STAR-Ghana
Theory of Change(ToC)

Executive Summary

This document describes the Theory of Change of Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana (STAR-Ghana). It shows how by working with both supply (government) and demand side (citizens) in a 3Cs (Convener, Catalyst and Coordinator) approach may lead to an active citizenship that influence and contributes to transformational change.

The STAR-Ghana programme was designed by the Department for International Development (DFID) to improve civil society influencing and effectiveness (governance) for more informed and active civil society to contribute to improved equitable service delivery outcomes in Ghana.

The programme was designed with an understanding that demand side governance (citizen advocacy and action) may contribute to the larger outcomes of the Government of Ghana which still suffer the effects of poverty, due to poor service delivery resulting from systemic failures in the working of government in Ghana.

Governance is undermined by both technical and political weaknesses in a framework in which governments do not set adequate policy and strategy direction, do not manage public finances well, and do not ensure the civil service is structured for delivery. Weaknesses encompass low capacity, poor skills, and more importantly low willingness to reform, but there are islands of improvement which demonstrate change is possible.

If STAR-Ghana convenes catalyses and coordinates spaces and alliances with relevant stakeholders on salient issues ripe for change, this will bring about a well-informed active citizenry which influences governance processes and structures that will effectively contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality and inclusion for all citizens.

It is not a simple linear process, and is beset with risks and assumptions, but the Theory of Change is borne out by STAR1, regional and global experience. Results are being delivered on the ground in some cases, and in some areas these are demonstrating sustainability as they have become a matter of routine government business.

Contents

Acronyms

3Cs – Convener, Coordinator and Catalyst

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

DA –   District Assembly

DFID - Department for International Development

GESI - Gender Equity and Social Inclusion

GoG - Government of Ghana

PMT – Programme Management Team

SC –   Steering Committee

STAR-Ghana – Strengthening Transparency Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana

1   INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN

The original design of STAR2 is based on the DFID Business Case. STAR-Ghana is a key civil society programme for DFID. It is expected to further support an active engaged civil society that supports results for a more inclusive Ghanaian society. There is a dual focus for STAR-Ghana: i) catalysing the efforts of citizens towards systemic and strategic impact and change ii) work towards the creation of a Ghanaian-run, body corporate entity to sustain support beyond STAR-Ghana programme.

The fundamental argument behind active and assertive citizens and civil society is that, despite the neo-patrimonial feature of Ghanaian democracy, people do matter – but their relevance and power depends on their ability to act collectively. This is the focus of STAR-Ghana, as Ghana evolves (and at times declines) in terms of governance indicators, quality of service delivery and inclusion, STAR-Ghana remains an important organisation and feature in the democratic space for change relevant to citizens and their inclusion in national discourse and growth.

The original design of STAR-Ghana comprises three core components:

1. Convening existing key parts of Ghana's civil society;
2. Coordinate and lead in carefully analysed and selected areas where existing civil society are not able to engage;
3. "Connect the dots" between grassroot interventions with policy level organisations, Parliament, using traditional media as well as new media to engage the public.

2   INCLUSIVE OUTCOMES AND GENDER EQUITY

Cross cutting these components, there is a stream of work integrating Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) to ensure that results are felt by those who have often been left out and more excluded (e.g. youth, women, disabled and vulnerable groups). Any cross cutting work of GESI is expected to be interdependent and mutually supportive for results on inclusivity. STAR-Ghana makes the commitment to work with its partners and key stakeholders in such a way that no one is left behind, and where all women and men, girls and boys have equal opportunity to realise their rights, achieve their potential and live in dignity, free from extreme poverty, stigma, discrimination and violence. For STAR-Ghana, this can only come about by a vibrant and effective civil society, working in alignment with the Government of Ghana (GoG) where all people are valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the democratic space - economic, social and political life. For STAR-Ghana, GoG policies must be inclusive as they affect all citizens' in particular those of the minority and vulnerable groups[1].

It is on this foundation that the intervention logic of the present day STAR2 has been built. The basic premise remains the same with an expected outcome of 'citizens' ability to influence' and an impact to 'contribute to transformational change' inclusive for all citizens.

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[1] See STAR-Ghana GESI strategy which goes into further detail on social integration, inclusion and cohesion for an inclusive society.

