Final Programme Evaluation of
STAR Ghana 2

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List of Acronyms

3Cs & L	Convening, Catalysing, Coordinating and Learning
CA	Christian Aid
CEDEP	The Centre for the Development of People
COPL	Communities of Practice and Learning
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSEN	Children with Special Education Needs
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FAITH	Forum for Actions on Inclusion, Transparency, and Harmony
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GFD	Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations
GHAFTRAM	Ghana Federation of Traditional and Herbal Medicine Practitioners Association
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GRA	Ghana Revenue Authority
HRAC	Human Rights Advocacy Centre
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
LI	Legislative Instrument
LOGNET	Local Government Network
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDF	Minerals Development Fund
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	Most Significant Change
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
POCRA	Partner Organisational Capacity Risk Assessment
PWDs	People with Disabilities
SGF	STAR Ghana Foundation
STAR Ghana	Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness Ghana
TMHCs	Traditional Mental Health Centres
ToC	Theory of Change
VFM	Value for Money

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The STAR Ghana 2 programme was a five year (2016-2020), £21.1 million programme funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the European Union. It was managed by a consortium led by Christian Aid. The programme's ultimate objective was to contribute to a well-informed and active civil society, able to contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality, and inclusion for all citizens.

Christian Aid commissioned this final programme evaluation to learn from the experience and point to useful directions for the STAR Ghana Foundation in the future. The evaluation addresses the following objectives:

1. Evaluate the STAR Ghana 2 programme and its contribution to increasing the effectiveness of citizens influencing change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations, and

2. Evaluate and support the sustainability of the STAR Ghana Foundation and its forward-looking strategy.

The evaluation used Outcome Harvesting to assess the contribution of the programme towards increasing the effectiveness of citizens influencing change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations, and the sustainability of the STAR Ghana Foundation. This was complemented by case studies and citizens impact stories as well as the development of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning experience over the past five years.

B. Evaluation of the STAR Ghana 2's achievements

The evaluation found that the programme produced significant outcomes in five areas: Access and quality of public services; Economic rights and empowerment; Gender equality and social inclusion;

Improved accountability and transparency; Free and peaceful elections.

Nearly two thirds of the outcomes were in Policies and Practices. Policy changes included new laws at national or district level, such as passage of the Land Bill or the Right to Information Bill, or new administrative regulations or procedures that had direct effects on people's lives, such as inclusion of women in District Assembly decision-making processes. The outcomes were evenly divided between national and local level. While the national level outcomes were of course significant because they set frameworks for the entire country, many local level changes were in fact *systems* changes as well, such as District by-laws affecting women or people with disabilities.

The programme and its Grant Partners used a wide variety of tactics to achieve these results. The most common approaches were meetings with duty bearers, alliance building, training and awareness raising, and engagement with the media. Most outcomes were the product of multiple tactics used by several stakeholders, and most required considerable time to come to fruition. Pathways to change for some of the more difficult results – such as passage of the Land Act, or increased funding for mental health – were actually quite complex, and did not follow any linear route to success.

C. Evaluation of the STAR Ghana 2's strategies

STAR Ghana used a well thought out collection of strategies to promote these outcomes. At the core was a strategy of Convening, Catalysing, Coordinating, and Learning. The programme provided some £7 million in grants for Civil Society Organisations, and embedded these grants in a system of support and influence that boosted the likelihood that Grant Partners would achieve their objectives. Convening not only brought Civil Society Organisations together to strategise and learn, it also opened spaces for interaction with Parliament and key executive state institutions at both local and national levels. Catalysing built capacity of Civil Society Organisation to manage their operations and increase their skills, and Coordinating facilitated cooperation among Civil Society Organisations, media houses, Members of Parliament, and other duty bearers. Supporting all these activities, the programme built in learning opportunities for staff, Grant Partners, and Members of Parliament on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. Interviews with many stakeholders suggested that the need for compliance sometimes overshadowed these strategies, and made the programme somewhat inflexible in managing grants.

The programme also set up the STAR Ghana Foundation, an independent Ghanaian institution that will carry on the work of STAR Ghana. The Foundation has slowly been taking over functions from the programme in 2019-2020. It has established a well-respected and representative Governing Council, has set up all its internal management and administrative functions, and is now raising funds to support its independent operation.

D. Evaluation of the sustainability of the Foundation and its forward-looking strategy

How sustainable is all this work? For the outcomes, many will be durable, since they are systemic changes – laws, government procedures, institutional practice. For example, social inclusion practices in Civil Society Organisations are now well established, and for many Grant Partners they have become an accepted way of doing daily business. Others will require continued civil society activity to ensure implementation and to prevent backsliding. District Assembly funding for people with disabilities, or changes in procedure of the Ghana Police Service in treating domestic violence, for example, will require follow up and sustained pressure.

Prospects for the sustainability of the Foundation are bright, though uncertainty over funding in the past year has meant that the Foundation has had to start off cautiously. Experience from elsewhere in

Africa suggests that successful new institutions like the Foundation do well when they: have continued support from the founding donors for a few years; do strong outreach to all stakeholders, domestic and overseas; improve the climate for local giving, including from the diaspora; and build a strong case for support from potential funders. The Foundation has built a firm base in all four of these areas.

E. Recommendations

1. Expand the scope of engagement to non-traditional and informal Civil Society Organisations to expand the boundaries of inclusion and support citizen-led initiatives. Adapt partner engagement, grantmaking practices, and technical assistance to better support a movement building approach: adaptive management, built-in flexibility in grant agreements, technical support more oriented to strategy, tactics, and relationships than to compliance. Continue to use STAR Ghana Foundation contacts, influence, and systems knowledge to broker relationships among Grant Partners and duty bearers. Integrate Political Economy Analysis into engagement and grantmaking practice to inform decisions on an ongoing basis, and build in movement-friendly practices such as core support, repeat grants, and funding for networks that include non-formal Civil Society Organisations and non-traditional partners.

2. Adapt the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning system to track complex social change events: methods such as outcome journals and Most Significant Change can work, especially if they are done on an ongoing basis, and not generated externally after long periods of time have passed. The system needs to balance learning with demands on time for staff and Grant Partners.

3. Revisit the Convening, Catalysing, Coordinating and Learning (3Cs & L) system to retain its key values while operating on reduced budgets. Adaptations might include doing fewer Grant Partner visits after original trust is established, and use of external auditors and organisational development specialists built into grant budgets. Staff have sufficient experience to work out how to retain the core functions with reduced resources.

4. STAR Ghana makes grants to numerous Civil Society Organisations small and large, local and national, across the country. Going forward STAR Ghana should develop a strategy and criteria for identifying and growing citizens organisations which are playing a catalytic role for citizens in specific selected issues and places.

5. Publicize the legacy documents that document the programme's achievements on social inclusion, Political Economy Analysis, learning and related documents both in Ghana and abroad. Develop accessible presentations of them and seek out as many opportunities to share the work as possible.

6. Hire full time programme and/or fundraising staff as soon as possible. If sufficient resources are not available right away, staff can double up on tasks, since good programmes typically raise money. Use STAR Ghana Foundation's reputation as an experienced and respected coordinator of Civil Society Organisations in Ghana as a key asset for donors in channelling their funding effectively.

7. Founding donors should continue to use relationships with other donors to pave the way for Foundation staff to approach new donors for at least the next two years.

2 INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the STAR Ghana 2 Programme

The STAR Ghana 2 programme was a five year, £21.1 million programme funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the European Union. It was managed by a consortium led by Christian Aid. The programme's ultimate objective was to contribute to a well-informed and active civil society, able to contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality, and inclusion for all citizens.

The programme aims to contribute to increase the effectiveness of citizen influencing that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

The first years of the contract were directly implemented by Christian Aid, which include the establishment of an independent entity, STAR Ghana Foundation (SGF), to continue to deliver STAR Ghana's objectives after the DFID programme ends in October 2020. For the final year of the programme, Christian Aid would move to a more advisory role as the SGF establishes itself.

As the programme draws to a close, Christian Aid has commissioned this evaluation to learn from the experience and point to useful directions for the STAR Ghana Foundation in the future.

We summarise the logical framework of the programme here:

Impact – A well informed and active civil society, able to contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality, and inclusion for all citizens

Outcome – Increased effectiveness of citizen influencing change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations

Outcome Indicator 1 – Policies and Practices Changed – Number of policies and practices that have been changed/or are in the process (advancing democracy, social inclusion, and accountability) following the actions of the Civil Society Organisations supported by STAR Ghana

Outcome Indicator 2 – Duty Bearers Engaged – Percentage of state and non-state duty bearers engaged by STAR Ghana and its partners per level of responsiveness to citizens' demands around democracy, accountability, and social inclusion

Outcome Indicator 3 – STAR Ghana Institution built – Credible national institution in place - as measured by Civil Society Organisations and Donors against its financial and strategic management and governance structures

Outcome Indicator 4 – Value for Money demonstrated – The STAR Ghana Foundation demonstrates Value for Money in the delivery of its work by achieving the respective targets for each of the 4 Es (equity, effectiveness, efficiency, and economy).

B. Objectives of the Evaluation

The overall objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Evaluate the STAR Ghana 2 programme and its contribution to increasing the effectiveness of citizens influencing change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations, and

2. Evaluate and support the sustainability of the STAR Ghana Foundation and its forward-looking strategy.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

1. **Programme Evaluation**

   a. Evaluate the programme against its set log frame (outcomes, outputs);

   b. Evaluate the programme against eight key evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Value for Money (VFM), impact, and sustainability;

   c. Identify outcomes that the programme contributed toward and analyse its contribution. This includes identifying expected and unexpected outcomes (positive and/or negative);

   d. Assess the state actors' (Parliament, Ministries) involvement in the STAR Ghana 2 programme and how this involvement contributed to achieving better outcomes;

   e. Assess the effectiveness of the programme's Theory of Change (ToC) focussing on the programme's strategies including: GESI strategy, Convening, Catalysing, Coordinating and Learning (3Cs & L) approach, Value for Money strategy, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) strategy.

2. **Assessment of the STAR Ghana Foundation**

   a. Develop a MEL strategy and guidance for the SGF moving forward;

   b. Assess and define the Unique Selling Point (USP) of STAR Ghana Foundation;

   c. Assess the extent to which the approach of setting up an independent entity to sustain a programme has proven effective;

   d. Assess the added-value of using a programme structure to set up an independent entity;

   e. Comment on the sustainability of the SGF and its forward-looking strategy.

C. Evaluation Questions

The following are the questions set out by the Terms of Reference:

A. Relevance – To what extent was the programme relevant to the country's needs and priorities, to the sectorial needs and to the needs of other actors in Ghana?

B. Coherence – To what extent is the programme compatible (adding value, but also completing and working in collaboration) with other actors' interventions in the country?

C. Effectiveness

a. To what extent has the STAR Ghana 2 programme achieved its intended results as set in the programme logical framework?

b. What outcomes (intended or unintended; positive or negative) has the programme contributed to (this should cover outcomes achieved through the grant calls, the STAR Ghana joint initiatives and working with key state actors)? How has the STAR Ghana 2 programme contributed to these outcomes?

c. What is the relative effectiveness of the STAR Ghana 2 Theory of Change? To what extent did the assumptions made in the ToC prove to be true?

d. What is the relative effectiveness of the STAR Ghana 3C & L strategy (with a focus on the Convening strategy)?

D. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – To what extent has the GESI strategy contributed to GESI mainstreaming at all levels (Grant Partners, STAR Ghana team, but also in the outcomes achieved externally)?

E. Efficiency

a. How did the programme team enable a good delivery of the interventions within its timeframe and resources?

b. To what extent were the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy and practices effective in demonstrating the programme's progress and achievements?

c. To what extent has setting up the Foundation through the STAR Ghana programme's intervention added value to the Foundation's structure?

F. Value for Money – To what extent did the programme's VFM strategy enable the programme to achieve good VFM?

G. Impact – To what extent has the programme achieved or contributed to achieving impact (longer-term changes) for Ghanaian citizens?

H. Sustainability

a. To what extent are the outcomes that the programme contributed toward sustainable?

b. How effective was the approach of setting up an independent entity to sustain STAR Ghana's mission and impact?

c. To what extent is the STAR Ghana Foundation and its forward-looking strategy sustainable?

D. Summary of method and limitations of the evaluation

Method

The evaluation team used the following methods. (A more complete description is available in Annex 4.)

Review documentation and draft outcomes – Of the 108 documents we received for review from Christian Aid staff, 19 proved productive for outcomes. The remainder answered different questions, including understanding the overall programme and its origins, and the sustainability of the newly created institution.

In harvesting outcomes, we recorded outcome statements, contributions, and significance. For contribution, we separated the contribution of STAR Ghana from its partners, where sufficient information was available. We harvested 113 outcomes. We used the standard outcome harvesting definition of an outcome: **changes in the behaviour, relationships, practices, policies, or actions of an individual, group, or institution.**

Substantiation – We selected 20% of the outcomes for substantiation, based on both importance and the need to verify it. We developed a simple form attached as Annex 6 that we shared outcomes with. Most substantiators replied by email to this form, but some required phone calls due to poor connectivity or the need to get responses quickly. The amount of time available for substantiation was limited by the short period of the evaluation.

Analyse Outcomes – We analysed the harvest with a spreadsheet with 13 different categories, spread across outcome statement, contribution, and significance. These categories were based on the logical framework and the Theory of Change, as well as our own observations in the harvesting process. Each of the 13 outcome categories had pull down menus for multiple choices, such as the following:

1. **Who Changed**

    - Individual citizens and community based organisations/youth groups
    - Civil society organisation
    - Coalition of Civil Society Organisations
    - Private sector
    - Media
    - Traditional Authorities
    - Local government (MMDA)
    - Executive government (ministers, ministries, departments, and agencies)
    - Parliament (members, committees, etc.)

2. **GESI –** which group of people benefited from the change – choose up to two

    - Women
    - People with disabilities
    - Youth – ages 13-21
    - Geographic inclusion (rural/urban, north/south)
    - Elderly
    - Children – ages 12 and under
    - Informal workers
    - Other

Interview Key Informants – We conducted 25 Key Informant interviews to help interpret the outcomes we harvested, and to gather information and insights needed to answer questions for which Outcome Harvesting was not a sufficient method. Interviews included STAR Ghana staff and consultants, Governing Council members, DFID staff, and civil society partners. We also conducted 20 interviews with Grant Partner staff and citizens for case studies (Annex 1) and citizen impact stories (Annex 2).

Institutional Analysis of the STAR Ghana Foundation – To answer questions related to the progress on the Foundation and its likely sustainability, Outcome Harvesting was of limited value. Instead we relied primarily on institutional analysis based on the Management Systems International Framework.[1] This framework assesses the Foundation against five parameters: Oversight/Vision, Management Resources, Human Resources, Financial Resources, External Resources. We assessed its likely sustainability by comparison with the experience of other African grantmaking institutions.

A more complete version of the framework is found in Annex 8.

Sensemaking Workshop – After analysis of the outcomes, we organised a final online workshop with the programme team and key stakeholders. The objective of the workshop was to make sense of the data: which outcomes ring true, which are more significant, and which project interventions contributed to producing them.

