MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

PROF. AUDREY GADZEKPO

September, 2016

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

Table of Contents

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGM   - Annual General Meeting

CBOs   - Community Based Organisations

COMPAS - Community Public Address Systems

CSOs   - Civil Society Organizations

DA   - District Assemblies

GESI   - Gender Equality and Social Equality

GJA   - Ghana Journalists Association

GIBA   - Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association

GCRN   - Ghana Community Radio Network

ISD   - Information Services Department

IFEJ   - Institute of Financial and Economic Journalists

LI 2224   - Content Standard Regulations Legislation Instrument

MFWA   - Media Foundation for West Africa

NCA   - National Communication Authority

NMC   - National Media Commission

PRINPAG - Private Newspaper Publishers Association

RSF   - Reporters without Borders

RTI   - Right to Information

STAR-Ghana - Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

The Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana (STAR-Ghana) has identified the media as "an important stakeholder in facilitating the achievement of transparent, accountable and responsive governance and seeks to understand how the media can be supported to help achieve STAR-Ghana's outcome of 'increasing the effectiveness of citizen influencing in an inclusive manner'.

The Programme's engagement and support to the media will build on the results and lessons from the previous programme – STAR 1 – and align with the 3C&L approach, the design framework of this second programme. STAR-Ghana's approach to gender equality and social equality (GESI) will also be mainstreamed in all Programme activities. The 3C&L approach comprises the following:

- **Convening** a broad range of stakeholders for dialogue and to support the identification of opportunities and critical entry points for action and engagement.
- **Catalysing** change through joint working with new and innovative strategic partners.
- **Coordinating** with a broad cross section of actors, promoting joint influencing and actions amongst partners, to ensure effective use of limited resources available.
- **Learning** from past and present experiences and effective application throughout the process of implementation.

STAR-Ghana is cognisant of the fact that the media have an indispensable role to play amplifying the voices of citizens on the issues that matter to them and enabling citizens to pressure for more transparency, accountability and responsiveness from government and public officials. It has commissioned this Scoping Study to identify entry points and issues for its engagement with and support to the media and to provide some guidance for the development of STAR-Ghana's Media Engagement Strategy and a possible Media Call

1.2 Objectives

The Study seeks to better understand the media's role in the citizen-governance-accountability nexus; to explore effective ways in which linkages between the media and other non-state actors can be strengthened for pro-poor policy development outcomes, as well as provide direction as to how that can be supported within STAR-Ghana's design framework of Convening, Collaborating and Catalyzing.

1.3 Methodological Approach

The Study builds on recommendations made at a consultation meeting with media resource persons and sector experts; results and lessons learnt from STAR 1, as well as other existing knowledge on how best to engage and support the Ghanaian media to achieve programme outcomes. The Study is also informed by data gathered through a document review and in-depth interviews with selected stakeholders in a bid to answer the research questions below.

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

1.3.1 Research Questions

The overarching question it seeks to address is: How and through what mechanisms can the media be supported to play a more effective role in the development of a vibrant, well informed and assertive citizenry that can demand and achieve accountability from government and other duty bearers? Specifically the study seeks answers to the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the current state and context in which the media function in Ghana?

RQ2: What are the systemic barriers/constraints to the media's effectiveness in supporting citizen actions, and including marginalised voices in processes aimed at achieving good governance at all levels?

RQ3: What are the existing opportunities for strengthening CSO-media-citizen's collaboration and influence in achieving systemic good governance and transformational change?

RQ4: What are the priority areas and themes identified by stakeholders for action and support in bringing about more effective systemic good governance and transformational change?

RQ5: What are the best ways of engaging relevant stakeholders to enhance the media's ability to effectively influence citizens' participation in governance, especially women and the socially excluded?

1.3.2 Document Review

The study reviewed STAR-Ghana's 'foundational' documents such as the Business Case, the Steering Committee Design Framework for STAR 2, STAR 1 Programme Completion report, STAR 2 Ghana Theory of Change, STAR-Ghana Phase II Foundational Political Economy Analysis, Draft Framework Document: Star Ghana Communities of Learning and Practice, 2016 and STAR-Ghana Gender and Social Exclusion (GESI) Strategy.

The Study also reviewed the websites and documents from media industry regulators such as the National Communication Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commission (NMC) for information and developments on the media, including the most current record of print and broadcast media, statements, press releases and position papers, reports, guidelines and policy documents, etc. relating to the media.

Useful insights were also obtained from documents produced by non-governmental organisations whose work impinge on the media such as the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and Afrobarometer, an international survey of public opinion and attitudes on democracy and development. International indices on media freedoms, including in Ghana such as reports produced by Reporters without Borders (RSF) and Freedom House were also consulted.

1.3.3 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted from a purposive sample of respondents in key positions within the media or with deep insider knowledge of the media industry, civil society actors who engage the media in Ghana as well as parliamentarians. The study also relied on respondent-driven sampling, a variation of snow-ball sampling, to identify a limited number of other key informants, especially in the regions, including from the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA).

Interviews were conducted through face-to-face contact as well as by telephone with respondents located outside Accra and were transcribed and analysed.