3 FIVE INTERLOCKING AND INTERDEPENDENT OUTPUTS – LONG TERM CHANGE STAR AIMS TO ACHIEVE

Over the course of inception STAR approaches and plans have been shaped and integrated into five interlocking **Outputs.** The core components (1 – 5 Outputs) of STAR-Ghana are:

1. STAR-Ghana providing effective convener, coordinator and catalyst (CCC) and Learning role.
2. Effective strategic partnerships in place with policy level organisations and parliament.
3. STAR-Ghana funding mechanisms effectively managed, helping partners to link citizens and local issues to policy/decision makers and their representatives.
4. Ghanaian owned, strategic and sustainable mechanism established.
5. Communities of Practice established, functioning effectively and learning for change.

Placing STAR-Ghana partners in civil society, communities, District Assembly, Parliament and the media at the forefront of the voice and accountability initiatives under each Output, STAR-Ghana will support them through convening, facilitation, coordination, catalysing and where necessary capacity strengthening, of an 'empowerment' process between actors, which aims at a deeper systemic change. This encourages the formation of partnerships within and between categories of 'demand-side' (civil society) and 'supply-side' (duty bearers, service providers) actors to be better able to perform their respective roles and responsibilities effectively and to achieve objectives.

The ultimate **Outcome** STAR aim to achieve is: *increased effectiveness of citizen influencing change that advances democracy, accountability and social inclusion through Civil Society Organisations.*

And this leads to the **Impact** of a *well-informed and active civil society, able to contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality and inclusion for all citizens.*

4 STAR-GHANA CORE APPROACH: 3CS – CONVENER, CATALYST AND COORDINATOR

The contextual problem analysis (political economy) and DFID strategic appraisal identified limited civil society capability in convening and supporting collective citizen voice and action. That there is an inactive population with limited know how and will in approaching duty bearers or service providers on service delivery issues. Any follow through from the public and local civil society organisations (CSOs) in building collaboration around salient issues with duty bearers needs to be deeply strengthened if longer term results are to be achieved.

Diagram 1 below illustrates the overall model and approach to support civil society and the need for a more effective and influential citizenry on key issues (local to national). This is the core function and approach for STAR-Ghana towards its Outcome. This approach is a new strategic focus for STAR-Ghana which has the programme play the role not as a grant machine (previous STAR1 approach) but moving into 3Cs of citizen – government processes and interventions

which aim at deep change in public institutions and accountability to the interests of all Ghanaians.

