certain challenges and setbacks were blocking progress towards the group's goal of establishing a student seat at the Board of Trustees. While keeping this longer term vision in mind, the group then decided to tackle another governance issue at the district level: inclusive student representation on the DSAC. The students launched a campaign to change the application process for District Student Advisory Council representation, forgoing formal structures and directing their complaints to the school administration. In contrast to the existing process that was based on teacher-nominated candidates, the group sought to establish a more democratic process whereby all students are made aware of the opportunity, all can apply, and the criteria are broadened so more diverse students may apply. This significant shift resulted from the students' strengthened relationship with the Director of Learning. Because their work caught the attention of the Burnaby School Board, the school administration made this change a priority, reinforcing the understanding that having allies in positions of influence is important in effective advocacy for policy change.

Influence, Outcomes and Effects

Though the measurable outcomes of the Democracy Project were few at the systemic level, the influence and lasting effect of the students' work within the student body and DSAC was significant. The Democracy Project managed to change the outlook of trustees, teachers, and other school district officials, and changed the process through which students of Byrne Creek High School become representatives of student voice. Finally, at an individual level, the Democracy Project enabled for student participants to deepen their self-awareness and empathy, as well as construct a critical analysis of the world around them.

Change of attitude at the district school board

The school district's Director of Learning admitted that while he was initially apprehensive about the group's demand to reform student representation, he later changed his mind. During a dialogue in April 2016, he admitted that the students' outlook on representation challenged his Board's culture of top-down communication. He expressed his gratitude to the group of students in the final meeting, highlighting that their passion and assertiveness challenged the status quo he was used to managing. He admitted the group forced him to step out of his director's role and remember the teacher's role, which was about empowering, not managing, youth. To have an influential decision-maker change perspectives underscores the importance of using a relational approach in both civic education and youth empowerment work. In other words, the students' work to build a relationship of trust with the Director of Learning changed not only his perspective, but also led him to take actions that were integral in achieving a policy change.

Change in district policy for DSAC student seat

The Democracy Project opened a space for all students to pursue the opportunity to represent student voice in school governance bodies. Before the project, each school principal would privately nominate the students they felt were most worthy of sitting at the DSAC table. The opportunity to be on DSAC was restricted through an exclusive and private nomination process, and therefore tended to lack diverse representation. There was no publicizing of the opportunity, and no district-wide policy existed to make applications available to all students. The youth influenced the school's administration to create an open and accessible application process that was made available to all students, including students in the alternate education program, a program for students with various learning difficulties. This application process was eventually adopted across the Burnaby School District by means of an official policy put forth by DSAC and implemented in all schools.

Impact on student participants

Finally, the impact on individual student behaviour was great. One student's story illustrates the effect this participatory process in building self-awareness and a more critical perspective on the world (names and personal details changed for confidentiality).

When Lillian showed up to the first Democracy Project info session, she was quiet and shy. She had recently moved to Burnaby from Southeast Asia with her parents, and it was her first time in a North American high school. Though she spent her childhood in Vancouver, and had excellent command of English, she had much insecurity with her mastery of the language. The culture change was just as challenging as her courses. Within the first two months, Lillian only gave her opinion when asked and never spoke over anyone. She was

often the first to complete projects and the personal journal assignments. During her phone interview, she recounted that at this stage, she did not feel she played an important role in the group discussions.

After the third month, the group collectively decided they wanted to focus their project on implementing the student trustee seat. This phase of the project required much personal accountability within the group as they navigated consensus-based decisions and goal setting. It was during this phase that Lillian began to speak up in group discussion, to disagree with common threads of thought and to suggest differing ideas. The collective pressure of collaborating and owning her own participation enabled Lillian to change her perspective of herself from a quiet cultural outsider to someone whose opinion and ideas needed to be heard. She began to arrive early to class to chat with the facilitator, which revealed an outgoing side to her personality. The collaborative space and emphasis on personal ownership in participation very clearly affected Lillian's sense of personal agency.

At the mid-point, she spoke of how her cultural norms were challenged heavily by the group. For instance, she had never been encouraged to be outspoken, to share a first-hand idea, or to participate in a group that was not academics-related. After the project, she stated, "I would have never joined a group like this, but the idea of changing systems power got me hooked. Then later, it was the only space where I always felt respected and like my ideas were valued" (personal communication).¹¹



Figure 27. Community School Coordinator discusses men's roles in feminism with the students.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

In analyzing the data from both mid-point and post-project surveys, three key lessons emerged along with insights into strengths and limitations of the approaches taken.

Increased agency, cooperation, and accountability in all students

First, the dialectic and participatory approach resulted in all respondents reporting increased agency and cooperative skills in the post survey. Further, all reported that they perceived themselves to play an important role in the process, indicating they understood themselves as agents of change. All respondents also reported an increase in their ability to cooperate from the mid-point survey onwards. In fact, when asked by the facilitator what their biggest

¹¹ Lillian gave her consent to share her story.

learning was, every respondent cited “cooperation.” “Accountability” was the second most cited learning, with 80% of respondents reporting that “democracy is about accountability and making sure everyone’s voice is heard, often before your own.”

Deepened sense of empathy among students

The second lesson came from the emphasis on team building and interpersonal respect. At the beginning of the process, the facilitator led a process to reach community agreements, which challenged students to identify what each needed to participate fully. From that point on, participants were bound to uphold these agreements. All students reported an increase in empathy after the course concluded. This deepening of empathy enabled each participant to take this new lens into collaborations with peers and friends outside the Democracy Project group.

Importance of inclusive decision-making processes

Ninety percent (90%) of respondents to the survey reported that they now “listen to all sides before making a decision” and that they “feel strongly that it is important to listen to all sides even when making individual decisions” because they saw the value in deep listening when working within participatory processes.

Participatory pedagogy as a catalyst for action

This experience also illustrates that education—and, in particular, participatory pedagogies—not only builds learners’ knowledge and skills, but also contributes to the attitudinal changes often required for individuals and groups to take action. In other words, the successes the group had in changing district-wide policy was closely linked to the methodology used for learning about citizenship, democracy, and inclusive representation in the Democracy Project learning space. Through this approach, bonds were strengthened between students, a crucial relationship was initiated with the Director of Learning, and trust was built over time such that students’ collective demands were seen as legitimate and ultimately were acted upon.

Limitations of consensus-based dialogue

Despite the success at individual and district levels, the dialectic, consensus-based approach was not effective in producing broad change at the Board of Trustees level. The experience reinforces that structural change often requires efforts that are sustained over time. In other words, the overarching goal of introducing a new student trustee policy, which would affect the entire school board, was not achieved in this timeframe. The process proved too slow and offered decision-makers opportunities to opt for “further dialogue” with the students rather than to implement a new policy that would make space for a student to be elected to the Board of Trustees and to be granted equal voting power. In efforts to overcome this

challenge and ultimately achieve this change, students pushed DSAC members to commit to working towards a Student Trustee position into their mandate, ensuring their efforts would be sustained. The work initiated by the Democracy Project group with the school administration to secure a new district-wide DSAC application process represents a step in this direction.

Conclusion

Overall, outcomes from the Democracy Project highlight the importance of building the trust needed to cultivate strong mutual accountability amongst students. Relational and experiential pedagogy was effective in empowering students to use their own lived experience to understand concepts, to develop the soft social skills required to sustain participatory processes, and to generate action that led to the design and establishment of a more inclusive process for student representation. Considering the project's initial question—*How can we empower students to be more civically engaged in schools and post-graduation?*—the participatory process used was successful in empowering students with a heightened sense of personal agency. All students reported that they see the value in, and would want to join a collaborative civic movement. Lastly, as a complement to the changes in policy and district-level governance structures (i.e., DSAC), the students themselves also developed the life-long skills to practice principles of cooperation, empathy, and accountability.

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Mobilizing Persons with Cerebral Palsy for Meaningful Participation in Uganda

Peter Ochieng, with Julien Landry, Catherine Irving and Rachel Garbary

Problem and Purpose

For years, persons with Cerebral Palsy (PWCP) in Uganda have been marginalised both in their communities and in the disability movement, partially due to limited awareness on Cerebral Palsy (CP) as a disability with its own causes and effects. Because PWCP manifest many different forms of functional limitations (e.g., challenges related to walking and/or speech), they tended to be categorised under other disabilities.



Figure 28. Young girl with cerebral palsy sits on her mother's lap

In most local communities, people interpreted CP through cultural understandings (e.g., parent's unfaithfulness, curses, incest) and stigmatised their families. Many families hid children with CP from the public, both to protect their family image and to avoid exclusion from broader community activities. Over time, this contributed to high illiteracy rates among PWCP and exclusion from capacity-building opportunities by both civil society and state actors, further limiting their participation in governance. PWCP have generally been invisible in all community activities, including those targeting persons with other disabilities, exemplifying the Uganda National Bureau of Statistics' understanding of disability: "any physical or mental conditions that limit full participation of an individual in family and community activities" (Uganda National Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

It was thus urgent to mobilize, organize, and empower PWCP to claim their space for inclusion and to realize their right to contribute to development and governance. Raising public awareness was also crucial to change attitudes and prejudice that perpetuated the exclusion of PWCP. To accomplish this, a group of PWCP initially mobilized and empowered their peers, engaged other stakeholders, and conducted media campaigns. However, to sustain efforts and ensure their full participation in development processes and decisions, PWCP moved to form their own organization: the Uganda National Association of Cerebral Palsy (UNAC).