Case Studies and Citizen Impact Stories – Based on the outcomes and interviews, we selected six grant programmes and 10 citizen impacts and developed narratives of them. We interviewed partner staff and independent citizens to provide concrete descriptions of results of the programme to give life to the more abstract analysis.

Development of MEL Strategy and Guidance – We developed a short overview of what principles and lessons the STAR Ghana Foundation can draw from the experience of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) over the past five years.

Limitations of the Evaluation

For an evaluation of this size and complexity, the time allowed for it was quite short – slightly more than two months. As a result, the team had to work quickly on a variety of tasks that ideally would have been given more time, such as scheduling the sensemaking workshop the same week the draft report was due. The team covered all the steps necessary, and quality was assured, but it did require us to approach partners and staff with reminders and follow up faster than we would have liked.

Second, in order to use the full potential of the Outcome Harvesting method, staff and partners ideally engage in an iterative process of refining and understanding outcomes. With the reduction in STAR Ghana staff as part of the winding down of the programme, staff were not available to go through all the outcomes and clarify the paths of change that led to them. Interviews with staff and partners of course contributed a great deal to the team's understanding of the more important outcomes.

The other main limitation was of course the COVID-19 situation, which meant that all activities had to be digital. For harvesting and stakeholder interviews this did not present serious issues, but for the citizen impact stories and the sensemaking workshop it required the team to try out creative means of getting what was needed without putting anyone at risk.

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1   MSI. (2015). *Adapted from Management Systems International "Institutional Development Framework" funded by USAID.*

3 FINDINGS BY EVALUATION QUESTION

A. Relevance

*Evaluation Question: **To what extent was the programme relevant to the country's needs and priorities, to the sectorial needs, and to the needs of other actors in Ghana?***

The evaluation addressed the question by examining the context in which the programme was designed and implemented, the existing practice of Civil Society Organisations in Ghana, the capacity needs of civil society, and the programme approaches.

The goal of the programme – increasing the effectiveness of citizen influencing change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations – was relevant. In the past two decades, Ghana has taken major strides toward democracy under a multi-party system. Accompanying this system have been key principles of good governance, including civil liberties and the rights of citizens' self-expression, participation, representative and accountable government at the local and national levels, and recognition of civil society and the media as key partners in nation-building and democratic development. Nevertheless, deep poverty remains a challenge. Issues of inclusive growth and participatory development remain a challenge. There is low representation of certain sectors of the society in the governance and decision-making process, evidenced by only 12.7% representation of women in the national Parliament. Issues of inclusion, representation, and practices such as early marriage, witch camps, and rural-urban dichotomy in service delivery still exist. The complex issues concerning male dominance and patriarchy; the promotion and maintenance of free, fair and transparent elections; eradicating corruption and state capture; and the challenges of unfulfilled electoral promises all clearly demonstrate and justify the need for active citizenship in the space. Successive governments have engaged with CSOs and demonstrated some level of accountability. However, the ability of Civil Society Organisations to influence policy generally has been low.

A key task of STAR Ghana Phase 2 was to give birth to a national entity to carry forward the vision of STAR Ghana. The relevance of the new entity is grounded on three main factors: the success and lessons from STAR Ghana Phase 1 and 2, the legitimacy of systems run by and for a country's citizens, and the need to stimulate local giving, which is currently very low. The ten years of implementation

of STAR Ghana Phase 1 and 2 have generated learning and lessons that justify the need to carry on its efforts. Work with key oversight institutions such as Parliament, requires refining and maintenance of relationships. The learning and lessons have also triggered the need to explore partnership and collaboration beyond the traditional understanding of Civil Society Organisations to include academics and other professional associations such as the Ghana Bar Association, Ghana Hoteliers Association, and Ghana National Association of Teachers, among others in the advocacy landscape. The concept of political economy has also emerged as a critical area of analysis, which is connected with the need to continue to catalyse the evolution of Civil Society Organisations from watchdog role to a critical mass with the intellectual capacity to critique and influence policy at the national, regional, and local levels. All these, together with the imperative to ensure active citizenship, underline the relevance of an independent national institution with the legitimacy to serve as a clearing house and an honest broker. The creation of a national grantmaking entity is a way of stimulating the growth of local philanthropy, which is currently low, though potential exists.

The STAR Ghana 2 programme as constituted, emphasised active citizenship in the democratic consolidation, development, and policymaking at the national and local levels. The programme built on the lived experiences of Ghanaian civil society by seeking to improve their capacity. The goal was to enable them to mobilise and expand the scope and quality of citizens' involvement in the policy space, which also fits well into the democratization process. The inaugural speech of the President on January 7, 2017 calling on citizens to get involved and not be seen as spectators validated the relevance of the STAR Ghana 2 programme.

The evaluation found that, since its establishment 2010, STAR Ghana has remained relevant in providing funding to a variety of Ghanaian Civil Society Organisations. Access to funding is a critical part of the survival and viability of Civil Society Organisations, and most Ghanaian Civil Society Organisations depend heavily on external funding. Access to funds became more difficult when Ghana attained a middle-income status in 2010 following a statistical re-basing of the economy by about 60%, and a resulting estimated Gross National Product (GNP) of $31 billion. Beginning in 2011, a number of donors began to withdraw funding. Clearly, STAR Ghana's establishment in 2010 was timely, as it partially covered the vacuum that was created by the departure of these funders. STAR Ghana 2 has continued to be a source of funding to many Civil Society Organisations. A STAR Ghana Grant Partner stated: "CSOs need funding to improve the quality of their engagement, such as paying for specialised skills and the services of good consultants to enable them engage and deliver. The funding role of STAR Ghana is very important as it makes CSOs much stronger."

The evaluation question as formulated, highlights three distinctive needs: the country's *needs and priorities*; *sectorial needs*; and the *needs of other actors*. The scores of differentiated outcomes that the evaluation harvested are a reflection of the strength and contribution of Ghanaian Civil Society Organisations, which the STAR Ghana programme sought to address. The successful achievement of a change in policy and practice pulls the three needs together because a good policy satisfies the need and priority of a democratic country, the beneficiaries of that policy, and a range of actors interested in and or delivering on the policy change. The use of the Convening, Catalysing, Coordination and Learning approach (3Cs & L) as a method of work has been key to achieving the outcomes harvested by this evaluation as they were carefully and deliberately deployed. In practice, the precise hierarchy and mix of application depended on the moment, the context, and the specific purpose it was intended to serve. Ghanaian civil society is quite wide in terms of numbers, size, capacity, and the issues of focus. The 3Cs & L approach was relevant in maintaining programme focus while responding to the differential needs and capacities of grantees.

B. Coherence

*Evaluation Question: **To what extent is the programme compatible (adding value, but also completing and working in collaboration) with other actors' interventions in the country?***

The evaluation responded to the question by addressing the following issues: the extent to which STAR Ghana intervention addresses synergies and interlinkages between it and other interventions; the consistency of STAR Ghana's intervention with other actors' interventions in the Ghanaian social sector; and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

The central focus of the STAR Ghana programme is strengthening civil society, mobilizing citizens, facilitating constructive dialogue between citizens and duty bearers across the country, and helping to bring about change in policy and practice that enhance the quality of lives of some of the most marginalised people. It shapes dialogue around inclusion, anti-corruption, accountability, and good governance. These are areas and issues which equally occupy the attention of governments, various Civil Society Organisations, donors, researchers, and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. For instance, anti-corruption and social inclusion are key principles for democratic intuitions. The laws of Ghana prohibit corruption, call for inclusion, and guarantee the existence of Civil Society Organisations as partners in the development and democratic process. The laws also provide and guarantee free expression of citizens and the media, engagement of Civil Society Organisations with duty bearers, and open funding of Civil Society Organisations. These are also consistent with international practices.

STAR Ghana has contributed to strong linkages and collaborative efforts among Civil Society Organisations, giving immensely more synergy and concerted effort to these organizations who used to work more independently on common or similar issues. STAR Ghana has made this possible through the 3Cs & L, the clusters approach, and the Communities of Practice and Learning (COPL). The 3Cs & L work together in synergy to create spaces for citizen engagement, and most of the Grant Partners replicate and apply the approach in their work. Before each call, as part of the practice of encouraging Communities of Practice and Learning, STAR Ghana convened a meeting of all grantees that encouraged them to participate in communities of learning. In each cluster, the members looked at the things they could work on, then STAR Ghana provided the funding and technical support as needed. Work on the Affirmative Action Bill, for example, came from the decentralisation cluster that decided to work together. STAR Ghana has also created linkages between Civil Society Organisations and state institutions through catalytic funding and brokering. STAR Ghana successfully linked Civil Society Organisations to Parliament at a time when it was difficult for Civil Society Organisations to engage Parliament and its various committees, in particular committees for Lands and Natural Resources; Gender; Constitutional, Legal and Subsidiary Legislation; and the leadership of the two political parties in Parliament.

STAR Ghana plays multiple functions including grant manager and intermediary, which have fostered synergy between the organization and its partners. With donors, STAR Ghana in its role as grant manager, allocated and disbursed funds from DFID, DANIDA, and the European Union. STAR Ghana used its long experience of managing funds in Ghana to shape and guide donors for what areas of funding make sense in the country, which helped avoid overlap and duplication. In its role as intermediary, STAR Ghana successfully linked smaller groups from rural areas to large and privileged NGOs at regional and national levels through mechanisms such as the convening and dialogue platforms.

The evaluation found high degree of consistency of STAR Ghana's interventions with the interventions of other actors. Through institutional and programme collaboration between STAR Ghana and a range of actors within government, Civil Society Organisations, the private sector, and development partners,

the organization worked in ways that did not compete, but enhanced the capacity of other institutions. Collaborations included awareness creation on COVID-19 with the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the Ghana National Health Service; anti-corruption with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and DFID programme on Strengthening Action Against Corruption (StAAC); the Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth programme (GOGIG); and on decentralisation and local governance with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Collaboration has emerged as an acceptable cost-effective way of dealing with multifaceted development challenges at the local, national, and international levels.

STAR Ghana is also using time-tested methods and approaches such as awareness-raising, meetings, research, and grantmaking for influencing policy and practice, eliciting responses from duty bearers, and promoting anti-corruption, inclusion, participation, transparency, and accountability. STAR Ghana was very successful in using media, particularly radio and television as channels for promoting inclusiveness, creating awareness, and eliciting responses from duty bearers to the plight of socially marginalised people. For example, STAR Ghana funded TV3 as a media house to produce human-interest stories in hard-to-reach areas.

The interventions of STAR Ghana have added value to the advocacy landscape in a variety of ways. The Political Economy Analysis (PEA) introduced by STAR Ghana seeks to achieve coherence as it provides a framework for Grant Partners, Programme Management Team, and the Steering Committee to critically analyse the terrain of implementation and the contending parties. PEA helps in the use of a broad range of analytical tools and models for advocacy interventions. This new mechanism along with the 3Cs and the trajectory of grantmaking has helped the programme to manoeuvre through the historically perceived siloed approach of Civil Society Organisations, better realising the benefits of synergistic actions. STAR Ghana has created a niche for itself and is seen as an honest broker. Some partners reported that their relationship with STAR Ghana funding has contributed to their success in securing other funding opportunities. The platforms that STAR Ghana created for all Civil Society Organisations through the 3Cs & L model were valuable for shared understanding, the evolution of collaborative relationships, continuity in learning, and addressing the root cause of what was perceived as scattered actions among Civil Society Organisations. The focus on capacity building of Civil Society Organisations in Ghana has made Grant Partners in particular, stronger and better, especially in gender and social inclusion practices, project management, accounting, and strategic corporate governance issues. The learning events have helped in shaping knowledge and skills and has enabled collective understanding of what needed to be done to support better management of their programs and institutions.

C. Effectiveness

Evaluation Questions:

To what extent has the STAR Ghana 2 programme achieved its intended results as set in the programme logical framework?

What outcomes (intended or unintended; positive or negative) has the programme contributed to (this should cover outcomes achieved through the grant calls, the STAR Ghana joint initiatives and working with key state actors)? How has the STAR Ghana 2 programme contributed to these outcomes?

The outcome in the logical framework is "Increased effectiveness of citizen influencing change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations." Our analysis shows that the programme has made significant progress in increasing the effectiveness of citizen influence in a number of key areas.

Over the course of its life, STAR Ghana made six thematic grant calls. In addition, the programme worked with Parliament to a) help it function more smoothly, and b) increase the openness and receptiveness of Parliament to citizens. (In the Theory of Change this stream of work is referred to as increasing the "supply side" of policy change.)

We analysed the outcomes based on the logical framework and Theory of Change, and then followed a more inductive method of looking for emerging themes. That is, we examined the outcomes independent of these planning frameworks to see what actually emerged. We summarise the results below.

The programme produced outcomes in the following thematic areas:

Access and quality of public services

Outcomes *(Grouped from Outcome Harvest)*	Examples
Changes to National Legislation, Regulations, or Guidelines	• In 2020, Parliament approved the Legislative Instrument (LI) for Ghana's Mental Health Act submitted by the Ministry of Health (MoH), which operationalizes the Mental Health Act for smooth implementation and secures the rights of mental health patients who have been neglected for many years. • In December 2018, the Mental Health Authority (MHA) published and launched the National guidelines for Traditional and Faith-Based Healers in Mental Health to complement protocols adopted by the Mental health Act in regulating the operations of the numerous Traditional and Faith-Based Healers in Mental Health in Ghana.
Ease of access to government funding programmes like LEAP and NHIA	• In 2019, the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) introduced mobile renewal of National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) membership. • In 2019 the Upper East Regional Director of Department of Social Welfare (DSW) submitted a list of about 120,000 Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) beneficiaries who are vulnerable persons (including the aged) to National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) for free registration as provided for in the LEAP legal framework. • The number of people with disabilities in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality (LMKM) who accessed the people with disabilities' share of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) increased from 40% in 2016 to 70% in May 2018.
Increased dialogue with people with disabilities around public budgets and policy	In 2019, 25 District Assemblies have instituted and are holding quarterly review meetings involving people with disabilities on the disbursement and management of the 3% District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) allocation for people with disabilities.
Local Health, Education, and Agriculture facilities completed or improved	In 2018 and 2019, 7 municipal and district assemblies, namely *Wa East, Kpandai, Daffiama-Bussie-Issa*, Tarkwa-Nseaum, Nkwanta, Dorma Central and Nanumba North, increased their responsiveness to citizens' demands for better healthcare and education services by providing school blocks, health facilities, maternity ward, boreholes, public toilets and disability access to various structures.
Barriers to public services lowered: teen mothers, children with disabilities, voters with disabilities	• In the Akuapim North municipality of the Eastern region, eleven children with special education needs (CSENs) got access to schools. • In 2018, the Girl Child Education Officer of the District Education Directorate re-integrated 33 teenage mothers into schools and placed 21 others in vocational training in Wa East and Sisala West districts.