Diagram 1. 3Cs
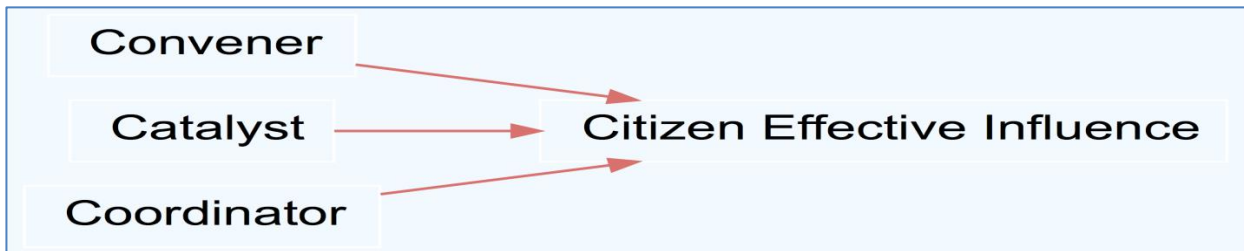
The **Convener approach** looks at building a strong active citizenship. To broker partnerships, citizens need to build alliances and collect on issues that matter. STAR-Ghana will convene alliances across CSOs and stakeholders on both demand and supply side actors, and address salient issues including fundamental areas of inclusion (e.g. girls, excluded groups, voiceless). The convener approach creates space where voice gets heard and builds that momentum and where voices do not get heard STAR-Ghana will support awareness raising, to inform citizenry and to bring citizens around a common concern which they can act on. The STAR-Ghana model places an emphasis on sustainable collective organising, *the ability in which citizens can together network, organise, and collaborate in order to achieve their mutually aims on influencing duty bearers, government and service providers.* The focus is on civil society collective action, and rebuilding community space to engage members of the community on issues which are affecting them. STAR's convening focus is to work with strategic conjectures, with citizens to influence change; if there is local relevance and salience on an issue with citizens it will likely have sustainability.
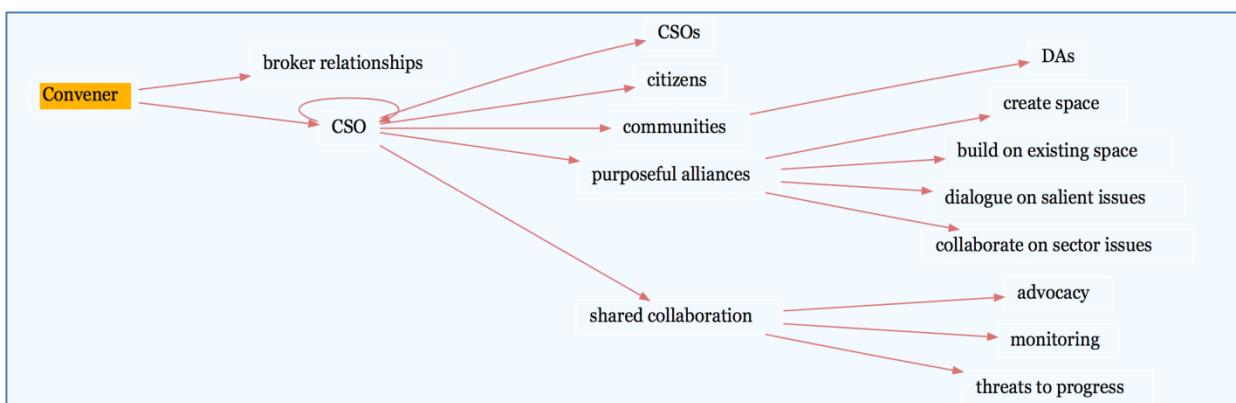
The **Catalyst approach** identifies, facilitates and supports interventions and approaches through joint working with new and strategic partners, with the potential to catalyse the nature of change being sought. Here there is a focus on the grants as a mechanism to support CSOs in their efforts for systemic change. STAR-Ghana focus is strategic, and will fund issues around innovation, energy and magic moments. As well, STAR-Ghana catalyst approach has a focus on action research, political economy and civil society analysis all providing evidence to inform the programme on what issues and approaches to focus on. The research will identify what approaches are working and can be replicated and scaled up for national impact.
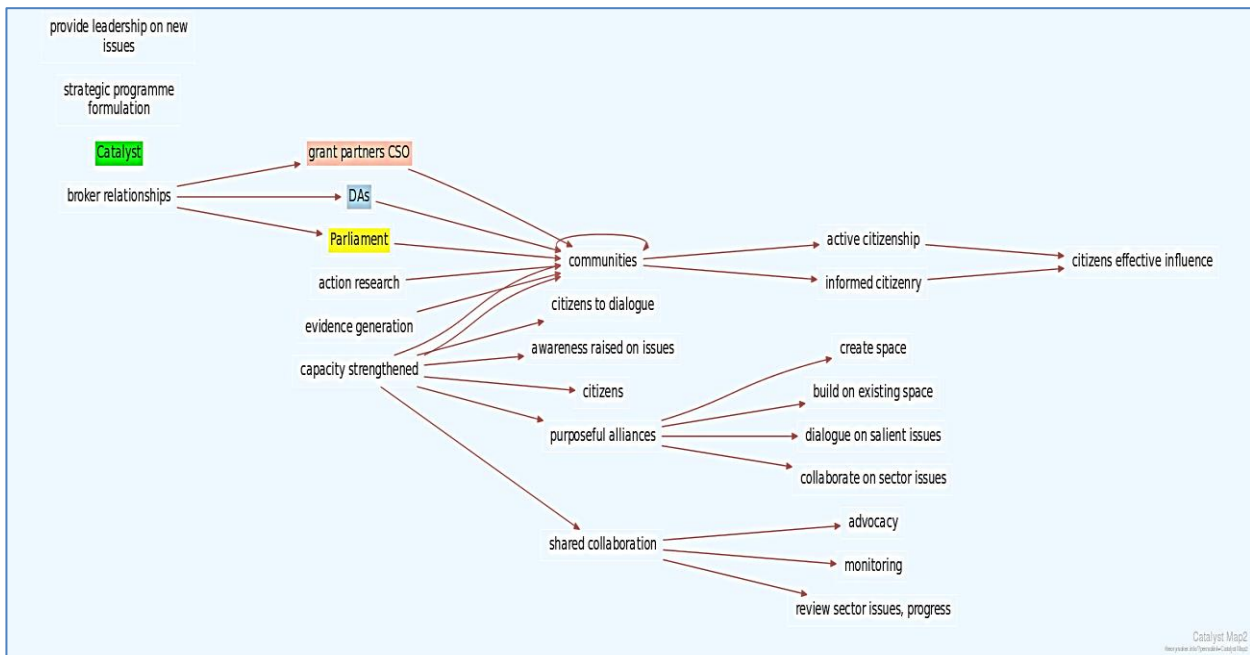
The **Coordinator approach** requires STAR-Ghana to hold consistently the various processes and actors across the portfolio of STAR-Ghana, which are ultimately all leading towards an increased effectiveness of citizens and their ability to influence duty bearers on salient issues. Key is the coordination of joint stakeholder processes between supply and demand; facilitating learning and harnessing best practice through reviews in order to join up influencing work and actions amongst partners; build and facilitate consistent communication with stakeholders on the programme results and approaches; and ensure that monitoring is supporting the adaptive flexible programme approach of STAR-Ghana so learning can inform strategy.
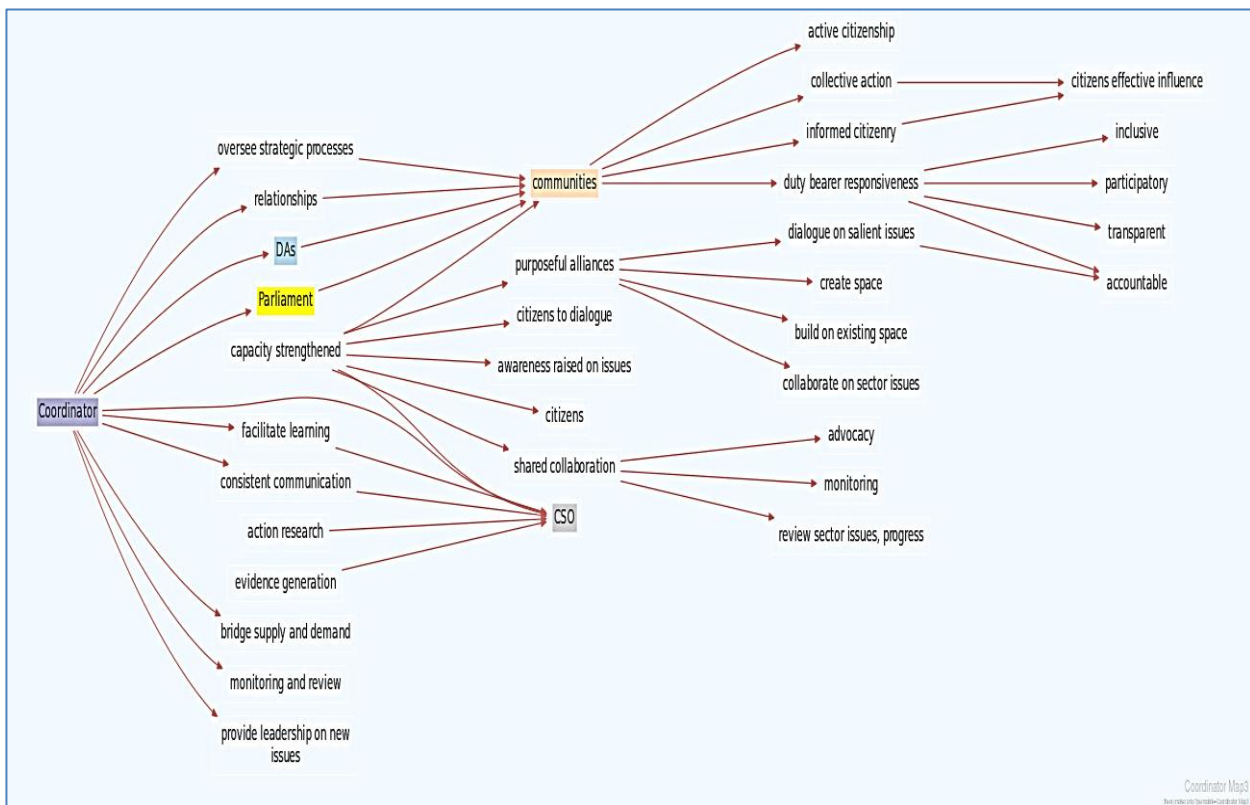
Overall the 3Cs overlap and should not be seen separately. **Combined with the 3Cs is GESI, research and learning** all playing a significant feature across STAR-Ghana activities with the aim to support civil society and GoG to inevitably build strong alliances, collaboration and engagement on salient issues.