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

PART 2: FINDINGS ON MEDIA LANDSCAPE

2.1 Context

Ghana boasts a vibrant media landscape with multiple outlets and an ever increasing availability of a plethora of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, online and social media. NMC statistics indicate more than 1,200 active print media are registered with the Commission, including at least 11 regular dailies. The NCA also reports that as at the end of December 2015 it had authorised 412 radio stations, 313 of which were operational. They are made up of 292 commercial, 68 community, 30 public, 17 campus and five foreign radio stations. Brong Ahafo region has the most radio stations on air (50), followed by Western (46) and Greater Accra (45). The regions with the least radio stations are Upper West (6), Upper East (9), Central (16) and Northern (20). NCA figures also show that as of the second quarter of 2016 there had been 75 television stations authorised.

Similar to most countries in Africa radio is the foremost way Ghanaians get news and information. The Afrobarometer survey results for 2016 confirm that most people rely on radio (87.1%) and television (69.1%) for news. Only a few people (19.1%) rely on newspapers, the internet (19.2%) and social media (18.7%) as sources of news. However, newspapers are still very relevant and recognised as the medium of record. Despite dwindling circulation, news and information from newspapers are picked up by radio and television and amplified beyond the reach of the particular newspapers through newspaper review shows and other news programmes. Influential newspapers that regularly inform local and national news agenda are the state-owned *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanain Times* and private newspapers such as *Daily Guide, Chronicle, and Crusading Guide.* The state-owned Ghana News Agency, which is struggling for survival is also an important source of news, particularly from rural areas.

Still the study noted complaints about the waning influence of newspapers and their lack of convening power. According to one respondent to this study the weakening status of newspapers is indicated by the fact that they are sometimes left out of invitations to cover especially politicical events.

A notable development since deregulation of the airwaves in 1996 has been the tremendous growth in local language radio stations. Aside from the fact that local languages have become the predominant means through which news, information and entertainment is delivered in regions around the country, in cosmopolitan places such as Accra, the dominant radio stations are Akan speaking stations such as Peace FM and Adom FM; they are also the most listened to stations at the national level. Two local language television stations – UTV and Adom TV – rank first and third respectively in terms of television audience share, according to Kantar-GeoPoll Media Measurements. This indicates that local language radio and television stations have become very influential in setting the news agenda and shaping the thoughts of a majority of Ghanaians on national issues.

There are at least XXX accredited and many more unaccredited media training institutions in the country offering education for media practitioners. However a large number of journalists lack formal training and the media has serious capacity deficits that undermine their ability to exact accountability from government and duty bearers.

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

2.2 Regulatory Environment

There are two principal external regulators of media in Ghana – the National Communication Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commission (NMC) as well as three key self-regulatory associations, namely the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) and the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN). Other media associations such as the Private Newspaper Publishers Association (PRINPAG) and the Editors Forum exist but are relatively inactive.

The NCA is the body in charge of allocating broadcast frequencies, while the NMC, an independent constitutional body, has been charged with the responsibility of regulating media content and ensuring high journalistic standards. Different industry players as well as civil society have criticized the manner in which frequencies are allocated, including the lack of transparency in frequency allocation, the disproportionate number of frequencies issued for commercial rather than community radio purposes and the number of frequencies that have been allocated to politicians or people with strong ties to dominant political parties. There are complaints also that too many frequencies have been issued in the same markets, making survival of broadcast media tough for business investors.

The NMC is widely critiqued for being too ineffective, lacking a presence in the regions outside Accra and not being able to effectively regulate content. It has a media settlement's committee that adjudicates complaints against the media and has issued a number of guidelines to help improve the work of journalists, including guidelines on print and broadcast standards, elections reporting and local language coverage. It however has difficulty enforcing standards and has no legal means to compel media to comply with its rulings. In an attempt to address its lapses the Commission has set up regional media advisory committees as a way of widening the scope of the Commission's work. It also controversially enacted through Parliament the Content Standard Regulations Legislation Instrument (LI 2224) last December to improve the quality of media content. The LI has however been condemned by many media and civil society organisations, including MFWA, for provisions seen as tantamount to censorship. GIBA has filed a suit against the NMC in the Supreme Court and successfully gotten the court to place a temporary injunction on the implementation of the LI pending the settlement of its suit. It is seeking the Court to expunge several regulations from the NMC (Content Standards) Regulations 2015 (LI 2224) as being inconsistent with the 1992 Constitution which guarantees unfettered media freedom. The regulations in contention basically require media owners to apply for content authorization, submit programme guide and content for approval and go by a set of rules stipulated by the NMC or in default pay a fine or serve between two and five years in jail.

Despite their challenge to the NMC's Content Standards legislation GIBA officials insist they are committed to professionalism in the media. In July 2016 GIBA launched a revised code of conduct which it states is aimed at "Promoting Professionalism and Ensuring Responsible Broadcasting." Again at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2016 GIBA issued a statement condemning the foul use of language and unsubstantiated reports on the airwaves and later in July issued a statement reiterating its disapproval for abuse of media freedoms following the Supreme Court judgement against a host and two panellists on a local FM station – Montie FM.