History

Intersectional discrimination is common to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and constitutes a major barrier to their inclusion and participation in community, despite a legal framework to protect these rights. Article 21 of the Ugandan Constitution (1995) prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities, and the Uganda Local Governments Act (1997), the Parliamentary Elections Act (2001), and the Movement Act (1997) all aim to increase the representation of PWDs in the public sphere.¹² Uganda is signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The enacted Uganda Persons with Disabilities Act (2006) makes further provisions for the elimination of all forms of discriminations against PWDs and towards equal opportunities. Notwithstanding, PWCP remain excluded in part due to assumptions that their views can be adequately represented by people with other types of disabilities, especially physical ones.

In 2011, a delegation of youth with disabilities from Denmark visited the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) Youth Committee as part of an exchange visit. The delegation included youth with CP, who noticed that PWCP were not included in any activity or in the organization database in Uganda. This prompted them to initiate a project specifically aimed at mobilizing PWCP in Uganda, requesting in 2011 that the NUDIPU Youth Committee recruit two youth with CP, who would then receive training in leadership and project management in Denmark.

On their return, the youth implemented a 1-year pilot project that raised awareness and mobilized 142 (87 male and 55 female) PWCP in two districts of Central Uganda, Kampala and Wakiso. Another 2-year project expanded the reach to Buikwe and Mukono districts. Despite the success, the fact that PWCP were operating under the umbrella of national disabled peoples' organization still meant limited control, influence, and dependence which prolonged their marginalization and invisibility. To overcome this, and to address the challenges of exclusion and voicelessness in their communities, PWCP resolved to form and registered their own organization in 2013

Originating Entities and Funding

Spastiker Association Denmark, in collaboration with the Danish Association of the Disabled, funded the projects implemented by PWCP leading to the formation of UNAC. To register under the Uganda Non-Governmental Organizations Board, PWCP largely used their own resources. Their aim was to enhance the visibility of PWCP in their community, to strengthen

¹² *The Local Government Act*, for example, provides for representation of disabled people at the various Local Council levels. In addition, Section 37 of the *Parliamentary Elections Statute* provides for five seats in Parliament for representatives of persons with disabilities.

their advocacy voice for inclusion and participation in their community, and to realise their rights to live a dignified life.

Several funders have since supported UNAC's initiatives. Disability Rights Fund (DRF) have supported efforts to establish leadership structures of PWCP across Uganda and to strengthen UNAC's own leadership capacity. The Abilis Foundation has supported the economic empowerment of PWCP through start-up capital, business development, and management training.

Project implementation partnerships have also been developed with Uganda National Action on Physical Disability and Motivation Charitable Trust.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Formation of UNAC

To mobilize PWCP, two youth with CP were identified from with Kyambogo University Kampala and were trained and empowered to mobilize their peers. They mainly relied on



Figure 29. Identifying persons with cerebral palsy in communities

community members to lead them to families believed to have a member with CP who would likely be hidden from the public. Other community members were eventually recruited to support in identifying PWCP from their community. All identified members (PWCP) were then trained on their rights and the difference between CP and other disabilities. From this initial group of members was established an acting committee to monitor and support project implementation.

UNAC activities

UNAC targets PWCP of all ages from all districts of Uganda, though it often focuses on those in project implementation districts. The engagement of PWCP depends on:

- project location, duration, and available resources;
- previous participation in UNAC projects, with new areas always prioritised; and
- the prevalence of CP.

UNAC approaches local leaders to help first disseminate the information to the community and then help in identifying families with PWCP. Parents and caretakers also constitute the primary participants recruited, since most PWCP depend entirely on someone for support.

UNAC also recruits teams of contact persons in each community, including community leaders, parents/caretakers, empowered PWCP, and reputable community members. Their role is to identify new members with CP; coordinate the exchange of information between UNAC, its members, and the community; and to monitor the participation of PWCP in all community activities.

DPOs, civil society organizations, and government departments constitute a secondary member group mobilized by UNAC as allies to support and promote the inclusion of PWCP.

Membership in all categories has increased annually, yet challenges persist in recruiting and mobilizing PWCP, pertaining to negative public attitudes, inaccessibility, poverty, illiteracy rates, age, and neglect.

Methods and Tools Used

Numerous methods were used by PWCP to claim their inclusion and enhance their community participation, including disability rights advocacy training, stakeholder engagement meetings, and media campaigns.

Disability rights advocacy training: This training targeted PWCP and their caretakers, focusing on raising their awareness of their rights and how to protect and promote them.

Stakeholder engagement meetings: These were aimed at both forming allies to support the inclusion of PWCP and to raise awareness.

Media campaigns: These aimed at reaching communities and publics beyond the project operation areas. It entailed press releases, television shows, brochures, charts, and call-in radio talk shows.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

Within UNAC

According to UNAC (2015), the Cerebral Palsy pilot project mobilised a membership of 142 (87 males and 55 females), which increased to 538 (342 males and 196 females) members with Cerebral Palsy mobilized in only 4 districts out of the total 121. Under an interim committee leadership, the mobilized PWCP joined together and established UNAC, which then established

leadership structures (i.e., committees) of PWCP in two regions of Uganda (West and Central); they are now in the process of establishing in the East and Northern regions. The structures have played a key role in mobilizing more PWCP in their respective regions and empowering them to claim space in their community.

Within the disability rights advocacy training

Over 15 trainings (each involving 10-20 participants) were conducted for PWCP and their caretakers in Central, Western, and Northern Uganda. The trainings included workshops and follow-up meetings to evaluate changes PWCP experience in their community. The workshops used moderated discussions, often led by a PWCP, to impart knowledge and skills and gather data for documentation. In all workshops, PWCP's views were primary in all decisions, with parents deliberating on behalf of children and those with severe CP. On matters concerning caretakers, their views were prioritised.

In the first workshop, participants listed and prioritized the most pressing barriers faced by PWCP, including:

- negative attitudes from community members;
- low self-esteem amongst PWCP and their family members;
- physical and information inaccessibility of opportunities in their community;
- isolation both in their family and in the community;
- lack of representation in any leadership structure within their community and at the national level;
- high illiteracy rates; and
- poverty.

In terms of actions to address these barriers and realize their rights, members agreed to prioritise:



- public awareness raising;
- leadership training for PWCP; and
- establishing an organization for PWCP.

Figure 30. Mobilization and leadership training in Lira District

Within the stakeholder engagement meetings

These engagements were preceded by stakeholders mapping to identify potential allies and align various stakeholders with particular barriers the initiative aimed to address. DPOs, local government departments, and the general community were primary targets. UNAC then arranged individual stakeholder meetings and joint meetings where multiple stakeholders came together to pledge reforms and support to guarantee inclusion of PWCP.

DPOs who targeted a particular category of disability committed to including PWCP in all their activities aimed at the broader disability movement. For some, PWCP became part of their primary targets in all their activities and leadership structures. The results were mixed, as these well-established national organizations had strong influence and reach in their areas of advocacy and operation; yet, their efforts tempted to diverted potential funding and support for PWCP to their organizations.

Local government leaders considered this initiative to be transformative for the entire community. They believed raising community awareness on CP would change people's attitudes, stereotypes and myths, and reduce stigma around families and PWCP. In Buikwe, each time a government program began, a PWCP contact person was mobilized to guide officials on any accommodations required to ensure their active participation.

Within media campaigns

Media campaigns aimed at raising the awareness of a broader audience on CP, at mobilizing other PWCP, and at showcasing PWCP's ability to deliberate on issues of public interest, like national budget allocations. For example, UNAC contributed to a press statement calling upon the State to follow the Uganda Persons with Disability Act (2006) in appropriating funds to special needs education programs.¹³ PWCP also contribute press statements regularly on other rights issues and comments on national budget allocations in health, inclusive education, the inclusion of PWCP, and implementation of the UN CRPD.

Within the community

These multiple engagements have also led several PWCP to gain formal representation as elected councillors in local government. As such, they have kept peers informed of all planned activities in their community, they advocate for reasonable accommodation to facilitate their participation, and they influence the local government to improve accessibility of their offices for all persons with disabilities. Since assuming office, some leaders with CP have cited noticeable changes amongst their fellow leaders, including increased patience to allow them more time to speak, receiving copies of Council deliberations, or a sense of changes in

¹³ The *Uganda Persons with Disability Act 2006* obliges the government to allocate 10% of the education budget to inclusive and special needs education, while it only spent a mere 0.12% in 2013-14.

attitudes. However, for greater inclusion of PWCP, this attitude change observed within Council still needs to be expanded to reach peers in the community.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The goal of inclusion and active participation of PWCP in the disability movement and in their communities has been partially achieved. As PWCP established their own association, they are now awarded representation both in the disability movement and their local community. While UNAC initiatives have reached fewer than 10 of 121 districts in Uganda, gains in those areas have been significant, and include:

Mobilizing PWCP to contribute to their communities

This initiative inspired PWCP to share their experiences and time to promote participation in their communities. By organizing themselves, PWCP established a platform upon which their knowledge and skills, acquired through living with a disability, was valued and shared to help the public develop interventions to guarantee their participation.