For STAR-Ghana all paths inevitably lead to i) policy and practice outcomes ii) civil society outcomes iii) larger inclusive democratic outcomes. The STAR-Ghana model assumes that as citizens and civil society grow to be 'more effective and influence change' (Step 1 to 2) at policy and practice level this is likely to lead to a change in duty bearer practice (responsiveness) and policy changes (inclusive, accountability) (Step 2 to 3). As a more inclusive approach emerges which see's citizen participate, influence and collaborate with government and service providers on service delivery this will bring about changes both within government approaches, institutions as well as service delivery outcomes (Step 3). STAR-Ghana is particularly focused on Step 1 and 2 through its 3Cs (combined with its cross cutting learning and leadership approach).
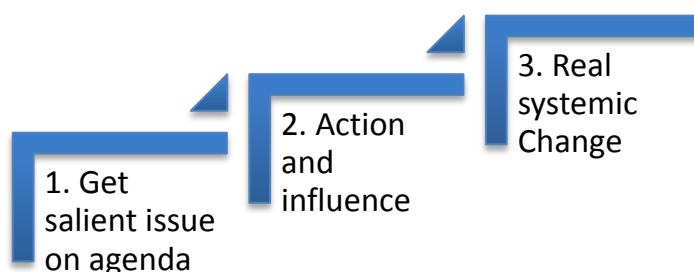
5   STRATEGY AND ASSUMPTION TESTING