Economic rights and empowerment

Outcomes (Grouped from Outcome Harvest)	Examples
Changes to National Legislation, Regulations, or Guidelines	• On Thursday 23rd July 2020, Parliament finally passed the Land Bill into law. • In 2019, Parliament finally established the Scrutiny Office as a mechanism to enhance its effectiveness in reviewing contracts, agreements and bills brought before it for consideration • In 2019, the Ministry of Finance revised the 'Pay As You Earn' policy introduced by the Government following recommendations from SEND Ghana and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to lessen the tax burden on the poor.
Women's access to productive assets	In 2019 Fisheries Landing Committees in the Shama, Ellembelle and Nzema East Districts of Western Region increased women's representation to 30% and assigned women to a new exclusive position as second Vice Chairperson as well as an existing position such as Treasurer.

Gender equality and social inclusion

Outcomes (Grouped from Outcome Harvest)	Examples
Increased dialogue with excluded groups on budgets and policy	By 2019 people with disabilities established 17 Disability Self-help Groups in the Volta and Oti Regions, and selected Inclusion Ambassadors to amplify their voices in local level decision making processes. Also, the seven target Districts in the Volta and Oti Regions – comprising Nkwanta North, Akatsi North, and Central Tongu Districts, Nkwanta South and Krachi East Municipal Assemblies, Keta Municipal Assembly and South Dayi District Assembly – have all established Disability Caucuses, comprising elected Assembly Members and leaders of people with disabilitiesin promoting inclusive developments in the respective Assemblies for the benefit of People with Disabilities.
Increased access of people with disabilities to services	The number of beneficiaries of the disability fund in the Wassa East District increased from an average of 111 persons between 2012-2017 to 239 (more than 100%) in 2018.
Barriers to public services lowered: teen mothers, children with disabilities, voters with disabilities	On the election day of 7th December 2016, the Electoral commission of Ghana lowered the polling booths and also mounted the polling stations to make them accessible to people with disabilities.
Changes to National Legislation, Regulations or Guidelines	In 2018, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) renewed its commitment to ensure at least a 30% appointment of women in District Assemblies (DAs) after the upcoming district level elections in December 2019.
Women's access to productive assets	In 2019, Community chiefs/leaders and the Movement of Shea Collectors signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 32 women's groups to regulate the allocation of Shea parklands for women in various traditional areas.
Improved representation in legislative bodies	• In 2019, traditional authorities, religious leaders and district assembly officials in Tema West and Ho Municipal Assemblies accepted and supported increase in the representation and participation of women in the 2019 District Assemblies Elections. • In 2018, 20 women campaigned for election as District Assembly members in Ada, which is the highest over the years.
Cultural change in traditional authority systems	• In 2018, the Koril, Balansa, Chiok, Pungsa and Kobdema communities of Builsa North were in the process of enskinning their first chiefs who have some form of disability in the Builsa North district of the Upper East region, while tradition did not allow people with disabilities to be enskinned as chiefs. • In 2019, traditional authorities in Funsi and Walenbelle publicly denounced child marriage and committed to ending the practice.

Enforcement of rights	In 2019 the Sisala East District Assembly passed by-laws forbidding child marriage and reactivated the child protect panel to deal with offenders.
Protection of girls from child marriage and expulsion from school for pregnancy	In 2018 Sisala West District Assembly made budget provision in their 2018 budget to support girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy to go back to school after delivery, thereby enhancing educational opportunities for girls.
Change in media description of disability	60 media houses changed reporting styles in reporting on disability issues. For example, they no longer see terms like disabled people but rather "people living with disability,» which is more dignifying. The project created a WhatsApp platform for trainees, fellows and editors and people from the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations (GFD) to interact.

Improved accountability and transparency

Outcomes *(Grouped from Outcome Harvest)*	**Examples**
Increased participation and monitoring of citizens in government function	In 2018, the GPS developed its Communication Strategy 2018-2020, incorporating the Police Watch WhatsApp platform as a simple and accessible anti-corruption tool.
Changes to National Legislation, Regulations, or Guidelines	• The Parliament of Ghana passed the Right to Information bill into law in 2019. • In 2019, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reduced the processing time for a screening report from a statutory period of 25 to 14 working days.
Anti-corruption	• In 2019, top music icons in Ghana such as Kidi and Okyeame Kwame among others galvanized other artists to embark on social media support for an anti-corruption campaign. • In 2019 the Minerals Development Fund (MDF) Monitoring committees in Prestea Huni Valley and Obuasi reviewed the MDF utilization receipts of revenue and projects supported by the revenues by physically inspecting some developmental projects.
Supply side opening of duty bearers to citizen action	In 2020, STAR Ghana raised the level of awareness and interest by 34% of state and non-state duty bearers engaged in interventions on issues of inequality, corruption, accountability and elections.

Free and Peaceful Elections

Outcomes *(Grouped from Outcome Harvest)*	**Examples**
Political parties more inclusive	In 2019, traditional authorities, religious leaders and district assembly officials in Tema West and Ho Municipal Assemblies accepted and supported increase in the representation and participation of women in the 2019 District Assembly Elections.
Peacebuilding among parties around elections	• On the 30th August 2016, all political parties in Nkwanta South, Nkwanta North and Krachi Nchumuru districts signed a Memorandum of Understanding dubbed the "Nkwanta Declaration" to promote and protect the existing peace in the constituencies in those districts. • On February 2017, the then President Elect Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the former President John Dramani Mahama met and made symbolic peaceful statements meant for the emulation of all their party followers, leading to a peaceful atmosphere during the transition period.
Free and fair elections	• In 2016, the Inspector-General of Police directed that all Electoral Commission offices and officials be provided with 24-hour security over the electioneering period. • In May 2016, the then President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, called for a national debate on the abuse of incumbency as part of ensuring free and fair elections in Ghana.

What changed

Within these themes, we analysed the outcomes according to what changed, who changed, what tactics were used to generate the change, and who were the main contributors to the change. To bring some life to these high-level overviews of outcomes, we present examples of pathways to change in both graphic and narrative form that suggest how these elements come together to achieve objectives.

Nearly two thirds (77 out of 113) of the outcomes were in Policies and Practices, as summarized in Figure 1. Policy changes included new laws at national or district level, such as passage of the Land Bill or the Right to Information Bill, or new administrative regulations or procedures that had direct effects on people's lives, such as inclusion of women in District Assembly decision-making processes.[2] Outcomes also included significant shifts in Discourse. (While Discourse is often words instead of actions, when spoken by influential people in new ways, it can be significant, and thus rises to the level of a behavioural outcome.) In February 2017, for example, the then President Elect Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the former President John Dramani Mahama met and made symbolic statements of peace meant for all their party followers to emulate. This joint effort led to a peaceful transition period. While most changes in Organisational Capacity did not rise to the standard of outcome in this analysis, they were included when the improvements were likely to have wide effects on people's lives.[3]
 Examples include the establishment of Disability Caucuses in seven District Assemblies, or when six regions set up citizen reporting mechanisms on corruption that generated nearly 13,000 useful reports.

These changes in Policy and Practice were split nearly evenly between the national and local level – 49% were national, 47% were local, with the remaining 4% at the regional level. It could be argued that national level changes were more important than local, since they set a framework for the whole country and affected far more people. While we found that to be largely true, many of the local level changes were also in fact *systems* changes. Local level changes such as new district by-laws were more likely to have a direct and more immediate effect on people's lives than national polices, that would take a long time to filter down to the local level.

What changed?

Figure 1: Theme of Change (note: some outcomes resulted in multiple themes of change such that the total above is higher than the total number of outcomes)

Gender Inequality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

The emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion in programme plans successfully produced many positive outcomes across the country. Overall 59% of outcomes were related to GESI issues, ranging from the progress of the Affirmative Action Bill at the national level to changes at local schools to make it easier for children with disabilities to attend.

The outcomes show that the vast majority of time, "inclusion" means people with disabilities and women. Note that these categories overlap, with many outcomes serving the multiple burdens many

2   Two Citizen Impact Stories in Annex 2 describe the experience of women in local government more fully.
3   We discuss organizational development of both STAR Ghana and partners more fully in the sections on strategy, impact, and sustainability.

people face, such as women with disabilities. Some outcomes addressing this intersectionality were around youth and children, and often focused on girls. Geographic inclusion addressed both the rural/ urban and the north/south divide, though there were only two outcomes in this category. One was particularly noteworthy: the revival of the Mole Series of dialogues platform for influencing central government on accelerated development of the north. The series of dialogues was significant enough to the government for it to be taken over by the Regional Ministers themselves, generating a more government-driven process than originally intended.

Themes of Outcomes

As noted above, the results show five main themes of outcomes. Of these, *Access and quality of public services* and *Gender equality and social inclusion* were most represented (see Figure 2). Note that *Access and quality of public services* were mostly local results, with citizens demanding improved services primarily in education and health from local government – frequently with success.[4]

These themes normally overlapped. Many GESI outcomes, for example, also increased economic rights and empowerment. The Land Bill was an example of this, where recognition of women's rights in land promoted both inclusion and women's access to productive assets.[5] Many outcomes that benefitted people with disabilities did so by increasing their access to social services such as schools or mental health services.

In terms of significance, the majority of high (21) and medium (52) significance outcomes were in these two categories as well, though all three other categories were not far behind.[6]
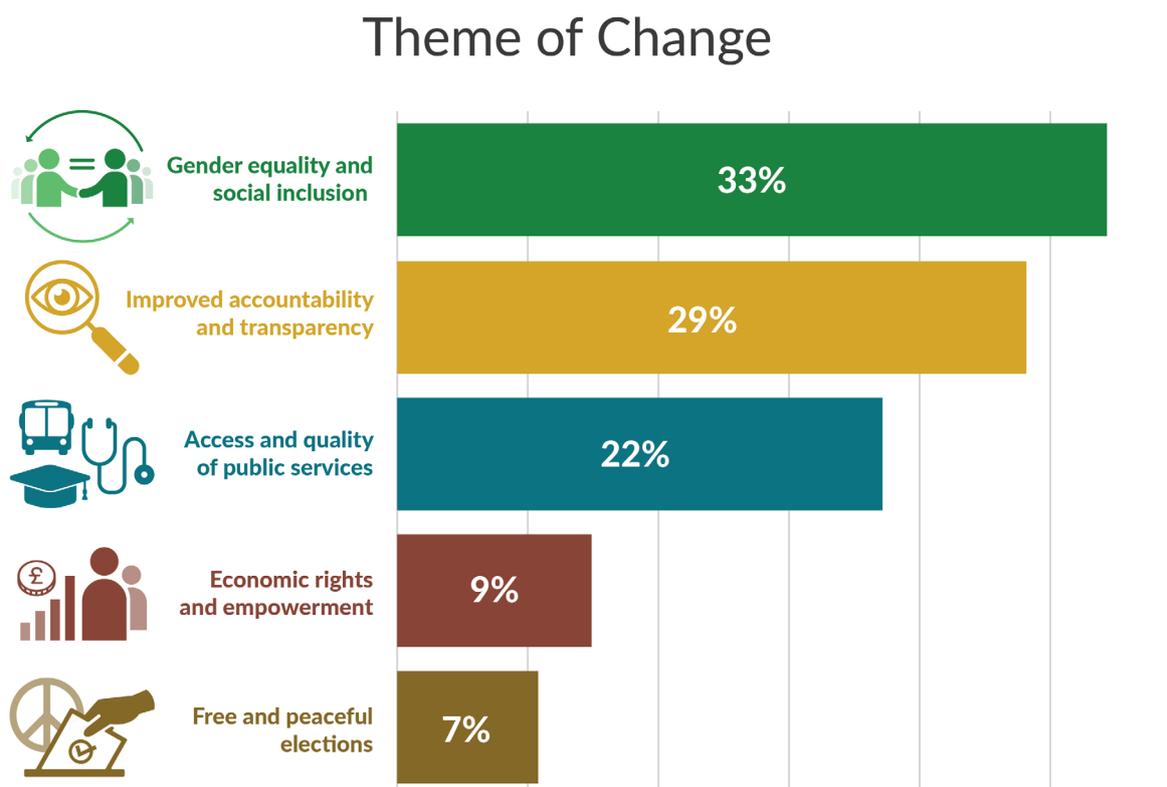
Theme of Change

Figure 2: Theme of Change (note: some outcomes resulted in multiple themes of change such that the total above is higher than the total number of outcomes)

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4   See the Citizen Impact Stories in Annex 2 for more detail on how one Grant Partner intervened to increase the access of children with disabilities to school.
5   Passage of the Land Bill is described more fully below, and in the Case Studies in Annex 1 and Citizen Impact Stories in Annex 2.
6   The evaluation team defined outcome significance as: high – policy change or change in practice affecting large numbers of people, or setting precedents that will have wide application. Change in discourse only if from an extremely influential source; medium – local level policy change, or national level change in policy and practice affecting fewer people. Change in discourse or organisational capacity; low – meaningful to a small number of people, or one of many steps on a path to outcomes of more significance; none/negative

Who Changed

Outcomes: Who Changed?

| Category	Value
Executive government	37
Local government (MMDA)	35
Individual citizens and CBOs	12
Parliament	9
Traditional authority	8
CSO	5
Private Sector	3
Coalition of CSOs	3
Media	1
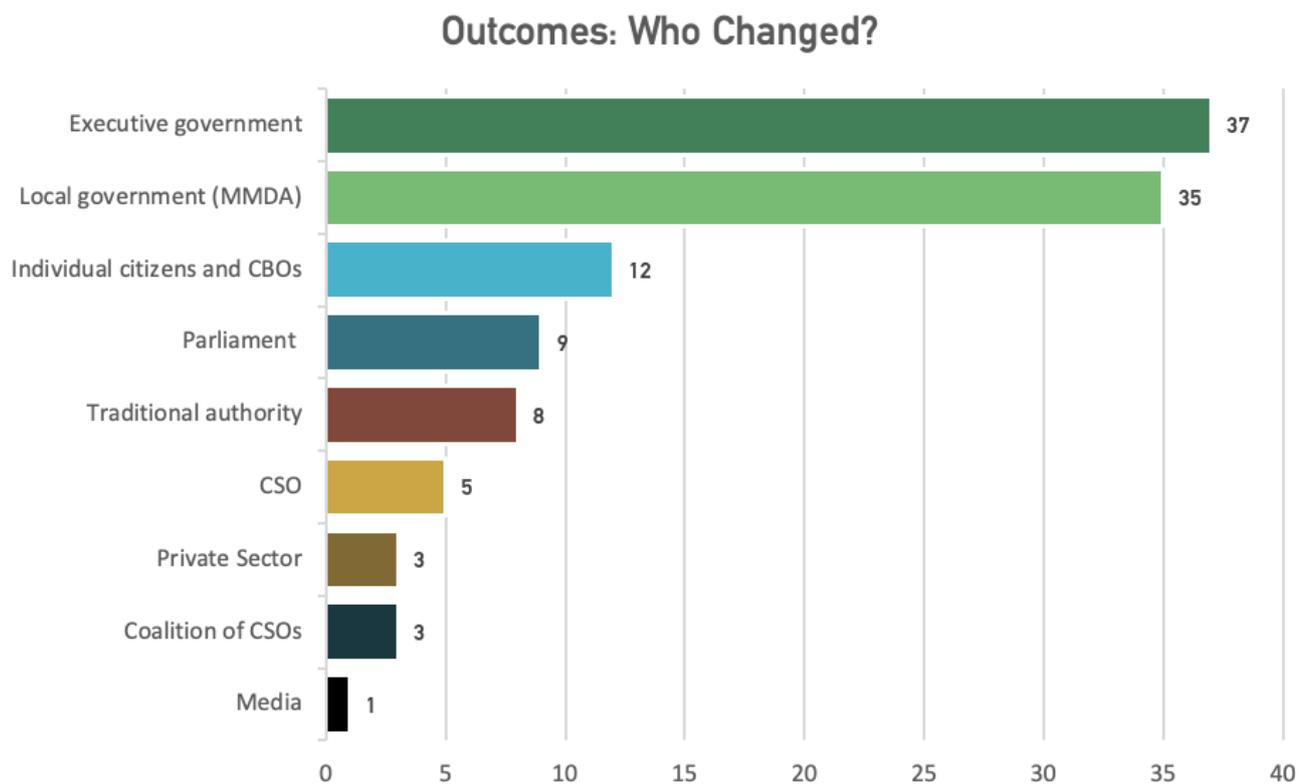
Figure 3: Theme of Change (note: some outcomes resulted in multiple themes of change such that the total above is higher than the total number of outcomes)

The vast majority of outcomes involved some kind of behavioural change on the part of the government or local authorities. The analysis separated out public institutions into four categories:

- Traditional Authorities
- Local government (MMDA)
- Executive government (ministers, ministries, departments, and agencies)
- Parliament (members, committees, etc.)