Meaningful inclusion in the disability movement and in communities

PWCP are now meaningfully included in both the disability movement and in many of their communities. There are now two youth with CP in the NUDIPU's youth committee, including one representing youth with disabilities from central Uganda. UNAC elected a board that includes persons with other forms of disability and other members without disability. Moreover, a former member of the CP committee was elected as a local councillor, representing all PWDs in his community. This has enhanced PWCP's sense of belonging in their communities. Though still limited, there is growing social acceptance and recognition that PWCP can play a key role in their community.

Confidence building and collective awareness

Each time PWCP are consulted and invited to contribute to debates in their constituencies, or participate in elections, or run for office as candidates, they feel connected and important to their community. Participation in such decision-making processes enhance their sense of ownership over processes and outcomes that benefit the whole community. PWCP now have an increased sense of their ability to act and influence their community, as is evidenced by the increased enthusiasm among PWCP to advocate for the rights of all PWDs.

Heightened public awareness and more equal opportunity

PWCP have effectively sensitised the public about CP and how they can be included in all activities in their community. Some communities can now clearly distinguish the needs of PWCP from other disabilities, which is evident where they are offered more time to speak and write, or where family members are always invited to participate on the behalf of those with severe conditions. This has also reduced stigma towards families of members. A heightened awareness has also prompted responses from authorities and encouraged them to consult PWCP regarding their representation and participation in community activities and governance.

Barrier free community

While it was crucial to address physical and social barriers that hindered the inclusion and participation of PWCP in their communities, addressing cultural beliefs which compounded these barriers and led to the exclusion and stigmatising of the whole family was urgent too. For example, in areas where PWCP projects have been implemented and people are educated around CP, they freely interact with PWCP without unfounded fears of contracting the disability. Stereotypes, such as the assumption that all PWCP are also intellectually, socially, or physically deficient are also less common.

Representation and voice in the political space

Having PWCP participate in politics by default raises political awareness of politicians and other public office holders of the existing disability legislations that they must respect, protect, and fulfil to guarantee the full participation of all members in the governance of their constituencies. During leadership training in western Uganda, local councillors and leaders with CP testified that they are always allowed space to present the views of their constituencies during debates, thereby increasing the voice of PWCP around those decisions. Another indicator is the increasing presence and influence of politicians who attend activities like International Cerebral Palsy Day, organised by UNAC.

However, in the political arena, partisanship has remained a major challenge to the participation of PWDs in governance. There is a general misconception that all PWDs support the ruling government, which has made inclusion overly political and a source of tension. In some communities, PWDs must affirm their support for the government to be included, while in others, the opposite is true.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

The following lessons can be identified from this experience.

PWCP creating and claiming their own space

The mobilization and empowerment of PWCP was crucial to the above outcomes. This initiative shows that it is very powerful when marginalized people take the lead in activities aimed at claiming their space. Moreover, it is transformative when a group comes together and acquires a sense of their own rights and values. PWCP mobilizing and empowering their peers established acceptance and trust from both their peers, family members, and the general community. This enabled them to first understand that the conditions they manifested was a disability with causes and effects different from other forms of disability; and second, this awareness dispelled stereotypes and stigma attached to PWCP, thus redeeming their political space.

Importance of moving from the individual to the collective

The lack of a united voice of marginalised groups of people often constitutes a key challenge to their inclusion. Most PWCP assumed that they were the only people with that type disability in their community, and perhaps in the world. This was perhaps due to their isolation from the public and misinformation about their disability. As such, many internalized a misrepresented image of themselves. When PWCP started to mobilize and organise themselves into an association, the community accepted that some of their conditions and needs are unique to them and started to respond in favour of inclusion.

Overcoming both physical and attitudinal barriers

In 2006, the UNCRPD was adopted to promote inclusion and active participation of all PWDs in their community. Post-adoption, it is asserted that it is not just one's disability or physical barriers that determine their level of participation in their community, but also included socially constructed barriers characterised by ignorance, indifference, and fear from community members to interact with persons with disabilities. Working at this attitudinal level was key for UNAC as it sought to have PWCP recognised and included in the governance and life of their communities; that is, it was impossible to advocate for their inclusion without first addressing community attitudes and stereotypes.

The challenge of dependence on external funding

Since 2011, the mobilisation of PWCP has been mostly donor-funded. When PWCP presented their desire to become an independent organization, there was hesitation from some donors who claimed that their partnership agreement would not allow such activities, thinking that

it would not directly benefit the community and that PWCP lacked sufficient capacity to manage their own activities. These attitudinal barriers, together with other restrictions related to location, time frames, activities, and objectives were driven by donors and further limited PWCP's ability to claim space and participate on their own terms.

To guarantee sustainability, UNAC has entered into partnerships with different DPOs to implement joint projects and to write joint funding proposals. This helps ensure that organizations working on similar or related challenges avoid duplicating interventions amidst a shrinking pot of international donor funding. A second strategy is the collection of membership annual subscription fees from all members. While this strategy has great potential, it is complicated by the fact that most members (mostly PWCP) live in poverty and their ability to pay fees is limited.

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External links

UNAC leadership training in Lira District Northern Uganda.
<http://unacp.org/mobilization-and-leadership-training-in-lira-district/>

UNAC commemorate world CP day 2017
<http://unacp.org/commemoration-of-world-cerebral-palsy-day-2017-2/>

UNAC achievements
<http://unacp.org/achievements/>

UNICEF Uganda study on children with Disability [https://www.unicef.org/uganda/UnicefUganda_CwDsStudy_Annexes_Final_\(2\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/uganda/UnicefUganda_CwDsStudy_Annexes_Final_(2).pdf)

UNAC (DRF grantee)
<http://disabilityrightsfund.org/grantees/uganda-national-association-of-cerebral-palsy>

A mother and son take disability out of the shadows in Uganda (Motivation's mother and child support group, funded by UK aid from the Department for International Development).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/a-mother-and-son-take-disability-out-of-the-shadows-in-uganda>

National Budget Framework Paper. FY 2013/14–FY 2017/2018 <http://budget.go.ug/budget/sites/default/files/National%20Budget%20docs/National%20Budget%20Framework%20Paper%202013-14.pdf>

Seeking the Meaningful Inclusion of People with Disabilities: the PATH Process at L'Arche Antigonish (Nova Scotia)

Asia van Buuren, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

L'Arche is an international federation of communities where people living with and without intellectual disabilities share life together (i.e., “the community”). In 2015, L'Arche Antigonish, located in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, invited people with intellectual disabilities (“core members”) to be part of a process to create a community-held vision for their art program, known as Hearts & Hands. As they are key stakeholders and contributors to the art program, including people with disabilities (PWDs) in this conversation was critical.

Prior to this process, there was tension within the community around the purpose, vision, and organization of Hearts & Hands. In addition, there was a lack of clarity on the most effective way to engage core members in community decisions and a belief that insufficient human resources was stalling their ability to invest in trying new techniques. In September 2015, L'Arche Antigonish began working with an OceanPath Fellow—a local youth participating in an experiential education program focused on community development leadership. The Fellow's role became to address both these challenges, the first out of a necessity to enable the art program to move forward and the second out of a desire to advocate for inclusion.

History

Ableism—discrimination or prejudice against PWDs—is a barrier to participation that is visible in many contexts and invisible in even more. The tendency to silence the voices of PWDs can come from assumptions of their inability to contribute in meaningful ways and/or from a lack of willingness to invest the resources necessary to seek out innovative ways to engage them.

The L'Arche Antigonish community grappled with how to meaningfully engage core members in conversations about activities that impacted them directly. In other words, the same societal tendencies to exclude were evident within this community despite it being an organization founded upon the desire to foster inclusion.

Heart & Hands, L'Arche Antigonish's art program, represented an opportunity to address these challenges, given the existing relationship with the OceanPath Fellow, who was willing to provide the human resources to facilitate the process. Since there was no precedent for an intentionally inclusive approach beyond their core principles about “living in community,” the initiative represented an exciting innovation for the community.

From the outset, the Fellow sought to move forward in a way that fostered true inclusion within the community and to push back against societal tendencies to exclude PWDs from decision-making processes. They invited the entire L'Arche community to a visioning session for Hearts & Hands, creating opportunities for people with and without intellectual disabilities to contribute to a conversation about the direction they would like to have their art program take. The Fellow was intentional about receiving guidance from those with significant expertise in the area of social inclusion and building accessible spaces for PWDs during this time.

Originating Entities and Funding

The Fellow's time with L'Arche Antigonish was funded by the Pathy Family Foundation, through the OceanPath Fellowship and in partnership with the Coady International Institute. An OceanPath Fellowship provides up to \$25,000 (CDN) in funding to recent graduates to facilitate positive change in a community they are connected to over a 9-month period. The Coady International Institute provides mentorship, education, and support. The initiative was community-led, while the Fellow facilitated and managed the work. Over the nine months, space was provided in-kind by the Coady International Institute, and other resources (supplies, graphic facilitation, etc.) were paid for through the Fellowship.