The Theory of Change approach of STAR-Ghana helps the PMT to develop conceptual clarity with their partners (CSOs) about **who** they are trying to influence, **how** they will go about this (reviewing strategies, strengths of communities, CSOs etc.) and **what** they should monitor and learn from regularly to assess programme progress on salient issues.

STAR-Ghana main 3C focus will be looking at the strategy of 'influence' that CSOs take on and how this may lead to greater action and influencing for systemic change. Citizen advocacy work is cause and effect. Meaning what is expected to take place from civil society influencing work (cause) and the actual final change (effect) may be different. Here it is important for STAR-Ghana to play its convener, catalyst and coordinator role to ensure 'effectiveness' - that the advocacy work of CSOs is having effect, knowing some strategies will be more effective than others.

One of the ways in which STAR-Ghana will assess effectiveness and learn from supply and demand side alliance work is by reviewing processes with stakeholders and carrying out specific 'strategy testing' and analysis. Answering and exploring questions such as:

1. Are citizens more aware and informed?
2. Has the work activated community action?
3. Has it contributed to public processes and inclusive planning?
4. Did it contribute to improvements in accountability of DA, Ministries and other relevant institutions / structures?
5. Did it enhance community participation?

6. Did it enhance equity and inclusion: gender, religion, disabled group access, etc.
7. Did duty bearers embrace the work and efforts of the community?
8. Has the DA responded to the needs of citizens?
9. Were CSOs included in local planning meetings?
10. Do CSOs and DAs understand policy analysis knowledge to make informed decisions?
11. Has sustained inclusive dialogue been achieved?
12. Has a GESI lens been applied?