Figure 3 shows how the outcomes were distributed across these groups. Two-thirds involved changes in Executive Government and Local Government. Since this is a governance programme, this finding is not surprising. What is remarkable is the absolute number of successes with these actors, given the long timeframe and conflicting pressures normally associated with changes in public policy or practice. Changes at Parliament were fewer, but most were ranked as highly significant since they involved changes to laws and practices that affected the entire nation.

One interesting note here is that the original analysis had grouped local authorities (MMDA) together with traditional authority. The analysis showed that it was worthwhile to separate them. The local authority outcomes tended to be changes in by-laws or important changes in practices, while the changes in traditional authorities involved cultural shifts that are normally quite resistant to change. For example, in 2018, the Koril, Balansa, Chiok, Pungsa, and Kobdema communities of Builsa North in the Upper East region changed practice for the first time to allow enskinning chiefs with some form of disability, which tradition had previously not permitted. Beyond the practical value of opening up rights to people with disabilities, this change also sends a symbolic message about capabilities and rights.

Did what – focus on tactics supported

Contribution: Did What?
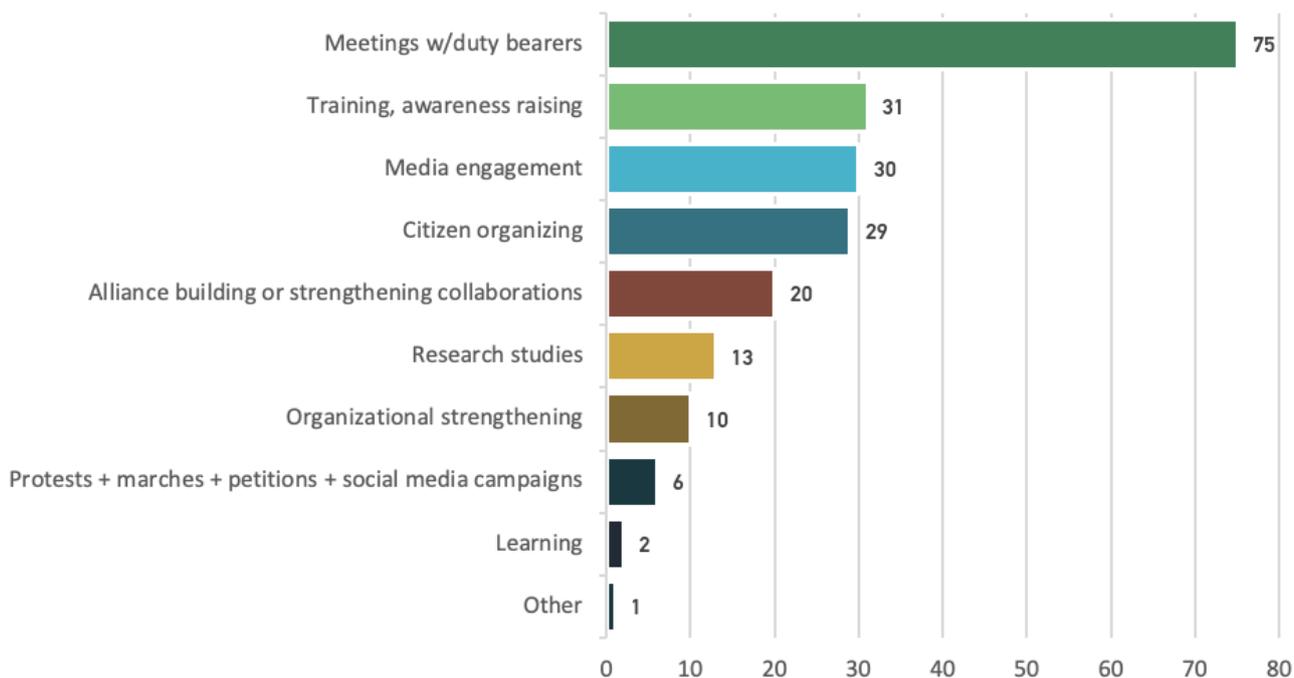
Figure 4: Tactics used to achieve outcomes

What did people do to make these outcomes a reality? Figure 4 shows the main tactics used. In no cases were any outcomes achieved using just one – all used combinations of tactics to achieve their goals. Dominating all other interventions were meetings with duty bearers, not just government officials but decisionmakers of any capacity, including members of political parties or heads of media houses. The finding demonstrates that while many tactics were necessary, until someone actually spoke to a decision maker, few policies or practices changed. In looking at the significance of outcomes, 14 out of 35 high-significance outcomes involved meeting with duty bearers, more than any other tactic (see Figure 5).

Did what? Level of Significance to Theory of Change
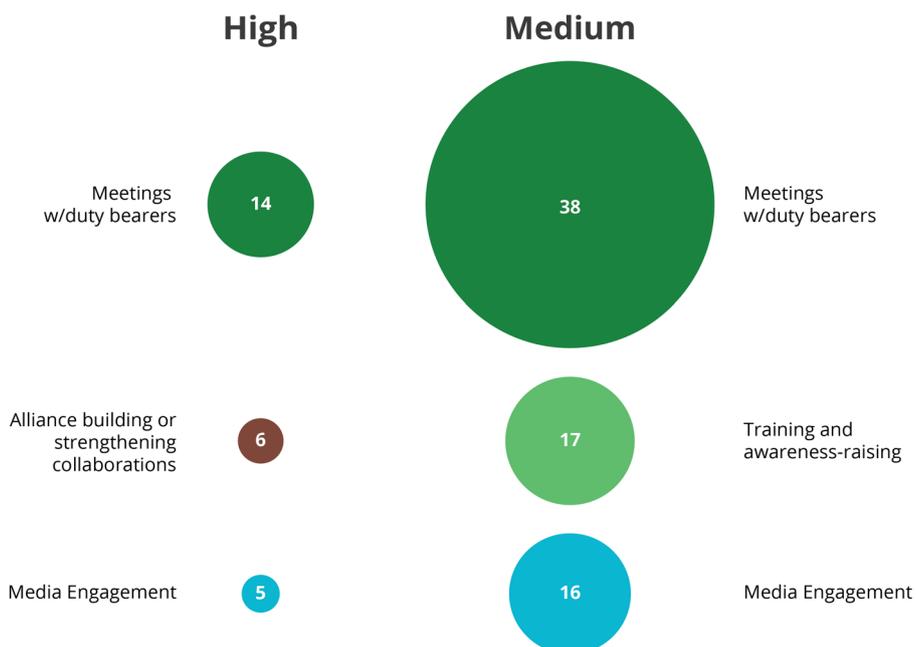
Figure 5: Top three tactics by significance

Training, awareness-raising, media engagement, and citizen organising showed up in many outcomes as important tactics, though in various forms. Media engagement, for example, ranged from documentaries and news reports, such as those produced by TV3 and Coastal TV, to engaging press to follow key issues such as the need to increase government funding for mental health care.

Alliance building or strengthening collaboration appears fifth on the list but had importance beyond this ranking. Six out of 35 high-significance outcomes used this tactic, the second highest total after meeting with duty bearers. High impact outcomes like the advancement through the legislative process of the Affirmative Action Bill – after ten years of limbo at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection – or the doubling of the government budget for mental health care in 2017 relied on collaboration among Civil Society Organisations and other stakeholders to make them happen.

The text box describes the multiple methods used by the STAR Ghana Coalition on Mental Health as an example of the threading of multiple of approaches.

STAR Ghana Coalition on Mental Health

Shortage of mental health care in the formal health care system and widespread stigma leads many to seek treatment from Traditional Mental Health Centres (TMHCs). These alternative providers offer traditional or faith-based healing options and are easily accessible, culturally accepted, and affordable. Yet these treatment services are largely unregulated.

In September of 2017, STAR Ghana made a grant of £100,000, which brought together a partnership of Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) and MindFreedom Ghana. The coalition used meetings, research, and advocacy to promote access to services as well as to ensure the protection of the human rights of people needing mental health care. Three months later, in December of 2018, the Mental Health Authority of Ghana launched guidelines for the regulation of more than 3000 traditional and faith-based healing centres, yet many traditional practitioners were reluctant to follow them. The coalition catalysed the change in relationship between The Ghana Federation of Traditional and Herbal Medicine Practitioners Association (GHAFTRAM) and the Mental Health Authority by arranging meetings for the two to discuss differences. By 2019, GHAFTRAM requested trainings on the guidelines, and the coalition delivered the trainings in the form of 16 workshops to train 110 nurses and 132 operators from seven regions.

The coalition also conducted research on current practices of traditional practitioners, and publicized the results, as well as the need for wider support of mental health care at a variety of durbars and public events. Stakeholders included Ghana Health Service, Ghana Federation of Traditional Medicine Practitioner's Association (GHAFTRAM), Department of Psychology of University of Ghana, and the Mental

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Who contributed to the changes

As a governance programme whose main activity was supporting Civil Society Organisations, it is not surprising that these were the main actors cited in over 60% of outcomes. This number rises to 81% when combined with *coalitions* of Civil Society Organisations. Media organisations were the next highest category, reflecting the programme emphasis on the media. TV3, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Coastal TV, Radio Ada, and SKYY Media all made major contributions to outcomes, primarily by keeping local governments on task on maintaining health and education service standards. Again, few outcomes were achieved by one actor – normally it took combinations of actors, including duty bearers who used their access or political capital to open paths for citizens to influence. Figure 6 represents the principle driver of these outcomes, not all the collaborators involved.

Who Contributed?
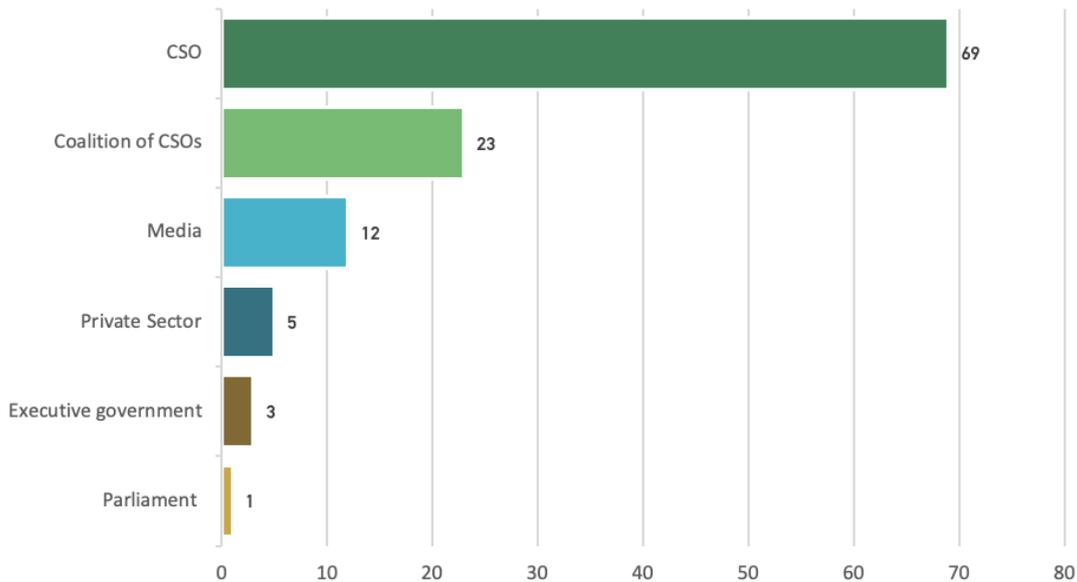
Figure 6: CSOs and Coalitions of CSO combined, made up over 80% of those who contributed to outcomes.

Pathways to Change

While these numbers are helpful to document the outcomes that STAR Ghana produced, they do not shed much light on how these various factors actually came together over and over to bring about change. It is not possible to tell the story of all the outcomes, but we can describe a typical example that incorporates most of the types of players involved and what tactics they chose.

Figure 7 shows a timeline of the passage of the Land Act in 2020. For at least a decade, a coalition of Civil Society Organisations including NETRIGHT, COLANDEF, and the Shea Network Ghana have been working to reform legislation on land rights in Ghana to make it more fair for customary landholders, women, and people with disabilities. The coalition used a variety of tactics including organising people through meetings, presentation of research findings and analysis, and sharing briefs with relevant stakeholders such as the Parliamentary Committee on Lands, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), and other Civil Society Organisations. The goal was to get a bill in front of Parliament. From 2016-2020, STAR Ghana gave new energy to the campaign by providing funding for the CSOs Cluster on Economic Rights to support this work and convene interested partners. The advocacy strategy included not only meeting the Parliamentary Select Committee on Lands, but also identifying champions among the Members of Parliament, who then used their political capital to push the bill. The result was the passage of the Land Bill in 2020, after a decade of effort.

Figure 7: From 2010 to 2020, CSOs convened to identify priority issues, then dialogues (supported by research, peer-learning, community organising and advocacy) engaged and influenced duty bearers to enact legislation at the national level.

Evaluation Questions:

What is the relative effectiveness of the STAR Ghana 2 Theory of Change (ToC)? To what extent did the assumptions made in the ToC prove to be true?

What is the relative effectiveness of the STAR Ghana 3C & L strategy (with a focus on the Convening strategy)?

Convenor, Catalyst, Coordinator, and Learning (3C&L) mandate

The Theory of Change calls on STAR Ghana to play the following roles:

- **Convener:** support the creation, utilization, and institutionalisation of spaces for collective civil society engagement in order to increase responsiveness of the executive and key state institutions at both local and national levels;

- **Coordinator:** support the implementation of strategies by civil society and Parliament itself to enhance the effectiveness of the latter in exercising its oversight role over executive action, and to be more responsive to citizen demands and concerns;

- **Catalyst:** support the growth of citizen-based groups and their linkages with Civil Society Organisations in order to strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of the civil society voice on national issues; and

- Facilitator of continuous **learning** to harvest and share lessons, innovations, and evidence to fuel wider-scale change.