L'Arche communities globally are funded differently depending on where they are located. In Canada, L'Arche communities are supported by their provincial governments, but also rely heavily on charitable donations through the L'Arche Canada Foundation. The Hearts & Hands program at L'Arche Antigonish falls under the broader L'Arche community's budget. Despite being supported by the L'Arche Antigonish community and its foundation, they also rely on the profits generated from the art they sell and the performances they give in the community (e.g., an annual Christmas play). Hearts & Hands is also supported by a dedicated team of volunteers composed of both artists from the broader Antigonish community and students.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

At the initial visioning process, the entire L'Arche Antigonish community was invited, which included core members, staff ("assistants"), members of the leadership team, board members, and volunteers who had an extensive relationship with the community. The intent was to make everyone feel welcome and to put systems in place to allow people to participate in ways that worked for them. For example, non-verbal communicators were given pictures to convey their ideas, participants with hearing impairments were assisted via sign language interpretation, and a graphic facilitation technique was used so that ideas would be portrayed using pictures rather than words. In addition, volunteers took note of the percentage of speaking time that was given to able-bodied participants versus participants with disabilities as a conscious effort to raise the community's awareness of who tends to dominate decision-making processes.

Following the initial visioning process, multiple conversations were had in order to continue to navigate tensions surrounding the vision and direction of the art program. The community decided who would be present at these follow-up meetings.

Methods and Tools Used

The method used for the initial visioning session, called PATH, is a participatory, person-centered planning tool developed by Jack Pearpoint, Marsha Forrest, and John O'Brien (see External Links section for more detail and resources). PATH was chosen for the initial visioning session due to its use of graphic facilitation to convey ideas, and its structure, which supports participants to focus on a dream they have and then grounds them in steps they will take to make it happen. It builds excitement around a vision, which was exactly what was needed in the initial stages of discussing the future of the art program. Anyone trained in the process of facilitating PATH spends an average of 40 hours in class, with ample opportunity to implement the tool and receive peer and instructor feedback. In this case, a fully trained facilitator was unavailable for the meeting, so the Fellow received guidance from a trained individual with over 20 years of experience in using PATH prior to facilitating the session. A graphic facilitator who had experience using this tool was present to facilitate with the Fellow.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

In planning and identifying goals for the initiative, it was critical for the community to have a meaningful voice in making the initial decisions about how time was invested and how the Fellowship resources were allocated. However, the Fellow did not have any innovative ideas on how to achieve this initially, wondering how could a space be created for the first time in this particular L'Arche community in which people with and without intellectual disabilities were equally invited to contribute ideas?

To achieve this, the Fellow opted to use PATH, given its common use in other communities of PWDs due to its intentional inclusivity and given the training and mentorship available through the Coady Institute. Conversations were held with the community to ensure people at all levels of authority within the organization were willing to try this new method of decision-making. A date was set that worked well within the community calendar, all community members were invited, and ways to make this process as inclusive as possible were brainstormed.

During the actual PATH process and in follow-up meetings, the community faced the challenge of the conversation being dominated by able-bodied participants. For example, during the PATH process, able-bodied participants spoke 74% of the time, while participants with disabilities spoke 26% of the time. Acknowledging this reality allowed the community to begin to ask questions about how to more effectively include core members in decision-making

processes. As facilitator, it was difficult for the Fellow to steer the conversation back to being inclusive without interrupting the natural flow of brainstorming. These meetings reinforced existing power relations between those who hold more power either because of their position within the organization (e.g., board members, leadership team members) or their level of ability (e.g., able-bodied staff), and those who do not (people with intellectual disabilities). Acknowledging this power differential, the Fellow met with as many core members as possible prior to the PATH process so that there would be an opportunity to contribute ideas in a smaller group setting. This allowed individuals with any hesitancy about speaking up in front of a group to participate in a safer space, and allowed those who could not be present at the actual PATH session to contribute to the conversation.

As key stakeholders in the art program, it was critical to include PWDs in decision-making processes, as they are often excluded from decisions that directly impact their lives due to a lack of clarity on how to facilitate meaningful inclusion. The PATH process was the first instance where the entire community made a collaborative decision to combat this; therefore, it enabled the community to witness the transformative power of participants and decision-makers coming together to exchange ideas.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The intended outcomes of the initiative were twofold: to address tensions that existed around the organization, purpose, and vision of the community art program, and to do it in a way that was inclusive of core members.

An inclusive vision for Hearts & Hands

The first outcome was largely achieved, in that the initial draft of a new vision for Hearts & Hands emerged from the PATH process. Included in this vision statement were clarity statements defining where Hearts & Hands fit within the broader L'Arche community and value statements that articulated the ideas shared in the PATH session. For example, it clarifies that while Hearts & Hands is a name and brand for the creative expression that happens at L'Arche Antigonish, it is also the connectivity that people feel to one another when expressing themselves. It also includes statements about inclusion and using creativity as a way for people to express their voice; for example, "every creative expression is welcome and valued" (L'Arche Antigonish, 2018).

Today, Hearts & Hands is seen within L'Arche Antigonish as an inclusive program in which community members feel free to contribute in ways that are meaningful to them. An unexpected, downstream effect of this is that the community is participating in more outreach activities due to the hiring of an outreach coordinator from a sustainable human resource

investment made by the community and the increased buy-in and support of the art program from all levels of power. Another goal articulated at the PATH process by core members was the creation of a drama group, which was successfully initiated. In addition, the final outcome to the visioning process was the creation of a short film (see link below) that both honoured the process the community had gone through and put the new vision in an accessible format within which people could see their lived experiences reflected.

Towards broader inclusion at L'Arche Antigonish

While these outcomes are quite positive, they only speak to the first objective of the process. Less tangible outcomes exemplify the community's movement towards the goal of including people with disabilities in central decision-making processes. For example, there were attitudinal shifts from those in positions of power, such as acknowledging that inclusion is something the community still needs to improve upon and that the leadership team has been intentional about making inclusion and voice a more serious priority. Further, there is continued openness towards using PATH as a decision-making tool in the future. For example, in 2017, L'Arche Antigonish facilitated another PATH process to discuss the creation of a new community space, which was largely successful and built on the learnings derived from the 2015 process. In fact, feedback from the facilitator of the 2017 process (the same person who initially trained the Fellow) was that the discussion was very lively and core members spoke closer to 50% of the time, up from 26% in 2015. There was less deference to people who traditionally hold power and non-disabled participants rarely intervened when a PWD spoke. The facilitators expected that the first exposure to PATH would be the most challenging, but in this case, it led to an extremely positive outcome.

Increasing core members' voice and agency

In addition, there were examples of PWDs vocalizing their desire to be invited to follow up on conversations around Hearts & Hands and requesting to meet with the Fellow to provide their input. The community also saw the Hearts & Hands subcommittee restructure their meetings such that the voices of PWDs were prioritized (e.g., PWDs are first to speak and are prepared for the meeting beforehand). These outcomes are meaningful because they speak to attitudinal shifts within the community and to transformations in invisible power; that is, the normalized and internalized sense of powerlessness that often limit the ability of marginalized groups to speak out (Power Cube, n.d.).

Analysis and Lessons Learned

The following lessons were gleaned from this experience:

Transforming community through inclusive participation

Participation was crucial to the achievement of the above outcomes. The decision to foster participation by using the PATH process at the beginning of the Fellowship guided the remainder of the Fellow's time in community. It enabled the entire community to become immediately aware of the tensions surrounding Hearts & Hands and created buy-in to address these tensions. Inviting every community member to the initial PATH process demonstrated that it is possible to be productive in these kinds of spaces and provided a living example of the richness that can be added to dialogue when PWDs are invited to participate.

Meaningful inclusion takes time

A key barrier to the sustainable implementation of inclusive practices within this community can be characterized as "the challenge of time." With the methods available, there is often a trade-off between efficiency and inclusion. For example, are individuals and organizations willing to set aside an hour and a half to meaningfully include people with disabilities in a meeting that may otherwise take 10 minutes? For many organizations, the answer is not an enthusiastic "yes." This was a huge challenge for the community. A caveat to this is that simply making meetings longer is not sufficient to addressing these challenges. Some core members are not interested in attending meetings, so it is important to acknowledge that people should be given the opportunity to participate based on their time and energy. It raises questions about how meetings are structured in general and whether it needs to be changed in order to engage PWDs effectively, while acknowledging that they may not be interested in spending an hour and a half in a meeting either. Time will continue to represent a challenge for anyone working towards inclusion, or towards applying a rights-based framework and having those who hold power recognize and acknowledge it. Investments in innovative practices to facilitate decision-making will be necessary to overcome this challenge.