Finally and importantly, STAR-Ghana will be ensuring the **assumptions** that underpin the Theory of Change will be reviewed regularly and test whether the ToC holds. The following are a list of STAR-Ghana ToC assumptions:

Outcome Level

1. Legal Framework remains
2. No or limited intimidation and self-censorship
3. Political spaces remain stable
4. Political will (supply/demand). Changed to Political will of stakeholders to engage and politically participate.
5. Quality of Steering Committee (SC) vision and strategic direction
6. Citizens have the potential to effect change

Output 1 Level

1. Enabling environment in place
2. Credibility of STAR- Ghana
3. Capacity of Steering Committee to undertake these roles
4. Civil Society buys into STAR- Ghana vision
5. Ability of Steering Committee to be politically astute and opportunistic.
6. Steering Committee willing to push tough agendas
7. CS/media willing and able to provide and channel constructive criticism to SC/PMT
8. STAR-Ghana brand clearly distinguished from existing 'STAR-Ghana brands

Output 2 Level

1. Parliament has the political appetite in effecting change in the lives of citizens
2. Potential strategic partners are willing to engage with STAR-Ghana, and citizen groups
3. Citizens are willing to engage with parliament and duty bearers

Output 3 Level

1. Partners have capacity to deliver on projects/programmes
2. CSO and citizen based groups can be mobilised for collective actions
3. Target service providers have the capacity (technical/human/financial) to provide quality services.
4. Citizens are willing to engage with CSO.
5. CSOs are interested in driving citizen-led agendas forward.
6. CSOs have the capacity to continue support citizen influencing activities after STAR- Ghana funding ends.
7. Risks identified by partners are within their control to manage.

Output 4 Level

1. Continued STAR-Ghana credibility
2. Ability and willingness of the STAR-Ghana to engage with relevant decision makers, CSOs, citizen-based groups and beneficiaries

3. STAR-Ghana is politically astute
4. Ability of the body corporate to attract different sources of funding
5. STAR-Ghana can make a convincing case to mobilise CSO's and demonstrate its added value to the CSO sector
6. Demand and interest of CS for the body corporate
7. Body corporate will be sustained into medium-long term
8. Commitment of donors to funding STAR-Ghana until 2020
9. STAR-Ghana's ability to change and perform the new roles at a strategic level
10. STAR-Ghana's ability to incentivise learning (from both what works and what does not work).
11. Donor appetite for risk (adaptability).

Output 5 Level

1. Funds committed to support the activity
2. STAR-Ghana's flexibility when needed a change in programming
3. Partners' willingness to change and adapt to lesson learning
4. STAR-Ghana is able to co-create and co-convene spaces
5. STAR-Ghana is committed to being an inward learning organisation.

6   STAR-GHANA OVERALL THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change for the Programme is a prose rendition of the logic that lies behind the Logical Framework (logframe) combined with the mentioned approaches (3Cs) above all aimed at reaching high level outcome achievements.

Theory of Change Statement

If STAR-Ghana convenes catalyses and coordinates spaces and alliances with relevant stakeholders on salient issues ripe for change, this will bring about a well-informed active citizenry which influences governance processes and structures that will effectively contribute to transformational change around key challenges of poverty, inequality and inclusion for all citizens

STAR-GHANA-Ghana Theory of Change

STAR-Ghana Technical Approach

- Understand the political economy
- Understand civil society and key stakeholders (analysis)
- Engage civil society
- Engage Parliament
- Engage duty bearers
- Apply a mix of approaches
- Learning by doing, action research
- Adaptive programming
- Thinking politically
- Continual Review
- Interconnectivity
- Working in partnership
- Knowledge management M&E
- Building for sustainability
- Actor led

STAR-Ghana Approach to Change

3Cs – Convener, Catalyst, Coordinator

L – Learning

GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Supply and Demand focus

Assumptions: political, context, CS, enabling environment, STAR-Ghana

Civil Society and Citizen Collective Action on Issues

Duty Bearers and Parliament focus on issues

Engaged spaces and participation of CS, Citizens with Duty Bearers

Citizen increased effectiveness and influencing policy and practice

MDA, Ministries, Parliament take on roles and responsibilities to deliver

Active citizenry contribute to change on poverty, inequality and inclusion

Duty bearer accountability and responsiveness

Service delivery and institutional reform

GESI, RESEARCH, LEARNING

STAR-GHANA Entity

8