The key assumptions of the Theory of Change were:

- Enabling environment remains in place

- Credibility of STAR Ghana is maintained to broker relationships and influence change

- Capacity of Steering Committee to play its oversight role

- Civil Society buys into STAR Ghana vision

- Civil society/media willing and able to provide and channel constructive criticism to Steering Committee/Programme Management Team

These assumptions largely held up through this period. While the Ghana political atmosphere had its issues, especially around the elections of 2016 and 2020, the environment for civil society action remained open. This stands in stark contrast to the trends in many other countries, where increasing restrictions on citizen action became the norm.[7]

STAR Ghana cultivated relationships with Parliamentarians, government officials, and civil society leaders, and steered clear of partisan politics. Interviews showed that the majority view from these sectors was that STAR Ghana acted as an honest broker, bringing people together to solve social problems. The Steering Committee represented a wide sector of respected civil society leaders and morphed into an active and respected Governing Council of the STAR Ghana Foundation. Broad consultation across the country with a variety of Civil Society Organisations, as well as momentum from STAR Ghana Phase 1, encouraged civil society to buy in to the vision. The decision to make a large number of grants – perhaps more than justified by the staff size – to Civil Society Organisations all

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7   Carothers, Thomas and Brechenmacher, Saskia, *Closing Space: Democracy and Human Rights Support Under Fire*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014; Dobichina, Iva and Joshi, Poonam, *In the Name of Security: When Silencing Active Citizens Creates Even Greater Problems*, opendemocracy.net, April 20, 2016; UN General Assembly Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai*, A/HRC/23/39, April 24, 2013; Civicus Monitor https://civicus.org/index.php/what-we-do/innovate/civicus-monitor.

over the country contributed to wider support for the programme. Being a source of funding of course helped encourage this support and may have put a damper on any criticism. While interviews with Civil Society Organisations were overwhelmingly positive, some pointed to a few areas where they found the programme less than helpful. Those coalitions that were already functioning well did not need further support in group process from an outside organisation. And several cited the inflexible nature of grants management as unhelpful to their implementation.

The 3Cs & L strategy was largely productive. Interviews and documents showed that activities in this realm produced the following results.

- **Organisation development of Civil Society Organisations,** especially in the areas of management, fundraising, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and project management, most often during quarterly visits.

- **Collaboration and network building** on a variety of issues – Some prospered and continued, others faded away, which suggested the organic nature of collaboration, despite having been put together by an outside organisation. Some had long been active, such as the coalition behind the Affirmative Action Bill, while others were created by this process. "No doubt STAR Ghana has made the work of CSOs in Ghana much stronger," noted one Grant Partner. "What STAR Ghana did by trying to bring all the actions of Civil Society Organisations into one pot is one thing I am proud of. Otherwise there is no local strategic one-stop shop for a country's development challenges."

- **Convening as a sector building tool** – The practice of bringing Civil Society Organisations together at the beginning of each call not only created opportunities for interaction, but also created dialogue among diverse organisations working on the issue at hand. It is possible to exaggerate the value of the convening, since it is promoted as much by having money behind it as by its perceived intrinsic value. One Grant Partner observed:

  "On coordination, they made us form clusters. At meetings, these clusters, we sat together to work on how we could coordinate. What happens was that between the business of project implementation, everyone gets busy. When I send an invitation to other implementing partners for a meeting, if they like they will come, depending on their schedules. But [when] STAR Ghana rather calls, they will come because STAR Ghana is the donor or the coordinator. But they tried to let us do it among ourselves which didn't work for our cluster."

- **Opened up Parliament and direct policy advocacy,** including "supply side" work – By working directly with Parliament and government staff, and by encouraging Grant Partners to make contact with Members of Parliament, the programme increased contact and interaction between citizens and elected representatives. As one observer put it:

  "In the past it was difficult for CSOs to engage Parliament....CSOs didn't know the right entry points to Parliament – whether to use the clerks, committees, etc. Also, Parliament itself was kind of closed to CSOs because they thought they were nuisance, always making noise. But now CSOs can sit with the Speaker of Parliament and discuss the Affirmative Action Bill. This is because of how STAR Ghana has worked with the Parliament, creating opportunities for our partners to engage them."

  In 2020, STAR Ghana reported that the level of awareness and interest of state and non-state duty bearers engaged in interventions on issues of inequality, corruption, accountability, and elections had risen by 34% over the life of the programme. This figure was based on consultations by STAR-Ghana in 2020 with leadership of Committees of Parliament, Officials of Ministries, Departments and Agencies at the national level, Local Authorities at the local level, and Civil Society Organisations to determine their level of responsiveness to citizens' demands around democracy, accountability and social inclusion.

- **Promoted Political Economy Analysis** – While not strictly part of the 3Cs & L, Political Economy Analysis became a key piece of programming for STAR Ghana. The overall

programme was informed by an initial Political Economy Analysis, as were the grant calls. Later in the programme life, staff increased their use of this analysis on an ongoing basis, as opposed to a one-and-done document, as it was at first. The programme also extended this skill to some of its more advanced partners, training them in how to do it, and encouraging them to integrate it into their work.

- **Learning** – Thanks to a well thought out learning strategy, the programme developed significant learning, knowledge and research products which will be of use not only to the STAR Ghana Foundation and civil society in Ghana but also to practitioners everywhere. These products include annual Strategic Learning Reports, the Foundation's Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) Toolkit, GESI Learning Synthesis documents, the STAR Ghana Learning Document on Elections, the STAR Ghana Foundational Political Economy Analysis, a GESI legacy product, a Story of the STAR Ghana Foundation, a legacy document on the 3C's & L Approach, legacy products on learning from the STAR Ghana Anti-Corruption and Local Governance grant programmes, a legacy product on the STAR Ghana work with Parliament, a research product on Movement-Building and Active Citizenship, a research product on Civil Society Sustainability and Strengthening Social Justice Philanthropy, and annual status reports on the State of Active Citizenship in Ghana.

In general, in our data collection, the 3Cs blended into each other, and were very difficult to pull apart in outcome analysis. STAR Ghana staff were unable to clarify which of the 3Cs & L contributed to which outcomes due to shortage of staff with the transition to the Foundation, and reports only referred to "engagement" and "technical support." What was clear was that initial convenings to consider new calls were useful for generating ideas and bringing civil society representatives together. And at times, convenings generated important conversations, such as the need to respond to vigilante violence around elections. One-off convenings represented a missed opportunity to further build collaboration and campaigns. Having taken on corruption or social inclusion once did not mean that these issues were dealt with and done. The Independent Review of 2019 echoed this finding: "the reason these convenings are often one off and not systematically following through some of the emerging issues through several iterations of convenings is that the programme is grants heavy, and hence delivering the programme took away time needed to embed the 3Cs & L approach among the staff as well as GPs." In STAR 1 the programme learned that giving grants alone does not lead to transformational change, but the lesson here is that while one-off convenings and funding calls can work, sustained effort over time is key.

The same point applies to the grants. Providing funding was key to all the outcomes the programme produced. Yet few of them – especially those of high or medium significance – will be sustainable without further civil society attention and pressure. In general, transformation requires repeated grants over time, adapting as issues change. The precipitous drop in funding that will occur with the end of the programme will leave many Grant Partners with much reduced capacity to follow up.

As for coordinating, the term is used in a way that seems a bit out of the ordinary in normal civil society usage. When the evaluation team saw the term used, our initial thought was that STAR Ghana had a role in working with coalitions of organisations brought together by grants around an issue, developing strategy together, planning sustained campaigns, agreeing on joint communications – in short, all the things a coordinated campaign does. Instead, the coordination seemed to mean introducing organisations to each other, and perhaps connecting them to decision makers. One observer of the programme noted that:

> *"They have given so many grants (over 100 Civil Society Organisations). They felt so overwhelmed making it difficult to add value. So the attention was on compliance, M&E compliance instead of adding value to the 3Cs & L, which also then meant that the focus was only on the convening, the easiest of the 3Cs...without following through the recommendations that came from those meetings and to ensure that they actually influence changes....There was the need for a much clearer link between programming and influencing, more strategic decisions on which issues to follow, not just convening, using all our different methods. A kind of cumulative impact, what do individual projects mean and linking to future opportunity."*

In general, the programme took a classic view of building civil society: if you give funding to formal non-governmental organisations, they will represent people's interests in the public sphere and improve well-being. While valuable, what this view of social change seemed to be missing was consideration of the wider dynamics of civil society, beyond those organisations formally organised and registered with the state, and the forces of the state that need to be engaged. The original programme documents imagined a wider reach into citizen organizing beyond formal Civil Society Organisations, but the need to meet donor requirements limited its room for manoeuvre. The programme did consciously seek out smaller, hard to reach Civil Society Organisations all over the country and invested time and money in building their capacity. The need to focus on registered Civil Society Organisations and their compliance made it hard to engage other forms of organisation. The fact that it took the programme a year and a half to work out how to get funds to Parliament because a state institution could not set up a separate bank account is an example of the consequences.

Programme staff noted in interviews that "Traditional forms of organisations – formal NGOs – are almost becoming irrelevant. The advent of social media, crowd funding, etc. has opened the space to other forms of citizen organisation." Engaging with non-traditional Civil Society Organisations like faith-based organisations, professional associations, traditional authorities, occupational groups, and organised labour, including informal workers, will mean adapting grantmaking procedures for those organisations where audits, procurement policies, and standard accounting procedures are not the norm. There seemed little distinction between formal Civil Society Organisations that work on behalf of people and people's organisations that represent themselves directly, and few partners engaged in deep analyses of power to plan their actions. These other forms of citizen organising bolster the claim of civil society to legitimacy and are key to countering claims of some political parties that Civil Society Organisations have no mandate.

One common framework in studies of social movements considers the following elements needed for the success:

- **Mobilizing structures** –organisational infrastructure is key to bring people together in common cause, including informal groups, formal nongovernmental organisations, networks, media, academia, and government allies, and the resources needed to support them. STAR Ghana did a superb job building formal organisations but will have a difficult time sustaining it.

- **Framing processes** –an "injustice frame" which shows clearly that there is a problem to be solved (such as lack of human rights), and proposed alternatives is developed. Convenings and learning honed framings, and helped diverse organisations come to consensus around them.

- **Political opportunities** – how open a political system is to challenges from outside its elites and social changes that undermine the established political system. Ghana is open right now to citizen action, and STAR Ghana has taken advantage of that and promoted it. This openness allows civil society to take advantage of the "magic moments" that the Theory of Change seeks to build on.

- **Protest cycles** – how resources are available in periods of heightened challenges to elites, often across movements as perception of this vulnerability spreads.

- **Contentious repertoires** – what are the tactics movements can call on, such as petitions, demonstrations, legal action, alternative media, etc.[8]

STAR Ghana's risk averse approach to building civil society understandably limited its ability to build social movements in this wider sense, but Grant Partners were often able to use the support to build their own movements, especially in the cases of people with disabilities and women. Skills in Political Economy Analysis will help both Foundation and partner staff as they experiment in reaching out to non-formal Civil Society Organisations in a more comprehensive movement building approach.

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8   These views of Resource Mobilization Theory and Political Process Theory are summarized in Caren, Neal. "Political Process Theory." Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology. Ritzer, George (ed). Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Blackwell Reference Online. 10 May 2012; Crossman, Ashley, "Political Process Theory: An Overview of the Core Theory of Social Movements," February 13, 2019, https://www.thoughtco.com/political-process-theory-3026451, accessed November 12, 2019.

D. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Evaluation Question: To what extent has the GESI strategy contributed to GESI mainstreaming at all level (Grant Partners, STAR Ghana team, but also in the outcomes achieved externally)?

The emphasis that the programme put on GESI issues paid off in every area of intervention. As noted above, the majority of outcomes improved the exclusion of a variety of groups of people, predominantly people with disabilities and women. Outcomes varied from local level, as schools and District Assemblies extended protections to girls from child marriage and exclusion from education, to national level, such as the passage of the Land Bill.
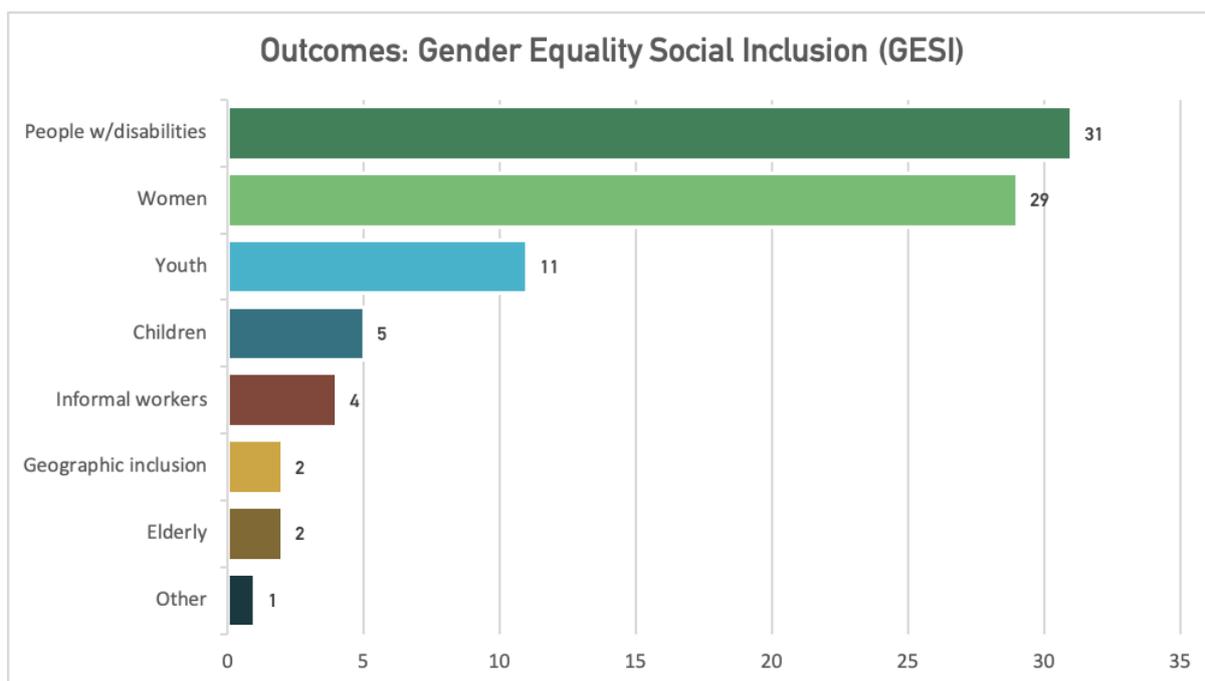

Figure 8: Groups benefitting from GESI outcomes

Beyond external outcomes, STAR Ghana can take credit for having elevated a large portion of the Ghanaian civil society sector in addressing inclusion issues. All Grant Partners but one implemented safeguarding procedures, and thinking in terms of inclusion was built into the standard operating procedures of most. One Grant Partner told the team:

"STAR Ghana insists on GESI compliance right from application for grant stages. And so it forced a number of us applicants to think about GESI. And these implanted GESI in most of us Grant Partners....Because of that all our staff became aware of GESI, and so it became a catch word in my organisation where if you're having a meeting, someone can say you must be GESI compliant. Even the language in our organisation changed. This has grown to the extent that when we were doing events in our project, we insisted that 40% of teachers and students representing each school should be females."