Access and the importance of lived experience: moving beyond "inclusion"

It is also important to acknowledge that the idea of promoting concrete inclusionary practices is often an innovative, if not transformative, one. Even the word "inclusion" increasingly is objected to, as it implies being invited into spaces that have not been designed or informed by the lived experience of PWDs. The silencing of PWDs within our society and the tendency to prioritize the voices of able-bodied individuals is pervasive and well-documented in the theories describing the social model of disability. In this social model, disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference, and actions focus

on removing barriers that restrict choices for this population. For instance, advisory councils are often set up by governments and communities to involve PWDs in policy discussion, yet are also fraught with a multitude of barriers that prevent PWDs from fully participating (Frawley & Bigby, 2011). Caldwell, Hauss, and Stark (2009) list some of the necessary supports to make these committees effective, including continuous monitoring of meeting accessibility, leadership development in recruiting self-advocates to participate, and attitudinal shifts such as participation not being tokenistic such that participants feel their voices are being taken seriously. In addition, the lifelong internalization of stereotypes and systemic exclusion is an important barrier to participation for PWDs, and researchers including as those cited above stress the importance of committing to both the tangible (i.e., accessibility) and intangible (i.e., inclusive attitude) supports in making participation meaningful.

Given the above, the reality is that meaningful inclusion is difficult. It is often unclear what steps to take to start tackling these representation and participation gaps. It was honorable of those in positions of authority within L'Arche Antigonish to start a dialogue about these questions as a first step.

Inclusion is not just about the tangible

Key desired outcomes from this process centered on attitudinal and cultural shifts within the community. These included:

- instilling a sense within the community that participation is worth the human resources investment;
- having PWDs now see their potential as central decision-makers within their community; and
- having able-bodied staff recognize their role in fostering inclusion in their day-to-day lives.

To get a sense of whether these were achieved, various forms of evaluation were completed, including (a) outcome harvesting (Saferworld, 2016), which documents less tangible behavioural and attitudinal shifts throughout an initiative; (b) personal reflections completed by the Fellow; and (c) exit interviews conducted by the Fellow with a diverse range of community stakeholders at the end of the process. From these evaluations, the success of this initiative lied in the less tangible changes, such as attitudinal shifts around inclusion within the community.

Balancing between neutrality and building trust

Since this initiative was catalyzed by the Fellow, a facilitator who held prior relationships with this community, it was challenging to maintain neutrality throughout the process. That said, these prior relationships were central to facilitating an inclusive dialogue. Without these relationships of trust, core members may have been less open to engaging due to the variety of barriers they face in participating. It also enabled the Fellow to have meaningful one-on-one dialogues with core members throughout the process in order to provide adequate time and space to participate in ways that were meaningful to them.

The Fellow, as an external facilitator, was also made aware of communication gaps within the community. Based on diverse lived experiences, people at different levels of organizational power held different values and perspectives on the best approach to these issues, and they faced challenges in hearing one another's viewpoints. From this point of view, not being perceived as neutral became a challenge, as the Fellow attempted to mitigate these communication barriers and facilitate productive conversations between people with unique viewpoints.

Potential ripples out to the broader community

Any long-term influences on core members within their broader context (i.e., beyond the L'Arche Antigonish community) are yet to be seen. Because the L'Arche community extends beyond those who live and work onsite, the transformations set in motion through this process have a potential for influence beyond the organization. The attitudinal and behaviour changes, as well as the shifts in power dynamics within the community could perhaps extend to challenge power relations and exclusionary dynamics outside the organization, as these same community members also engage in the broader society on a daily basis. In order to move towards this, long-term and sustained efforts need to be made by those with authority both within the organization and the broader Antigonish community to tackle patterns of exclusion so that people with disabilities continue to see their voices considered in decision-making.

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External Links

L'Arche International: <https://www.larche.org/>

L'Arche Antigonish: <http://www.larcheantigonish.ca/>

"What is Hearts & Hands" (a video representing the community's new vision) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj8xi4PcDnl&t=3s>

The OceanPath Fellowship: <https://coadynet.stfx.ca/oceanpath>

PATH Process Resources:

- <https://www.northstarfacilitators.com/services/customized-group-facilitation/strategic-planning/the-path-process/>
- http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/up_doc/What_is_PATH_Strategic_Planning.pdf
- <http://trainingpack.personcentredplanning.eu/index.php/en/map-and-path/path>
- <http://www.inclusion.com/bkpathworkbook.html>

Fellowship Blog Entries:

- <https://fellows2follow.wordpress.com/2015/10/25/the-road-of-trials-striving-for-inclusion-asia/>
- <https://fellows2follow.wordpress.com/2016/02/09/sweet-surrender/>
- <https://fellows2follow.wordpress.com/2016/05/27/living-on-the-right-asia/>

Community empowerment for education reform: Public hearings in Ba-Ziyd (Beni Suef, Egypt)

Moshira Zeidan, with Julien Landry and Rachel Garbary

Problems and Purpose

Within the education system in Egypt, the central government is responsible for the policies and financial allocations for local levels of education administration. This directly affects the funding allocations to school buildings and infrastructure for every governorate in Egypt. Rural areas are often disadvantaged, in that some villages have an insufficient number of schools relative to other villages. This is a major contributor to dropout rates, primarily of girls, reaching upwards of 15% in the Beni-Suef Governorate (CAPMAS, 2015a).

The provision of quality educational services depends on the participation of a large number of stakeholders, including local traditional leaders, civil society members, parents, teachers, policy makers, and school administration, as well as students and government officials. In rural areas, however, there is little engagement of community members and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the subject of education. The relationships between stakeholders are therefore poor, leading to a general lack of awareness about governance and social accountability tools that could improve the quality of education.

Few community members are aware that they have a role to play alongside government officials to elevate the quality of education services and to monitor service provision within their communities. However, there is a growing number of civil society organizations (CSO) that are acting on their role as service providers, identifying shortcomings in the quality of government services.

These challenges were at play in the education sector of Ba-Ziyd, a rural village in the Beni Suef governorate, where dropout rates of students, and particularly girls, reached 14% according to baseline survey implemented by a local Community Development Association (CDA) in 2014. Geographic isolation, poor access to transportation, as well as lack of funding for school buildings were additional factors posing a challenge to the provision of quality education in this area.

Between 2013 and 2014, the Youth Association for Development and Environment (YADE) has played a key role in improving education in Ba-Ziyd by promoting citizen participation through public hearings and via a social accountability tool through a project called *Social Accountability for Education Reform (SAER)*.

History

Since the 2011 Egyptian revolution, many development challenges continue to impact Egypt due to limited resources, a poverty rate that had increased to 26.3% by 2013 (CAPMAS, 2015b), over-population, high illiteracy rates, and economic instability. All this results in decreased public spending in education. School buildings and infrastructure are often inadequate relative to the needs of students, especially in rural areas, because funding is often allocated to urban areas with greater population density. Insufficient communication and planning have resulted in some villages having a large number of schools while other villages have received no funding for renovations of existing schools.

Beni-Suef is one of the poorest governorates in Egypt. It has a high rate of population growth of 76% in rural areas, compared to 24% in urban areas (CAPMAS, 2017). In 2014, the illiteracy rate was 40% (CAPMAS, 2015) and overcrowded schools had an average of 43 students per class (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Ba-Ziyd village is a rural area encompassing 11 hamlets with a total population of 6,300. The majority of the population engages in agricultural activities. People walk distances of up to six kilometers to the central village to access services such as health and education. Community members are largely disengaged from decision-making processes around public service delivery, as these occur in the central village. Citizens are thus limited in their input into how social services can address their needs, although there is one grassroots Community Development Association (CDA) in Ba-Ziyd that has direct relations with its community members and works to address community needs.

YADE first engaged in Ba-Ziyd as part of its participation in the *Transparency and Accountability for Good Governance* (TAG) project, implemented in Egypt by the Coady International Institute from 2012 to 2014 (see Castle, Rafaat, Zeidan, & Foroughi, 2017). As part of its engagement in TAG, YADE applied learning and transferred newly-acquired skills by designing the Social Accountability for Education Reform (SAER) project in Beni Suef. The initiative aimed at using social accountability tools to increase civic participation and to also integrate CSOs, local government, and local media professionals from local newspaper, radio, and television in education reform in 10 communities, including Ba-Ziyd, between 2013 and 2014.

Originating Entities and Funding

The Youth Association for Development and Environment (YADE) is a national NGO working in community development since 1998 to improve the quality of life in marginalized areas of Egypt. It was funded by Civil Society Fund (CSF)-World Bank from 2013 to 2014 to implement the Social Accountability for Education Reform (SAER) project in cooperation with partners from local CSOs and CDAs.

Stakeholders engaged through SAER project in Beni Suef included volunteers from grassroots CDAs, local media actors, local government representatives from the Ministry of Education, members from Boards of Trustees (BOTs), and citizens. Members of community-based organizations and community leaders played an important role in this project. Their engagement provided community members with a platform to voice the issues surrounding education and to advocate for change; they also negotiated the citizens' points of view and influenced the process of public hearing meetings.

Participant Selection

In July 2013, YADE held an initial meeting with the representatives and key bodies of 10 CDAs. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project's goal and activities to the participants and to explore ways for engagement in the project activities. Other meeting objectives were to build mutual understanding of and commitment to the project parameters, and to collect participants' recommendations for future ideas and plans for increasing the capacity of their volunteers, who would participate in the project implementation in their communities.

During the meeting, CDA representatives expressed full support for project activities. Each CDA was asked to nominate at least two volunteers to participate in the project. Together, the YADE and the CDAs determined selection criteria to guide the nomination of volunteers. Selection was based on:

- a commitment to a citizen engagement approach;
- a concern about problems in the education sector;
- being a resident of the target community who has a good reputation among its members;
- a demonstrated potential for leadership;
- the ability to form a community awareness team; and,
- having the basic skills to deliver trainings and to collect data.

Following the meeting, the YADE and CDAs interviewed and selected the volunteers from those nominated in each community. The CDA of Ba-Ziyd selected two volunteers: a teacher from the primary school in the community and a traditional leader.

Methods and Tools Used

The method of engagement selected by participating community members was a Public Hearing. These public hearings provided an avenue for direct participation through a process whereby community stakeholders and participants are given the opportunity to express themselves in a transparent way. It opens a dialogue between decision-makers, civil society actors, and community members to interact on a given subject.

Deliberation, Decisions, and Public Interaction

In June 2012, two staff members from YADE attended a workshop held by Civil Society Fund for their grantees. The aim was to introduce and discuss social accountability approaches and tools, to exchange ideas and experiences between the participants from many countries, and to develop tools to be used in their own projects.

In Ba-Ziyd, YADE initiated the project in July 2013 with an initial meeting with representatives from target CDAs to introduce project activities and select the 20-member core team who would be responsible for implementing project activities. The target stakeholders and participants for the SAER project were:

- community development associations (CDAs);
- Boards of Trustees (BOT) from the schools;
- governorate and local government officials from the education sector; and,
- media professionals from local newspapers, television, and radio.

Professional consultants and experts in good governance and social accountability approaches were contracted to provide 90 training hours for the project core team and YADE staff. The training focused on community needs assessment and mapping, good governance and social accountability tools, public hearing skills and community dialogue, roles and responsibilities of local administration, and policy analysis.

By training the core team as trainers themselves, members were empowered to apply their learning around social accountability and education policies by delivering the same training (40 training days) with the 10 Community Support Teams based in the 10 target communities. In Ba-Ziyd, a Community Support Team (CST) of eight members was formed to address community needs around education services and increased citizen participation.

As a result, targeted stakeholders were equipped to engage with each other effectively through public hearings. CDA members and the Community Support Team expressed their ability to translate the knowledge and skills acquired on social accountability approaches into local initiatives that aimed to:



Figure 31. CST members participate in a mock public hearing during a social accountability training

- collect the data about citizen' satisfaction concerning education services; and,
- raise the community awareness about public hearings, as a tool to create space for dialogue between service providers and service users, and to find collaborative solutions to improve the quality of services at the local level.

The Community Support Team (CST) members participated in the following activities to achieve the initiative results:

Information and data collection campaign

In Ba-Ziyd, the CST (comprised of two women and six men) led a door-to-door campaign to raise the awareness of community members about social accountability. This campaign also aimed at equipping community members with tools to monitor government services and facilitate engagement with government officials. Finally, the campaign collected information and feedback from citizens concerning education services in the community. Findings from the data collected identified a number of issues.

In the primary school, this included:

- poor infrastructure due to the age of the building, with no budget allocated for renovation and maintenance of broken windows and cracked and chipped concrete stairs;
- inadequate resources such as desks and chairs;
- over-crowded classrooms (42 students per class) with insufficient numbers of teachers; and,
- poor school governance, including weak parent and community participation in the school's Board of Trustees.

Likewise, in the preparatory school, issues included:

- poor physical accessibility;
- high dropout rates of girls, as they have to walk long distance to schools, posing safety and poverty barriers to access (especially for people with disabilities); and
- over-crowdedness leading to a separation of the student body into two shifts, with many having to return home in the evening.

Public hearing session

Based on this information, the Ba-Ziyd CST organized a public hearing with a goal to increase the accessibility to safe basic education. They invited stakeholders to sit on a panel for this public hearing; these included governorate-level government officials responsible for school construction and administration, the Head of Education Administration at the district level, the BOT Chairman from the primary school, and the Primary School Manager.

The date was appointed at the end of June 2014 for the public hearing to take place at the primary school in Ba-Ziyd, a choice location because the local government officials trusted in the information the CST collected based on a good relationship with the school administration as well as increased citizen engagement around school issues.

Organizers informed the participants one week prior to the meeting and encouraged affected parents to attend to support the case. Various segments of the community participated in the public hearing, including traditional leaders, parents of affected students, people interested in education reform, teachers and some students.

The public hearing itself was relatively informal, as it did not require that both community and official representatives get time to speak. It rather consisted of a discussion of the issues – without a question and answer period – organized and facilitated by the CST leader. The facilitator introduced the public hearing as a tool for citizen engagement with official bodies responsible for service provision. He then introduced the panel and presented the information and data gathered. The facilitator asked participants to begin by clearly stating their name and present their points of view, offering testimony in light of the data presented. The affected parents began, followed by community leaders and primary school teachers. Panel members then responded and discussed every issue of concern, while the CST recorded the main points and outcomes.



Figure 32. CST member presenting data during the Ba-Ziyd public hearing

In reacting to the data, participants talked about the problems at both primary and preparatory education levels (i.e., infrastructure, over-crowdedness, insufficient number or teachers, weak Boards of Trustees). As discussions evolved between the panel and the community members, the focus became the infrastructure issue, that is:

- the need to build a preparatory school to address parents' concerns about high dropout rates among their children, especially girls; and,
- the poor infrastructure at the primary school, especially the cracked stairs.

The Ba-Ziyd public hearing was one of 10 held in each respective target community as part of the SAER project between 2013 and 2014.

Data dissemination through local media

The SAER project activities included raising local media practitioners' awareness of good governance and social accountability standards in education issues and to facilitate engagement of local media with CSO participants and government officials working to promote social accountability. The CST facilitated a two-day workshop on social accountability for 22 media professionals including representatives from local newspapers and bloggers to ensure that media had access to appropriate information about social accountability tools—especially public hearings and were equipped to perform their function in support of education reform.

The media played a key supportive role in distributing the data collected in the awareness-raising campaigns in each community, in publishing the findings about problems in the education sector, and in broadcasting the outcomes of the public hearings. The issues and problems identified were publicized among the affected citizens and all stakeholders were involved through newspapers, blogs and Facebook. This public dissemination further contributed to holding government officials to respond to citizens' demand that they participate in the public hearing and follow through on their outcomes.

Influence, Outcomes, and Effects

The decisions made during and following the Ba-Ziyd public hearing led to a number of results, including the following:

Budget reallocations in line with greatest need

At the public hearing, community members explained that the land in Ba-Ziyd had been donated by community members and was allocated for the construction of the preparatory school. The problem was that the public budget had the funding earmarked for investments in the central village that year, as opposed to Ba-Ziyd. After the public hearing, the government official responsible for school buildings, who was part of the panel during the session, decided to give priority to Ba-Ziyd schools. The budget was reallocated in support of greater investment in Ba-Ziyd, to address the required renovation and maintenance at the primary school and to build a new preparatory school.

Improved educational infrastructure

A preparatory school was built in Ba-Ziyd and opened in the 2017–2018 academic year. Similarly, renovations were brought to the existing primary school, addressing many of the safety concerns raised by parents in public hearing session. The involvement of citizens through the SAER project was key to achieving these results. Hearing the complaints directly from community members prompted the Construction Administration Officer—the government officials responsible for the school building budget at the governorate level—to support the construction of a school in Ba-Ziyd. At the same time, CWA also expressed his appreciation for the public hearing, as it allowed him to understand the issues from the citizen’s perspective.

Improved relationship between government and empowered citizens

Parents and community members realized that their participation in education governance is essential and can bring about change in the quality of education service. Also, relations improved between the community members and government officials, as service users felt greater satisfaction about the services and the government’s response to their needs. This contributed to increased collaborative behavior among citizens and government actors alike.

Increased citizen participation in governance

Community members, including the parents of students at the schools, have expressed a greater desire and intentions to be part of school governance, through increased engagement with Boards of Trustees.

Analysis and Lessons Learned

The following lessons can be drawn from this experience.

Importance of an open platform for dialogue

In this instance, the public hearing was an effective method of engagement to get government to respond to community demands, as it connected citizens directly with decision makers and made their concerns and complaints known in a public forum.

Working with traditional leaders

Local traditional leaders were able to mobilize both community members and government officials and contribute to closing the gap between them. Their convening role helped to provide a safe space for marginalized groups, such as poor and illiterate people, to express themselves and to work collaboratively to resolve issues in the education sector. Further, it



Figure 33. CST members conducting a power analysis

was important to get the right stakeholders on the public hearing panel. Through an analysis of power dynamics and relationships in the community, and in considering which government officials had authority over priority matters, organizers assembled a panel that was able to take swift action as a result of what they heard in the public hearing, ultimately addressing many of the issues in Ba-Ziyd.