One interviewee who was not involved in the GESI programme directly said that:

"I'm yet to see any African structures or group of people who have gone that far in terms of internally having an organisational culture and structure that was so sensitive to GESI and safeguarding, and also of having programs delivered and measured. The success of any of those programmes that STAR Ghana did were all anchored around GESI."

E. Efficiency

Evaluation Question: How did the programme team enable a good delivery of the interventions within its timeframe and resources?

As a civil society building programme, STAR Ghana extended far beyond making grants. Its additional commitment to the 3Cs & L added a significant dimension of programme work beyond funding. While this work on the 3Cs & L was an expensive way of making grants, it was an efficient way of promoting improved governance.

The programme team built in a number of measures that enabled them to reach many partners at the same time in an efficient way. These measures included:

- **Convenings** – Consultation with a large number of relevant Civil Society Organisations on calls not only allowed for efficient discussions, it also generated a variety of ideas outside what staff had come up with on their own, such as the anti-vigilante work. At the same time, it promoted collaboration among potential Grant Partners, and began generating consensus in the field about what needed to be done. Individual discussions with a variety of potential partners would have taken far longer and achieved nothing on promoting collaboration and consensus. Other convening events included regularly scheduled group learning events and the creation of communities of practice.

- **Calls** – Rather than dealing with hundreds of proposals on different topics at different times, the programme grouped funding rounds into specific calls on specific issues. This allowed staff to review proposals by common criteria at the same time.

- **Funding networks** – In many cases, the programme funded networks or consortia of Civil Society Organisations to work together on an issue. One Grant Partner observed that: "The collaboration with other partners made us efficient. For example, the collaboration made us to save cost. There are many cost elements like initial preparation, airtime among others that were saved. When we had to organise programmes in Northern Ghana, [one of us] did all the groundwork, which would have cost [us] money and time."

- **Orientations** – The practice of conducting group orientations for new grantees allowed staff to deliver many messages efficiently, as well as for partners to learn together. Grantees gained understanding of compliance requirements, Value for Money concepts, and safeguarding for example, all in a single meeting.

One element of the programme that may have been *inefficient*, however, was excessive documentation. Normally, programmes do not document their work well enough, and it is the rare evaluation that suggests that efforts to record what happened and to learn from it was excessive. However, there is a real cost to every report, presentation, and communications piece. Every cedi spent on this documentation is a cedi that could have funded another activity or even another partner.

In many cases, learning can be captured and summarised briefly and succinctly, as was done with the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Learning Synthesis. But extensive strategy documents, reviews of learning events, programme reports, and 50-page evaluations like this one eventually lose their effectiveness as busy managers find little time to absorb them, and partners often ignore them altogether. The evaluation team was provided with over 100 documents, perhaps thousands of pages in total. These documents are of high quality, and reflect considerable thought, consultation, and review on the part of many staff and consultants. A simple calculation suggests that over the course of five years the programme produced a major document a couple times per month. All documents were of excellent quality, with many important considerations and conclusions. It is possible that this production was out of balance with the benefit provided, when contrasted with shorter, pithier documents.

*Evaluation Question: **To what extent were the Monitoring and Evaluation strategy and practices effective in demonstrating the programme's progress and achievements?***

From the beginning, the programme placed a strong emphasis on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The programme started out with a strong logical framework and Theory of Change, and then developed information systems for all aspects of the logical framework. The presence of experienced consultants on the Programme Management Team, including specialists in Value for Money, Political Economy Analysis, Organisational Development, GESI, and Finance, provided considerable advice not only on how to set up programmes but also on how to monitor them.

As it was set up, the M&E system required considerable labour on the part of staff. Initial orientation meetings for all grantees, including trainings in compliance, initial assessments of management systems of all grantees, quarterly visits to all grantees, and quarterly reports to donors with detailed information from grantees all created a fairly heavy M&E system. Annual programme reports topped 50 pages each, not counting attachments. Of the 13 staff in the Programme Department, four were devoted full time to M&E. Except for programme staff devoted to GESI and Parliamentary support, there were no people devoted to working with partners on strategy, campaigns, advocacy, or any of the major functions where partners normally consult and adapt on achieving objectives.

While this work stretched the staff due to the large number of Grant Partners, it is noteworthy that the original guidance from 2016 laid out an even more ambitious system. It called for process tracing and ranking of partners and primary beneficiaries, collection of partners' 'outcome journals' and periodic analysis of outcomes, beneficiary-generated 'stories of change,' analysis with use of Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology, and finally, scorecards for use by M&E staff. These methods are all excellent for capturing results in complex programmes like this one, but there is little evidence that they were actually used. When it came to day-to-day implementation, the original guidance overestimated the time available to staff and partners to do this work, so in practice, staff cut back.

What did work was the ability for managers to see issues arising fairly quickly, due to frequent reporting and contact with Grant Partners. Staff were able to recognise partners who were having trouble implementing in the first quarter or two, and could determine if they needed some support or if it was better to regrant the money elsewhere.

While staff and partners had frequent opportunities for reflecting on the work, the actual learning function in the programme team was separated out – "MEL" became "M&E." So, while considerable learning happened throughout the five years, it did not feed into the monitoring as smoothly as it might have. "Learning takes you higher into an outcome level state," one staff member said. As a result of separating out that function, M&E focused more on the bureaucratic details of grant implementation, and programme learning was more outward looking to external stakeholders, donors, and beneficiaries.

*Evaluation Question: **How effective was the approach taken to set up an independent entity to sustain STAR Ghana's mission and impact?***

This question is dealt with in depth in the Sustainability section, so we refer the reader to that section to avoid repetition.

F. Value for Money

Evaluation Question: To what extent did the programme's VFM strategy enable the programme to achieve good VFM?

The Value for Money strategy was based on standard principles: **Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness**, and **Equity**. Value for Money is a particularly thorny concept to track for national-level governance programmes, so staff developed a nuanced approach that balanced Equity and Effectiveness on the one hand with Efficiency and Economy on the other.

The original indicators were:

- **Equity** – % of stakeholders reporting that GESI issues are being addressed
- **Effectiveness** – % of stakeholders reporting evidence of consequent influence
- **Efficiency** – % of Grant Partners where burn rate and delivery of outputs in on track against milestones
- **Economy** – % of activities where standards on cost control met.

In response to comments from DFID in its Annual Reviews, these indicators were revised to introduce measures of cost per person reached or policy changed. STAR Ghana duly included these indicators in its 2019 and 2020 reports. To do so, STAR Ghana and partners counted beneficiaries for each grant.

The original set of indicators for Equity and Effectiveness were based on responses from extensive annual stakeholder surveys. The thinking was that for a large project dedicated to governance, value would be judged by the extent to which the constituency recognised that the programme provides good service and value to them. These results showed that both Grant Partners and other stakeholders largely agreed that GESI issues were being addressed, and that they had had influence on the issues they were working on. The table on the following page summarises the responses from the most recent survey in 2019.

Equity	2019
% of stakeholders reporting that GESI issues are being addressed	76%
% of partners achieving GESI markers and safeguarding policies	97%
The extent of engagement by citizens over the last 12 months was 'very high' or 'fairly high'.	86%
Effectiveness	
Respondents regarding the extent of engagement by citizens as 'very high' or 'fairly high'.	86%
Respondents confirmed that public officials are actively addressing or planning to address the issues raised	83%
Efficiency	
% of annual budget spent	89%
% partners spending 75% or more of their grant budgets	84%
Economy	
Survey questions asked about economy	N/A

Figure 9: Results of Stakeholder Surveys

On Efficiency, Grant Partner burn rates showed that grant spending remained largely on pace throughout the project. In 2019, for example, 84% of partners (75 out of 89) achieved burn rates of 75% or better. At first glance, it seems odd that pace of spending would be an indicator for Efficiency,

but the logic was that partners were implementing their grants at a pace commensurate with planning, and were likely to have completed activities on time and within budget. This assumption does not necessarily sit well with the reality of Grant Partner efforts to influence change, where the timing or responsiveness of those they aim to influence cannot be predicted in advance.

And for Economy, the strategy was to look at how projects were implemented and that practices and measures were in place to increase the likelihood that grants were being spent in a prudent way. STAR Ghana integrated several practices into the programme that were likely to generate wise use of funds:

- Initial orientation – Every funding round started with an initial orientation for grantees, which included training in Value for Money thinking and operations, guides to accountability procedures, and training in financial management and organisational governance.

- Initial assessment with Partner Organisational Capacity Risk Assessment (POCRA) framework – STAR Ghana staff assessed each grantee for a number of areas of compliance and accountability: Governance, Financial Capacity, Accounting System, Reporting, Internal Controls, and Information Security, and made detailed recommendations for improving these functions.

- Quarterly monitoring visits – STAR Ghana staff made visits four times per year to monitor implementation, focusing on compliance and governance.

- Encouraging networking – In all calls and many grants, STAR Ghana encouraged Civil Society Organisations to team up and take on issues together, increasing the potential for generating effects beyond the capacity of any one organisation.

- Convening to generate collaboration – All funding rounds began with a convening to discuss the issue of the call and generate discussion among potential collaborators about what needed to be done to solve the problems at hand.

- Training – STAR Ghana staff and Steering Committee underwent training in Value for Money thinking and practice, and in turn trained grantees in it.

- Oversight Role – The Steering Committee of the STAR Ghana programme also had a very rigorous oversight role of staff to ensure Value for Money, and did not just leave staff to implement without guidance.

- 5% threshold – STAR Ghana grant agreements limited Grant Partners to discretion over budget adjustments to 5% of value, in an effort to encourage them to spend according to agreed plans.

Over the life of the project, the result of these measures was an extremely low rate of misuse of funds. In cases when funds could not be accounted for or were not fully spent by the end of the project period, STAR Ghana received reimbursements from Grant Partners for the amount in question. Of the more than £7m granted over the life of the project to over 130 organisations, only 0.3% of total grant funds disbursed were unaccounted for and not reimbursed.

Overall, the Value for Money strategy did produce Value for Money, but it came at a cost.

First, the requirements for efficiency and Value for Money generally took much of the time and focus of Grant Partners in implementation. In other words, rigorous requirements for efficiency and Value for Money tended to dilute the political effectiveness of Grant Partners. In general, Programme Management Team members said that STAR Ghana's approach to grantmaking seemed to lean more toward reducing risk than generating successful outcomes. One observer noted that: "There was understandably a very significant bias towards overdesigning and over implementing the risk management system rather than coming up with something that would be more appropriate or feasible and therefore less expensive."

Second, the shift in 2019 to indicators of cost per beneficiary actually reduced the Value for Money of the project without producing a corresponding benefit. The numbers of beneficiaries that staff produced may be of benefit somewhere, but they were not beneficial to either project staff or partners for making management decisions. Advocacy and policy change are notoriously complex, in the true

sense of the word: inputs and activities cannot predict or often even be directly linked to outcomes, given the number of players and random factors at play throughout a complex adaptive system. Determining the number of beneficiaries of wheelchair ramps at schools is one thing, coming up with a meaningful number for the passage of Land Bill is quite another. Given the large portion of outcomes that dealt with policy change or widespread changes in practice, any numbers should be taken as extremely rough, and not meaningful for a calculation. However, it took time and money to gather these figures, that could have been used better in making grants and assisting partners.

G. Impact

Evaluation Question: **To what extent has the programme achieved or contributed to achieving impact (longer term changes) for Ghanaian citizens?**

While this evaluation was not an impact evaluation, there are some indicators from the interviews, outcomes, and the logical framework that show some emerging trends.

The logical framework cites three indicators for overall impact that rely on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG).[9] Figures for the three indicators show slight upward trends in the period available for analysis, 2014-2017. (Figures for later years are not available.) The first, "Level of human development in Ghana," measures "welfare, education, and health." All three show improvement over this period. The second, "Level of safety and rule of law in Ghana," showed a slight upward trend. Considering that the Safety and Rule of Law index had actually been dropping in 2014 and 2015, this trend is particularly welcome. The largest contributor to that dip was in the subcategory of Transparency and Accountability, so the intervention of STAR Ghana in this period was particularly relevant. The third indicator, "Level of citizen participation and human rights," again showed a slight upward trend. However, the numbers mask a downward trend of Rights for 2015, that reversed the following year, though it has yet to return to the levels of 2008-2014 when it held fairly steady.

While looking at national trends in this way is instructive, it is a blunt instrument for assessing the impact of an individual programme, even one as large and wide-ranging as this.

There are other emerging trends cited in interviews both within and from outside of STAR Ghana, and from project documents.

- **The work of STAR Ghana programme has made changes in policy, legal, and institutional reforms at the local and national levels.** The work with Parliament has enabled the reflection of the positions and concerns of Civil Society Organisations in the passage of various laws such as the Land Act and the Right to Information Act, and in moving along consensus on some constitutional amendments between the two largest political parties represented in Parliament. One person interviewed observed that "Parliament has become more open to CSOs in [the] past four years than in the past. The culture of Parliament does not change quickly – STAR Ghana worked with them to the point where the Speaker of Parliament seeks out CSO input into policies and laws, and focuses on GESI issues. To the extent that the Speaker holds the Speakers' Breakfast on the Affirmative Action bill. In the past it had been a contentious relationship where Parliament saw civil society as attacking it." Various other institutions and duty bearers at the local and national levels are reacting to the work of STAR Ghana, as documented in the outcomes described above.

- **STAR Ghana is creating opportunities in the public policy space through its funding mechanisms and the 3Cs &L approaches.** Through funding and the 3Cs & L approach, various Civil Society Organisations including LOGNET, CEDEP, IDEG and other groups in several parts of the country are stimulating interest among citizens in what Parliament, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) as well as the metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies (MMDAs) should be doing.

9   Graphs and data for this section are drawn from Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag

- **Citizens are becoming active as manifested in the use of various mechanisms for accountability of duty bearers.** From providing disability access in school and health buildings to promoting women's right of ownership and access to shea trees, citizens are learning how to approach decision makers, and are gaining the confidence to do so. Duty bearers are becoming responsive, as shown in many of the outcomes documented here. At the same time, this work has established Civil Society Organisations and other social groups as legitimate actors and participants in the decision-making process at the local and central government levels. Of course not all of these efforts are successful. The Evaluation of the GESI Call, for example, found that "eight out of the 13 strategic projects that tried to influence policy at the national level towards increased accountability and social inclusion could not get the desired results beyond mere promises and verbal commitments from the policy maker." This trend is normal in advocacy efforts and indicates that further support is necessary for these long-term changes to happen.

- **More and more citizens groups are applying approaches of the STAR Ghana programme, especially the cluster idea.** New sets of relationships have been forged and are evolving, thereby facilitating recognition, voice, and inclusion, in particular the relationship between Parliament and citizens' groups, large and small Civil Society Organisations, and citizens. An example is the establishment of the Mineral Development Fund (MDF) Monitoring Groups in 2018 in three districts, which comprise representation from affected communities, women, people with disabilities, local authorities, and mining companies.

- **The media work is helping to shift discourse on all pillars of the STAR Ghana programme by generating public interest and responses from duty bearers.** The TV3 Mission programme has continued to expose the challenges of access and quality of health and education in hard-to-reach areas and these exposures have continued to receive responses from duty bearers, central government, local authorities, and local philanthropists.

- **Probably the most influential impact has been on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.** As one Grant Partner noted, "They have made GESI a big thing in Ghana. Because leaving it to the politicians, they would not even talk about it. So, they have been able to put some issues on the national front burner. They have force. There are some issues we wouldn't have paid attention to. So, by their convenings around those issues like the people with disability, mental health, etc.," people are paying more attention. The influence is felt not only in the outcomes about legislation or inclusion in local decision-making processes, but in the way that civil society now works. One Grant Partner observed that "because of that all our staff became aware of GESI, and so it became a catch word in my organisation where if you're having a meeting, someone can say you must be GESI compliant."

H. Sustainability

*Evaluation Question: **To what extent are the outcomes that the programme contributed toward sustainable?***

Many of the outcomes of the programme are likely to be sustained, since they involve continuing practices, such as involving people with disabilities in local government funding discussions, or the proper functioning of the Scrutiny Committee in Parliament. Those outcomes that described one-off events – a meeting between presidential candidates, girls returning to school after pregnancy, passage of by-laws, for example – will only be maintained if there is continued attention to the issue and pressure to keep them going. In the case of meetings between the President and President-elect, for example, that was actually the result in part of a long term, sustained series of engagements with citizens, political parties, and other influential people organised by the Forum for Actions on Inclusion, Transparency, and Harmony (FAITH) dating from 2016. The National Catholic Secretariat moderates the FAITH forum, which includes many faith-based associations, including the National Muslim Council, Christian Council of Ghana, and Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council. As long as the FAITH

forum continues its activities, outcomes like that are likely to be sustained.

The drop in funding available to civil society with the end of the programme suggests that many Grant Partners will not be able to continue their activities on the same level as the past five years. One noted that "we can lose this membership [in district committees] and the ideas we bring to the committees if our organisation collapses due to lack of funding. I am sure this is applicable to many other CSOs, especially the smaller ones."

The increased management capacity of Grant Partners is likely to be sustained, especially in the areas of financial management and governance, which were the focus of STAR Ghana assistance during the quarterly visits. Other organisational developments included increased networking and collaboration. Many Grant Partners were already working in alliance with others, but the convening and cluster work of the programme likely increased comfort with collaborative work. And the number of successes that resulted from collaborative work may well have shown in practical terms the benefits of teaming up with other organisations. A fifth of outcomes were achieved by coalitions of Civil Society Organisations. Some of these alliances have solidified into clusters, which are likely to continue to work together into the future. The clusters that had solidified by the end of the programme were: Decentralisation and citizens' participation; Transparency, accountability, and equitability in public services and pro-poor programmes; Democratic and peaceful elections; and Economic rights and empowerment.

Many outcomes also increased the comfort and skills of organisation in approaching and working with duty bearers, from local to national levels. For citizens who had not had much experience in approaching decision makers before, they are more likely to do so in the future, since the process is demystified, and they have experienced success. These outcomes also created relationships, which ease future interaction. Duty bearers will turn over, however, so relationships would need to be constantly renewed.

There is also a whole set of practices and legacy documents that have become part of the way many organisations now work that will outlive the programme. The GESI strategy and tool kit, learning synthesis, and methods of Political Economy Analysis are now firmly established with the staff of STAR Ghana, the Governing Council, and many Grant Partners. The openness of Parliament compared to five years ago, the access that Civil Society Organisations have to duty bearers at many levels, and the receptiveness of many duty bearers to citizen action all show improvement over this period, and much is likely to be sustained for some time.

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*Evaluation Question: **To what extent was setting up an independent entity the best option to sustain STAR Ghana's mission and impact?***

The Steering Committee considered five options for the STAR Ghana Foundation proposed during the stakeholder consultations: an umbrella membership organisation of Civil Society Organisations; a federation of Civil Society Organisations; a National Commission of Civil Society Organisations that provides regulatory, capacity building, and quality assurance services; a public foundation, trust, or endowment fund that performs the functions currently being undertaken by STAR Ghana; or a normal NGO performing the specialised functions of 3Cs &L plus grantmaking.

Of these options, the Steering Committee settled on "a Public Trust that can be characterised broadly as a national centre for active citizenship, civil society, and philanthropy."[10] This format most closely satisfied the criteria set by the Steering Committee. The criteria set a high bar for a new organisation, but the STAR Ghana programme was already meeting them, so it was reasonable to conclude that the Foundation could as well. A foundation was the only format that acted as both a broker for civil society activity and strengthening and provided funding, while minimizing competition with the rest of civil society for funds.

Having decided the form, experience from similar efforts elsewhere suggest there were several approaches to create it: adapting a local organisation to take over the role, or multiple organisations to

10   *STAR Ghana: Nature and Governance System of Proposed New Entity, A Discussion Paper for Steering Committee.* Updated, 15 December 2017.

take on partial roles, or creating a new organisation. Given the strong brand and existing relationships, the Steering Committee opted to create something new.

In the final year of the programme, implementation shifted from Christian Aid to the STAR Ghana Foundation, which had registered in late 2018. Christian Aid made a grant of £750,000 to the Foundation, which managed the last two grant calls (Elections 2020 and COVID-19). Christian Aid shifted from programme implementer to programme facilitator, though its accountability to DFID did not change, which represented a risk on the part of Christian Aid. Foundation staff managed this grant with support from Christian Aid staff seconded to the Foundation. Decisions such as grant selection and procurement of a new grants management system were approved through the Governing Council. The Foundation handled its own human resources and accounting work, and moved into its own premises. Programme staff who would not be supported by Foundation budgets after September 2020 were pared down by mid-year. This arrangement worked to implement the programme, but did not truly test the viability of the Foundation, since so much support was handled by seconded staff from Christian Aid. In this sense, seconded staff masked the actual capacity of the Foundation. In addition, implementation of the programme ran right up to the last day of DFID funding, so some of the tasks of creating a new organisation were complicated by the need to also run a large and complex programme.

The main difficulty this dual character presented was difficulty in testing its fundraising capacity in 2019 and 2020. When DFID encountered difficulties with funding due to the COVID-19 crisis, future prospects for a smooth funding transition became cloudy. In this sense, using the STAR Ghana programme as a means to set up an independent entity worked against a smooth start up for the Foundation.

Evaluation Question: **To what extent is the STAR Ghana Foundation and its forward-looking strategy sustainable?**

To a large extent, this is a speculative question. To answer it, we call on both a brief institutional analysis, and lessons learned from the creation of other similar institutions in Africa. We consider areas of strength that bode well for sustainability, and areas of risk that must be well managed.

Institutional analysis of STAR Ghana Foundation

We used the format developed by Management Systems International for assessing institutional capacity.[11]

Oversight/Vision

STAR Ghana Foundation's strongest asset is its governance and vision. The Governing Council was born out of the Steering Committee, and has deliberated and guided the institution for several years to get it to this point. The Governing Council is made up of respected civil society leaders, representative of several sectors, and has been built up slowly over time. The mission and vision of the organisation derives from that of the programme, developed and tested over a ten-year period. The Foundation is entering a new period of autonomy. It has not functioned independently, but has been supported (largely) by a single funder.[12] Its ability to navigate this new autonomy will be important in carving out a new identity and diversifying funding.

Management Resources

The Foundation has the advantage of being able to adapt several management systems in long use in the programme. It has also benefited from the services of the Project Management Team in setting up

11   MSI. (2015). *Adapted from Management Systems International "Institutional Development Framework"*
12   While the programme has been supported by several funders, including DANIDA and the European Union, the main donor relationship has been managed by DFID.

systems throughout 2019, including finance, human resources, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Staff are used to doing participatory planning with its constituency on key issues, since the programme regularly consulted with Civil Society Organisations before and after its grant calls.

Christian Aid staff performed a Capacity Risk Assessment for the Foundation in 2019 and turned up only one area of real concern: lack of funding. At the time, the assessment noted that the Foundation could expect a £2m grant of core funds from DFID for its first two years of operations. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, DFID staff were unable to guarantee this support, both in amount of money, the likelihood of core funding, and the period over which it can spend it. The situation was only resolved in the last month of the programme's life.

Human Resources

The experience of the programme has developed seasoned staff with many relationships and skills in programming, MEL, advocacy, and administrative compliance. Unfortunately, the Foundation has lost nearly all of these staff in the transition. The number of staff is plunging from 27 professionals to five, as illustrated in the two organograms in Annex 7. It is not a good sign for the Foundation's ability to create great programmes that of the five staff envisioned for the STAR Ghana Foundation three are compliance related (two in finance and administration and one grant manager), with no programme person yet hired. The GESI programme manager has been lost, which has been one of the programme's strongest contributors to the sector. As the Foundation raises money it will be able to grow its staff complement, though the momentum lost will be unfortunate.

Financial Resources

As noted above, financial management systems are a strong point for the programme. The Governing Council has an active Finance and Audit Committee, though it has had little real finance to work with so far. The Foundation has a comprehensive Finance Manual including all policies and procedures in accordance with global good practice. What it is missing is money.
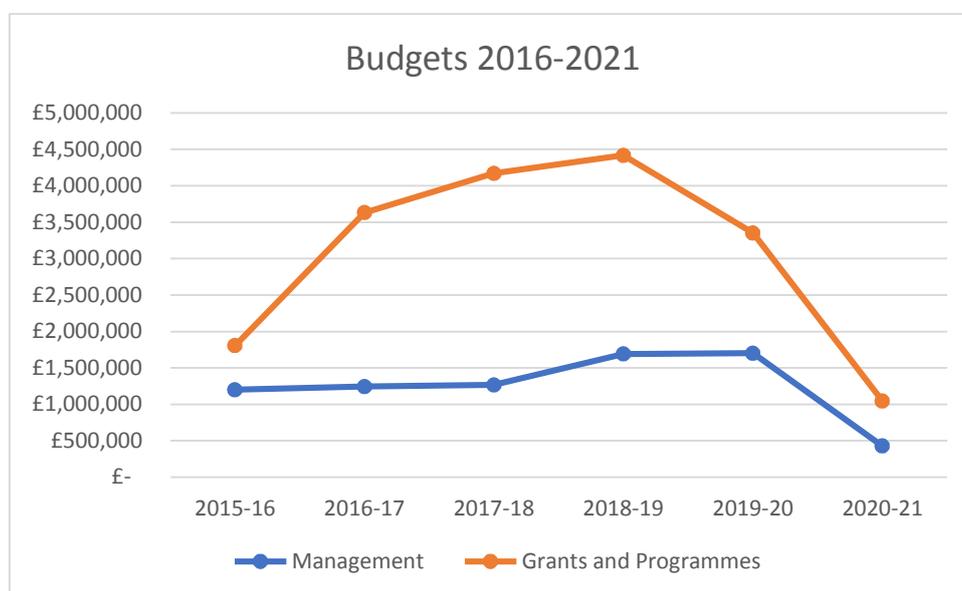

Figure 10: Budgets 2016-2021

Christian Aid has made an initial grant to the organisation of £50,000, and only in the final days before the end of the programme did commitments from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) – formerly DFID, European Union and the Dutch government become clear. With this funding, the reduction in annual income is from an average of £4,9m over the past five years to something closer to £1,5m in 2020-21. Managing this reduction will require some creative management on the part of the Foundation. Foundation staff are well aware of this risk and are devoting considerable staff time – especially the Executive Director – to bringing in more funding.

The Foundation has no shortage of funding planning documents: a well-argued (if long) case statement, proposals, a sustainability strategy, fundraising strategy, list of funding prospects, an ethical fundraising strategy, a branding and positioning strategy, donor scoping reports, a risk analysis, a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats analysis, critical success factors, and a strategic assets and resources audit.

The evaluation team did not see a programme strategy or work plan, though staff say they have them, so it was difficult to assess exactly what the Foundation planned to do. Since it is a truism of fundraising that good programmes raise money, this seems to be an important gap. Current documents seem to basically cut and paste the programming approaches of the programme to the new Foundation. With reduced funding, the Foundation's ability to continue to convene organisations, provide them with advice and assistance, and coordinate activity, while still providing grants will be curtailed. A good deal of the programme's convening power stemmed from its attractiveness as a funder, and the fact that it had sufficient resources to fund multiple organisations working on similar issues, as well as supporting clusters to back up these joint efforts. One observer wondered: "For the Grant Partners, with the clout of STAR Ghana, they will come. But I think most CSOs participate in STAR activities so as to catch the eye of STAR Ghana, to be in good books so they can get funds should there be the opportunity. So, if there are no grants, most likely participation in their activities may be reduced." In the absence of a major grants programme, the Foundation will have to use its skill in finding common ground among a diverse set of Civil Society Organisations to keep its convenings relevant.

External Resources

The programme has always devoted considerable time and resources to building its constituency and finding its niche. One observer noted that "their practice is about consultation, inclusiveness. So, they took their time and went through the process because you want it to be sustainable." Throughout the life of the STAR Ghana 2 programme, staff conducted numerous consultations in all the 10 regions with leaders from many sectors.[13] They consulted widely for every new call put out as well. Consultations were extensive, and the programme was responsive, building the results of consultations into its programmes, rather than continuing on with its original plans regardless of feedback. As a result, the initial fears that the Foundation would compete with Civil Society Organisations for funding were allayed, and the programme developed a niche that adds value to civil society.

Ironically, the unexpected drop in revenue means that there is a renewed risk that the Foundation will compete for funding, especially with the national-level organisations. Rather than operating with secure core funding that would allow the Foundation to continue to be an honest broker operating across sectors, the Foundation may be obligated to seek out sector-specific funding, and to develop a number of smaller, disjointed programmes that lack the coherence of a single, large programme.

Experience from elsewhere in Africa

The last two decades have seen a growth in African grantmaking institutions, most with outside funding support. STAR Ghana Foundation is of course more than a grantmaker, but its funding role gives it a certain character that makes the experiences of African foundations relevant. The evaluation team gathered some of the main lessons learned from those experiences to inform this assessment.

A number of lessons emerge.

- **External funders have played an integral role in the development of these foundations.** The majority have been set up by international private foundations, though public funders and international Civil Society Organisations have also been involved.[14] In most cases funders

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13   Much of this activity took place January to July 2017, when STAR Ghana consulted about the form of the Independent National Entity with 700 leaders and activists face to face, and canvassed an additional 1,500 indirectly.

14   Private foundations active in this area include The Ford Foundation, The CS Mott Foundation, The WK Kellogg Foundation and the John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation, and The Open Society Foundations. NGOs include Novib, Hivos, Prospera-International Network of Women's Funds, Global Fund for Community Foundations, and the Global Greengrants Fund. Public funders include World Bank, IDRC, Canada, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA Sweden, USAID, and the United Nations Development Programme.

have provided funding over several years of independent operation. The existence of long-term core funding will be important for a smooth transition from programme to Foundation.

- New institutions **focus on strong outreach to local stakeholders** to develop systems of accountability and transparency that are culturally and contextually appropriate, in addition to holding up to international standards. This area has been a strength of the Foundation, which has created a strong base for the future. For international donors, experience shows that local ownership is improved when they cede some of the say over important elements of the foundation's identity to enable it to be driven by local processes.