Importance of data collection and evidence

Collecting data about the problems and service situation directly from service users through grassroots CDAs not only highlighted the service users' concerns and priorities, but it also provided the evidence required to persuade decision makers and ultimately to make informed decisions. The data collected also set a more objective basis for citizens' observations, concerns and demands during the public hearing. Finally, this evidence base added greater legitimacy to citizens' concerns, as the data represented the voices of community members who were absent at the public hearing.

Social accountability through public hearings

YADE and the grassroots CSOs participating in the initiative realized that they can play a key role in improving the quality of services by using social accountability mechanisms to hold the government officials to account, rather than providing the services themselves as short-term solutions. Working at the local level for social accountability can give marginalized groups a voice and empower them to participate in democracy at a larger scale.

Role of the facilitating organizations

YADE worked to build the capacity of the grassroots CSO members to increase their knowledge and skills around social accountability, policy analysis, and responsiveness to citizens. Also, to ensure they take ownership of the initiative, YADE engaged stakeholders throughout the process, and motivated the CST to play a lead role in implementing social accountability. Formal and informal training techniques, as well as knowledge platforms and meetings, were key in achieving this.

The CDAs also played an active role in building trust with community members and government officials, in designing data collection tools, and in implementing and facilitating the public hearing.

Role of media engagement in social accountability

Local media played a vital role in aiding the CST by disseminating information about the issues and about the social accountability approach put forth to address them. They were important in gaining consideration from government officials. Finally, their participation in support of activities and in sharing outcomes prepared citizens to form opinions and participate effectively in social accountability activities.

Using different types of media such as local radio broadcasts, printed materials, and social media channels enabled various segments of the population to know about the issues and the initiative, and ultimately contributed to the effectiveness of the public hearings and education reforms that ensued.

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External Links

Youth Association for Development and Environment (YADE) website
www.yade-egypt.org

Transparency and Accountability in Governance (TAG) project website
<https://tagegypt.wordpress.com>

Analysis and Discussion

This collection of case studies offers a glimpse into the diverse practice of Coady graduates seeking to promote more accountable, transparent, and participatory governance across a broad range of contexts. Rather than to provide an exhaustive analysis, this section offers just a few reflections and insights on these experiences overall, recognizing that the 12 cases represent only a small cross-section of Coady’s graduate experiences. The following paragraphs will discuss this collection’s overall contributions from the perspective of governance and power (using elements of the *Power Cube*¹⁴ as an analytical lens), consider some of the emerging lessons and challenges, and comment on innovative governance practice before offering concluding thoughts.

Governance and power: multiple entry points for change

In considering the full collection of cases, a first observation relates to the diversity in who is driving the process. In only a few cases, power holders open a space or initiate a process to involve citizens, as with the SCC in Egypt. Similarly, only a few experiences are driven by empowered citizens and communities who lead the efforts, as with Omaar in Zakazik, or PWCP in Uganda. In most cases, rather, an external—or *intermediating* (von Lieres & Piper, 2014)—actor plays a key role, at least at the outset, in facilitating processes to raise awareness, empower, build relationships, foster dialogue, create spaces for engagement between citizens (rights holders) and decision makers (duty bearers), and monitor implementation and delivery of services and/or ensure accountability. The “Ambassadors” in Peru, San Mark NGO in El-Kfoor (Egypt), PWAN and NBA in Nigeria, YADE and traditional leaders in Ba-Zyid (Egypt) serve as a few examples.

In all cases, roles evolve depending on the issue at hand, the entry point for engagement, and the changing power dynamics between stakeholders. As such, the cases show the importance of leadership that is adaptable, can move through various supporting roles, and navigate multiple relationships in pursuit of citizen agendas.

Second, the cases also illustrate how civil society organizations, volunteers, community groups, and active citizens are using different entry points to engage at various stages of the governance cycle (adapted from Malena, 2005): *policy making, planning, budgeting, expenditure, and delivery* (of programs or public services, depending on the level of engagement).

Figure 31 illustrates the variety of pathways of engagement represented among the 12 cases. The stage at which each case is labelled represents the *initial focus* of citizen engagement in that particular case. Where relevant, a line connects this initial stage to other *points of engagement*—that is, another stage at which further engagement, impact, or influence

¹⁴ See www.powercube.net.

resulted. For example, in Ba-Zyid, YADE gathered data and held public hearings aimed at assessing and addressing the quality of *public service delivery* (education), which then resulted in revised educational *budgets* and greater *expenditure* for educational infrastructure.

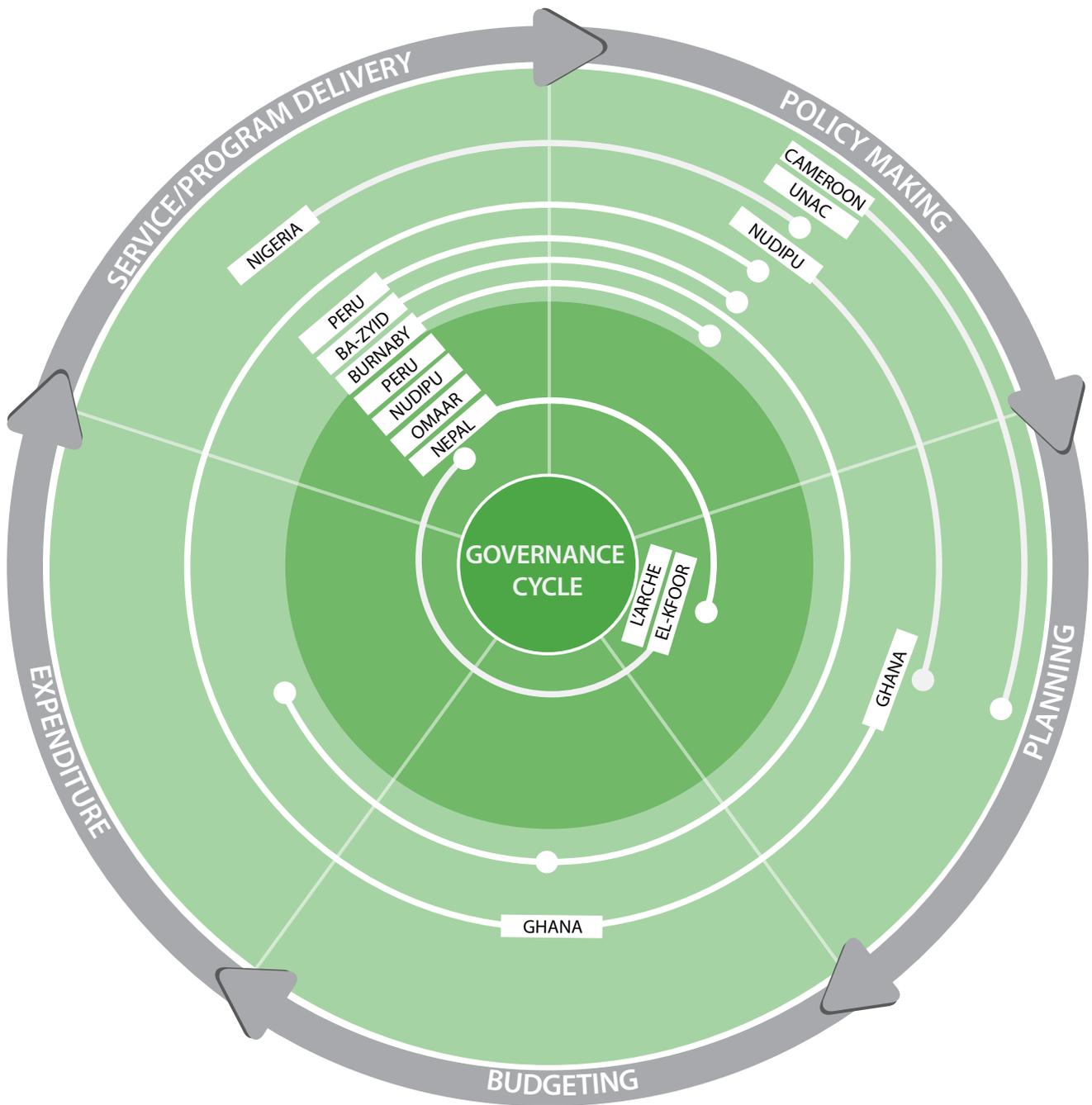


Figure 31. Engagement at multiple stages in the governance cycle.

Figure 31 also contrasts cases that deepened engagement at an organizational level—represented in the inner, darker-colored circle—with those targeting the governance of public affairs—represented in the outer, lighter-colored circle. On one extreme, L’Arche Antigonish’s

scope was around enhancing inclusion in the *planning* of one program (Heart and Hands) within the organization; at the other end of the spectrum is YOP's work in Santa connected with the *National Youth Policy* framework in Cameroon. Of note, a few cases (i.e., NUDIPU-Youth in Uganda and the Agenda Ambassadors in Peru) engaged citizens both at the organizational and at the public governance levels.