  The programme strategy of making a large number of grants across the country over the past five years has generated wide support for the programme and built its constituency and convening power. While a large number of grants was hard to manage, it created a base of support among Civil Society Organisations. The Foundation will have to adapt its approaches to its smaller staffing and financial reach.

  One adaption to the new era is that the Foundation may need to adapt many accountability and transparency practices in use. Many may be more aimed at meeting the values and standards of a foundation's external funders than its own constituency. As the African Philanthropy Network notes, "Civil society should be working on ways of accountability that our constituencies can make sense of. Annual reports and audited statements hardly allow us to be accountable to them."[15]

- Few African grantmaking organisations are endowed, so most need to develop **strategic fundraising and programming efforts** that are ambitious but also protect them from downturns. Having sufficient income to cover operating expenses while playing a significant role in convening and developing local networks is a critical element in their development. The Foundation is well positioned to succeed in this area, but will need to tailor its programmes to the resources available.

Figure 11 reflects the thinking of The Ford Foundation when it began its support to community foundations two decades ago. STAR Ghana Foundation has excelled in two of these areas – self-governance and strategic grantmaking – but seems to be underfunding the third, mobilizing resources. It has relied on outside consultants to do fundraising and left the majority of the work to the Executive Director. The Foundation organogram shows no role for fundraising staff. It will need to build fundraising capacity of its staff soon if the whole operation is to continue.

One narrative to avoid is that STAR Ghana Foundation is a "re-granter," that is, a Ghanaian organisation that takes external money and passes it on. The more successful foundations have made the strong case that their role goes well beyond re-packaging a donor's funding for local organisations. Instead, they build capacity, strengthen networks, and make a sustained impact. The Foundation has a strong case to make here as its Unique Selling Point, since grantmaking is only part of the work it does. It is better described as a civil society support organisation or facilitator, for which grants are one tool among many. Its local knowledge is also invaluable to many foreign donors.

Successful institutions use their existing donors as stepping stones to new ones. Developing a kind of solidarity network of donors is not only important to learn strategies that have worked elsewhere, but also to build a profile among funders.

- **Improving conditions for local philanthropy is a continuing challenge.** STAR Ghana documents emphasize the need to build the environment for giving in the country. Foundation staff are already engaged with like-minded organisations like the African

Figure 11: Ford Objectives for Foundation Building (Ford 2001)

Mobilize Resources

Develop Self-Governance

Healthy Grantmaking Institutions

Practice Strategic Grantmaking

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15   Africa Philanthropy Network (APN), (2018), Assembly Report.

Philanthropy network and the Global Fund for Community Foundations. In Ghana, a report in 2015, identifies mixed positives and negatives in the legal environment, noting that while grantmaking foundations have little trouble registering and can engage in a broad range of activities, they are restricted from revenue-raising, commercial activities, and cannot bid on government contracts. As the report puts it, "The legal environment is still characterised by definitional confusion and contradictions as to what constitutes philanthropy."[16] Experience elsewhere on the continent has shown that it is important to build an enabling environment for giving and to build the legitimacy of African institutions. While there are few places where local philanthropy has overtaken the need for external funding, it is still important to promote local ownership and legitimacy, and to break the North-South divide on funding for social action.

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16   Kagoro, Brian (2015), Constructing a Developmental and Transformational Philanthropy in Africa: Towards a new regulatory common sense. African Grantmakers Network.

4 CONCLUSIONS

A. Evaluation of the STAR Ghana 2's achievements

The evaluation found a wide range of achievements and challenges.

Achievements

1. The programme contributed to a wide range of social, economic, and political outcomes that we have grouped into five themes. Within each theme there are subsets of outcomes. These outcomes are evenly split between national and local level. While the national level outcomes have obvious implications for systems change, many of the local level outcomes do as well. The full list of outcomes is available in Annex 9.

   a. **Access and quality of public services**

   - Changes to National Legislation, Regulations, or Guidelines
   - Ease of access to government funding programmes like LEAP and NHIA
   - Increased dialogue with people with disabilities – budgets, policy
   - Local Health, Education, and Agriculture facilities completed or improved
   - Barriers to public services lowered: teen mothers, children with disabilities, voters with disabilities

   b. **Economic rights and empowerment**

   - Changes to National Legislation, Regulations, or Guidelines
   - Women's access to productive assets

   c. **Gender equality and social inclusion**

   - Increased dialogue with people with disabilities and northerners – budgets, policy
   - Increased access of people with disabilities to services

- Barriers to public services lowered: teen mothers, children with disabilities, voters with disabilities
- Changes to National Legislation, Regulations or Guidelines
- Women's' access to productive assets
- Improved representation in legislative bodies
- Cultural change in traditional authority systems
- Enforcement of rights
- Protection of girls from child marriage and expulsion from school for pregnancy
- Change in media description of disability

d. **Improved accountability and transparency**
- Ease of communication
- Increased participation and monitoring of citizens in government function
- Changes to National Legislation, Regulations, or Guidelines
- Anti-corruption
- Supply side opening of duty bearers to citizen action

e. **Free and peaceful elections**
- Political parties more inclusive
- Peacebuilding
- Free and fair elections

2. The capacity of Parliament to engage with citizens and function smoothly is improved

3. Relationships with Parliament as an institution and with individual Members of Parliament are better developed, and openness to citizen engagement is improved. The programme has opened up other duty bearers to public input as well, especially District Assemblies, staff of several ministries, and some traditional authorities.

4. The programme built the capacity of dozens of Civil Society Organisations, especially in the areas of GESI, financial management, organisational governance, and Political Economy Analysis.

5. The ability of Civil Society Organisations to collaborate, as well as their desire to do so, has been greatly enhanced, as they have seen the results of collaboration.

6. The STAR Ghana Foundation has been created, and management and governance systems have been set up.

Challenges

1. After a decade of development and growth, the future sustainability of the STAR Ghana way of working is uncertain. A host of sets of relationships and outcomes that need follow-up and maintenance may not survive the next couple of years. Much depends on the success of the Foundation to raise funds flexible enough to allow it to support a wide range of civil society interventions across the country.

2. The overemphasis on grant compliance came at the expense of the flexibility often needed in shifting policy and cultural change efforts. The reasons for it – to satisfy donor requirements, maintain credibility, and demonstrate competence for current and future funders – are clear, but it came at a cost.

3. One-off grants and convenings were sometimes successful, but often limited the ability of the programme or its partners to follow up and build on successes.

B. Evaluation of the STAR Ghana 2's strategies

STAR Ghana applied a complex set of strategies to the complex world of governance and accountability. In general, all contributed to the outcomes produced, though in different ways.

Grants – Providing funding for Civil Society Organisations and Parliament was STAR Ghana's most powerful contribution. In an environment when funding is dropping and hard to come by, especially for public policy work, STAR Ghana provided a lifeline for dozens of Civil Society Organisations. Use of Political Economy Analysis and convenings for each funding call resulted in focus on strategic approaches to key issues. The fact that the calls and grants were done once and then the programme moved on to something else somewhat limited their sustainability, since many key issues require sustained support over long periods of time.

Convening, Catalysing, Coordinating, and Learning – This collection of strategies was key to making the grants programme effective, and in fact made STAR Ghana far more than a grants programme. The convening was relevant in bringing a variety of Civil Society Organisations and other actors together to harvest ideas, share experiences, and learn from each other. The catalysing approach provided both money and advice tailored for each partner. The evaluation found that STAR Ghana applied this approach well to open doors for Civil Society Organisations and other actors to engage and influence change, including in Parliament. Using its excellent relationships there, STAR Ghana promoted Civil Society Organisation access to Parliament, especially for smaller ones who did not have the clout to bring Parliamentarians together. At the same time, it promoted the ability of members of Parliament to consult productively with constituents. STAR Ghana also worked with a number of Civil Society Organisations and the media over the last ten years to create space within the media to focus on development communication and reporting, and monitoring service delivery, helping to draw the attention of policymakers to the challenges on the ground. Coordination facilitated joint action and complementarity of effort and resources, including the coalition or cluster approach. STAR Ghana put the various Grant Partners together into clusters such as the Land Rights Cluster, the Local Governance and Participation Cluster, and the GESI cluster, which then tended to self-coordinate their activities.

Learning – The evaluation found that the deployment of the 3Cs stimulated learning. The approach has contributed to enhancing skill sharing among Grant Partners as different people bring different ideas to the table; promoting an efficient use of resources with the realisation that different organisations can pull resources together to achieve a common objective; and provided grounds for expanding networking relations. Learning was purposeful, built in the programme, planned, and well documented.

Political Economy Analysis (PEA) – Understanding the broader context of the work helped STAR Ghana not only target its efforts to high priority areas, it increased understanding of the forces at play in numerous areas of work. Initially, staff and partners treated PEA as something to be done once, but over time they came to see it as something they needed to do on an ongoing basis, and a skill that had to passed on to partners. In the last two years of the programme, PEA became more embedded in the work of some of the higher-capacity partners.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion – All observers agreed that integrating inclusion practices and outcomes into all work – within the organisation, among partners, and in project work itself – was one of the most important contributions STAR Ghana made to the country during this period.

Value for Money – The Governing Council, programme staff, and partners all advanced their thinking about how to achieve Value for Money in a programme where success is sometimes hard to measure and is often slow to come. The strategy of balancing Equity and Effectiveness on the one hand, and Efficiency and Economy on the other, was sound and well implemented.

Figure 12 summarizes the STAR Ghana approach. While the outcomes arose out of many factors, this illustration takes the most impactful elements as examples of how these outcomes came about. Most often, STAR Ghana supported Civil Society Organisations and their coalitions to meet with duty bearers and use media to generate changes in executive and local government, half at national level and half at local level. Most often they changed practices and policies in the areas of Gender equality and social inclusion and in Access and quality of public services.

Most impactful Stakeholders, Contributions, and Outcomes

who, did what, to change what, where, which changed:

Media engagement

CSOs and Coalitions of CSOs

Meetings w/ Duty Bearers

Executive Government

Local Government

National Level

Local Level

Practices

Policies

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Access and quality of public services
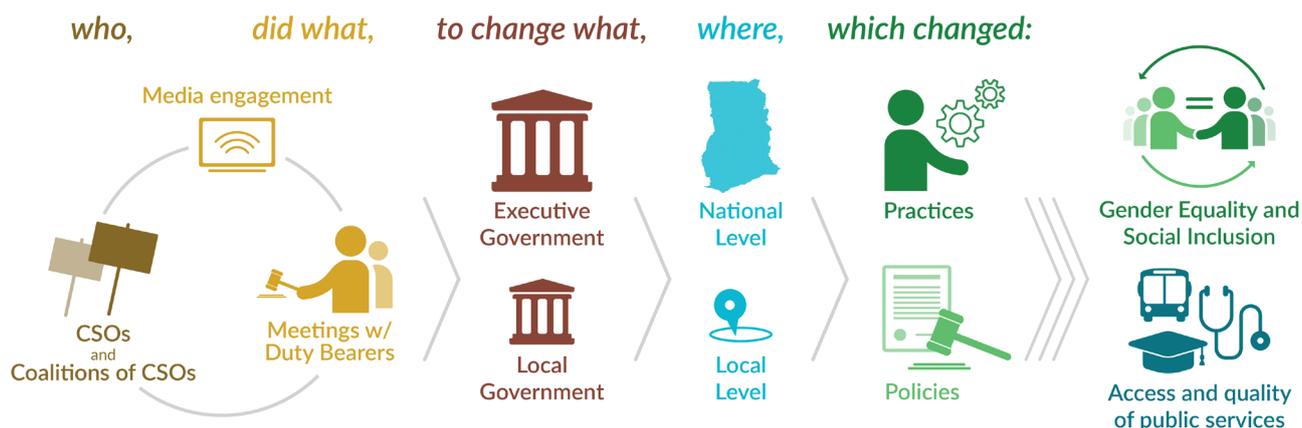
Figure 12: Progression of change showing the two most impactful categories from each step of the process

C. Evaluation of the sustainability of the Foundation and its forward-looking strategy

Prospects are bright for the STAR Ghana Foundation. All organisational systems are in place, including strategy, fundraising plan, a strong Governing Council, and an excellent reputation. None of these systems have been tested in an independent organisation however, so adaptation will be necessary over the first few years.

Experience from elsewhere in Africa suggests that several steps correlate highly with successful grantmaking organisations:

- Continued support from the founding donors for a few years
- Continued strong outreach to all stakeholders, domestic and overseas
- Improved local giving, including from the diaspora
- A strong case for support from potential funders.

The discussion above highlighted that most of these are in place except for continued funding. Dependent on a single donor, the COVID-19 situation is an added hurdle for the Foundation as it faces a major transition on October 1, 2020. Future prospects depend on the Foundation's ability to draw in other donors in the first year to continue its highly respected work.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

1. Expand the scope of engagement to non-traditional and informal Civil Society Organisations to expand the boundaries of inclusion and support citizen-led initiatives. Adapt partner engagement, grantmaking practices, and technical assistance to better support a movement building approach: adaptive management, built-in flexibility in grant agreements, technical support more oriented to strategy, tactics, and relationships than to compliance. Continue to use STAR Ghana Foundation contacts, influence, and systems knowledge to broker relationships among Grant Partners and duty bearers. Integrate Political Economy Analysis into engagement and grantmaking practice to inform decisions on an ongoing basis, and build in movement-friendly practices such as core support, repeat grants, and funding for networks that include non-formal Civil Society Organisations and non-traditional partners.

2. Adapt the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning system to track complex social change events: methods such as outcome journals and Most Significant Change can work, especially if they are done on an ongoing basis, and not generated externally after long periods of time have passed. The system needs to balance learning with demands on time for staff and Grant Partners.

3. Revisit the 3Cs & L system to retain its key values while operating on reduced budgets. Adaptations might include doing fewer Grant Partner visits after original trust is established, and use of external auditors and organisational development specialists built into grant budgets. Staff have sufficient experience to work out how to retain the core functions with reduced resources.

4. STAR Ghana makes grants to numerous Civil Society Organisations small and large, local and national, across the country. Going forward STAR Ghana should develop a strategy and criteria for identifying and growing citizens organisations which are playing a catalytic role for citizens in specific selected issues and places.

5. Publicize the legacy documents that document the programme's achievements on social inclusion, Political Economy Analysis, learning and related documents both in Ghana and abroad. Develop accessible presentations of them and seek out as many opportunities to share the work as possible.

6. Hire full time programme and/or fundraising staff as soon as possible. If sufficient resources are not available right away, staff can double up on tasks, since good programmes typically raise money. Use STAR Ghana Foundation's reputation as an experienced and respected coordinator of Civil Society Organisations in Ghana as a key asset for donors in channelling their funding effectively.

7. Founding donors should continue to use relationships with other donors to pave the way for Foundation staff to approach new donors for at least the next two years.

6 ANNEXES

1. Case Studies
2. Citizen Impact Stories
3. Briefings
4. Description of the Methodology
5. List of Interviews
6. Template for Outcome Substantiation
7. Organograms
8. Institutional Profile Template
9. List of Outcome Statements
10. Interview Guides