While a few cases used approaches and strategies targeted at one particular stage, the majority either sought to effect change through multiple interfaces, or their initial focus on one stage had an influence on others. As reflected here, initial engagement at the stage of *service or program delivery* is a common entry point, and one that often impacts on other stages. Conversely, there is a gap in engagement focused on *public/organizational expenditure*, at least initially. This may, in part, be explained by the fact that *public spending* tends to be opaque and relatively unknown to most citizens—a valuable reminder of the crucial role of transparency in governance. On the other hand, most direct interactions between citizens and the state (or organizations) occur through access (or lack thereof) to *services and programs*, which may, therefore, represent a more concrete, relevant, and accessible entry point for participation.

Third, as political processes, the case studies also demonstrate a wide variety of strategies and actions seeking to influence or transform how power operates in their respective contexts. The experiences illustrate multiple power dynamics, as citizens navigate different *levels, spaces, and forms* of power (see Gaventa, 2006; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002) to achieve change.

Taken together, the cases offer examples of engagement to change power relations within organizations (e.g., L'Arche Antigonish, El-Kfoor CDA, local radio stations in Nepal), institutions (e.g., schools, school districts, courts), local/municipal- (e.g., Santa) or district-level government (e.g., Juaboso in Ghana; Lira, Sironko, Mpigi and Mbarara in Uganda) as well as broader state-level (e.g., FCT and Kano states in Nigeria), national (e.g., UNAC in Uganda) and international (e.g. TMM and the SDGs in Peru) change agendas.

In a few cases, CSOs and citizens were *invited* into *spaces* (e.g., L'Arche members into community programming) or were working to open up *closed* spaces (YWD participation in public planning in Uganda, student representation on decision-making bodies in Burnaby school board). Most initiatives, however, involved *creating* new spaces (e.g., dialogues hosted by NUDIPU-Youth, a Community Committee in El-Kfoor, a democratic education program in Byrne Creek High School, the creation of UNAC in Uganda, a public hearing in Ba-Zyid), or transforming existing *spaces* to include a broader range of voices (e.g., local citizens onto radio airwaves in Nepal; children and youth in community development initiatives in Zakazik, Egypt; YWDs in policy discussions in Uganda; or women in district-level government in Ghana). In other cases, citizens moved from *closed, invited, or created* spaces to *claiming* space (e.g., youth in Cameroon engaging in civil disobedience, Ambassadors' interventions in Peruvian public spaces) as alternate or parallel strategies to achieve meaningful participation.

Finally, a clear common thread in these cases is the importance of addressing *invisible power*, that is, the normalized and internalized sense of powerlessness that often “shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation” (Gaventa, 2006, p. 29). In those cases, a process of *conscientization*, or raising the political consciousness and critical awareness of constituencies, was necessary prior to engagement, particularly with those who have been traditionally excluded from decision-making and governance processes. From an intersectional gender perspective, this is often crucial in breaking patterns of oppression that maintain in place social norms and mindsets that act as barriers to effective participation and to structural change. The cases where women, persons with disabilities, youth, and other excluded groups are placed at the center illustrate that when properly supported, these groups can and do engage directly and meaningfully in governance processes. In fact, Cheptoek, Maigari, Nyberg, and van Buuren all discuss the importance of shifting the attitudes, norms, and perceptions of both communities and duty-bearers around issues of disabilities, inclusion, and access, while Akakpo and Ghaly comment on the need to apply gender-equitable approaches.

While almost all cases embedded actions to educate, raise the awareness, or build the capacity of citizens (rights holders), a more limited number also included capacity building and awareness raising with duty bearers in efforts to better equip them to adequately and effectively deliver on their obligations to citizens (e.g., local radio in Nepal, Uganda-UNAC).

Common lessons and challenges

A first clear lesson emerging from this collection connects to the last point above. Education—whether in the form of transformative adult education, skills-building workshops, rights (and responsibility) awareness, or other—is often a crucial building block for effective participation in governance, and all 12 cases contain an educational component. As graduates of the Coady International Institute, the authors each have participated in transformative adult education programs seeking to equip practitioners to lead community and social change initiatives more effectively. A follow-up publication as part of this *Innovations Series* will explore further the link between the authors’ own educational and ongoing learning processes and the experiences described herein.

As many cases discuss, part of the learning that happens through participation is around active citizenship. As individuals and groups are invited and engaged through appropriate means, they learn to exercise voice, act collectively, make demands, contribute resources, and monitor and seek accountability from governments and other power holders. This is evident not just in the numbers of people engaged, but also in the reflections many of the authors have regarding a kindled spirit of volunteerism (e.g., in Cameroon, Uganda-NUDIPU, El-Kfoor, and Zakazik), including those who move from a participant role to one of leadership (e.g., the youth from Omaar, the women in Juaboso, Ghana), or those who can apply to specialized skills towards civic efforts (e.g., the “skilled citizens” monitoring Nigeria’s judiciary).

Third, a number of cases reinforce the notion of engaging key stakeholders early, meaningfully, and in a transparent manner, as described in the Ghana, Nigeria, and Antigian cases. This approach, for many, was cited as a factor for success, contributing to a shared understanding around the purpose of participation, wide-reaching ownership over the process (e.g., with citizens and judges in Nigeria), better implementation (e.g., Ba-Zyid), and follow up (e.g., L'Arche).

A fourth common element is media engagement. A key stakeholder in the democratic process, the media (whether local, state, or national) has played various roles in support of the actions described: from being the focus of increased engagement (Nepal) to raising public awareness around issues and proposed solutions (Ghana, Uganda-NUDIPU), to gathering feedback and opinions (Ghana), to ensuring transparency to the public, to disseminating information, results, decisions or outcomes, and holding decision makers accountable to their word and obligations (Nigeria, Uganda-UNAC, Ba-Zyid). Recognizing these key roles in the democratic process, deliberate efforts were made to build relationships with (e.g. Ghana, Peru) and train (Uganda-NUDIPU, Ba-Zyid) media representatives to ensure a more informed and accurate representation.

Similarly, the use of social media was key in a number of cases, particularly those seeking to engage youth (Peru, Cameroon). Aside from providing additional channels for voice and participation, social media was also deployed as a tool for transparency and accountability, as with PWAN's mobile app for citizen monitoring in Nigeria, or with Sharecast's work to put in place feedback loops between citizens and local radio stations. With the increasing use of online platforms and social media, additional streams of citizen-generated data can support "offline" efforts to increase citizen participation in governance and decision-making, as was the case in Ghana, Nepal, Peru, and Ba-Zyid. Further, a few cases illustrate the importance of such data in making the "invisible" visible, as with NUDIPU-Youth's and UNAC's efforts to identify PWDs through home visits and collect information and evidence to better respond to their otherwise-unknown realities.

Finally, the authors' experiences serve as reminders of common challenges associated with participatory governance and citizen engagement. Secure funding and sustainability of the groups and organizations driving participation, achieving buy-in from power holders and decision makers, supporting the most excluded to participate, and sustaining citizen engagement over time can strain these efforts. In various ways, the cases demonstrate that ingenuity, creativity, and a sound understanding of contextual realities can go a long way in negotiating and overcoming such barriers.

Innovations in participatory practice

The Coady graduates whose experience is showcased in this collection have, each in their own way, found novel ways of practicing citizen engagement and supporting communities and citizens to participate in decision-making processes and governance. They have identified multiple entry points and worked within the specific opportunities and challenges presented within their context to increase the political space available to citizens and set in motion new ways of participating that were otherwise unavailable to individuals and groups. Drawing from a set of diverse approaches and practices, their work reinforces that innovating in the field of democratic governance often requires adaptability, creativity, and multiple strategies—promoting civic education and empowerment, collaborating with the media, promoting transparent and accountable leadership, working in partnership and building alliances, to name just a few. Arguably, none of these actions constitute innovative practice in of themselves. Rather, it is the particular ways in which these actions and strategies are approached, sequenced, combined, and adapted that can be considered innovative, inasmuch as they respond to particular contextual needs and assets in novel ways to address and transform power relations and unjust access to the right to participate in one's development.

It is also in the messiness and complexity of applying (sometimes) tried-and-true practices in a new context that the richest learning can be drawn. Indeed, the experience documented herein—and the process of documenting them into case studies—constitute a parallel educational process for the practitioners who authored them, which may itself lead to further innovation in their governance work. As mentioned above, this ongoing learning will be the focus of another proposed publication as part of Coady's *Innovations Series*.

Concluding thoughts

This collection of case studies offers a window into participatory governance and democratic innovation from a practical perspective. It is important to recall, however, that the lessons drawn here have emerged from a relatively small set of select practices, which are part of a much broader constellation of participatory political practice—as is obvious from the growing body of work available on Participedia’s online platform. As such, many of the questions raised here may warrant further exploration and analysis that is beyond the scope of this volume. For example, one such area for further exploration could be around how participatory governance applies in Indigenous communities, one of Coady’s core constituencies and an area with relatively limited documentation on Participedia.

Finally, beyond a contribution to understanding participatory practice, the work presented here also showcases in some depth the quality of work that Coady graduates undertake in their own spheres of action. As such, these stories help the Coady understand the value and impact of its work, they foster ongoing learning for the Institute itself, and they provide insight into how to improve on the support offered to practitioners like the contributors to this volume.

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