The Ghana Journalists Association is the oldest and largest association to which journalists belong with more than 900 paying members registered with the Association. It too has been

criticised for its inability to promote self-regulation amongst its members and for courting controversy in its handling of issues relating to its annual awards and the protection and welfare of journalists. GJA used to have an ethics committee but the committee is now moribund and the association has no clear mechanism to sanction errant members.

The regulatory environment has been further undermined by the absence of a broadcast law that would help clarify how broadcasting should be managed and regulated in the country. The lack of a broadcast law is often cited as amongst the reasons for low professional standards, especially in radio programming and quality content. Another lacuna in the regulatory regime relating to media is the absence of a Right to Information (RTI) legislation, despite pressure from civil society organisations such as the RTI Coalition and high-level promises that Parliament would enact the law.

Still, Ghana's media landscape is widely acknowledged as amongst the freest and most vibrant on the continent although recent media freedom indices suggest there has been a deterioration in the media environment. In the 2016 World Press Freedom Index, published by the advocacy group, Reporters without Borders (RSF), Ghana ranked 26 out of 180 countries, a drop of four points from the 2015 ranking of 22. The RSF Index, measures countries according to indicators such as media independence, self-censorship, rule of law and transparency. The country was also downgraded in the latest Freedom House rankings from "Free" to "Partly Free" due to factors such as attempts to limit coverage of news events, confiscation of equipment and physical violence (including a murder) on journalists by the police, the military, political party members, and ordinary citizens which have gone unpunished. Another contributory factor to the fall in ranking was the NMC's Content Standards Regulation and a directive from the Information Services Department (ISD) requiring journalists working with foreign media to seek ISD approval before filming and after filming, submission to the ISD for approval.

2.3 Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses and Challenges of Ghanaian Media

Many people think the media has improved somewhat with most people (73.7%) in the Afrobarometer survey indicating the media have been somewhat effective in revealing government mistakes and corruption and that they provide fair coverage for elections (almost 80%). Respondents interviewed in this study also acknowledge that the media have proven their ability to bring out issues and improve transparency in government and note that many media organisations have gained the trust of citizens. There is also some agreement that citizens are willing to engage in media discussions either as contributors to phone-in segments or through social media. Citizens are seen as sometimes driving public conservations on what is important to them because of social media. As one respondent said ordinary people are breaking "big stories on social media." Still despite the growing appeal of social media a majority of the Ghanaian citizenry remains inactive on social media platforms, and predominantly exercise voice on radio platforms.

The Programme Completion Report for STAR 1 noted some significant achievements made by the media through STAR-Ghana support, including the successful piloting by the Institute of Financial and Economic Journalists (IFEJ) of a process which enabled citizens to engage with government officials on the draft National Budget. This led to the process being formally adopted by the Ministry of Finance and incorporated into the budget processes for 2014 and 2015. Also noteworthy was the successful use of the media, particularly community radio, to facilitate community dialogue with service providers and district assemblies to address health

issues as well as development advocacy initiatives by a number of media organisations on governance, elections and development issues.

However, there are still significant deficits in professional standards and ethics as well as depth and focus in coverage on governance and developmental. In the Afrobarometer survey almost half of the respondents (47.8%) think the media abuse their freedoms, compared with 40.3% who say they either do not or rarely do they abuse media freedoms.

Of particular concern are the weaknesses in news content and poor translation of news by local language radio. Some concerns have also been raised about the xenophobic tendencies consciously or unconsciously that often manifest in local language broadcasts and the fact that radio stations often ignore minority languages in their localities, thus marginalizing ethnic minorities. Also, and no doubt a contributory factor to the lapses noted above, are the poor service conditions of many media practitioners. Some media organisations pay journalists poorly, fail to provide them with basic entitlements such as healthcare and social security, and expect journalists to survive by demanding money (*Soli*) from programme organisers of events they cover.

PART 3: FINDINGS ON MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

A number of issues were raised by the respondents interviewed for this study that could form a basis for STAR-Ghana support for media engagements. The findings illuminate some of the constraints and challenges that impede the ability of media to effectively engage with other non-state actors in exacting accountability and pressing for better developmental outcomes. They also pinpoint the existing opportunities within the current media environment for collaboration amongst the relevant stakeholders in increasing the voice of citizens. They identify important thematic areas of engagement and affirm the media's convening role in discussions where citizens can pressure duty bearers as well as the media's ability to act as a catalyst in achieving more transparent, accountable and responsive governance at both local and national levels.

Finally the findings are instructive on how STAR-Ghana might support citizen's voice through deliberate ways of engaging with the media through linkages with relevant stakeholders especially in local communities and civil society.

3.1 Challenges and Constraints

Substantial contextual challenges and systemic barriers impact on the effectiveness of media in supporting citizens' voice and holding government accountable. These can be found on all three levels in the media-CSO-citizens nexus and are expanded on in the preceding sections of the Study.

3.1.1 Systemic Barriers and Challenges in the Media

Management of Frequency Allocation: On the level of the media one challenge is the increasing ownership of radio by political operatives with parochial goals aimed at serving their own interests rather than that of the larger public. There is a growing number of such outlets in rural areas masquerading as community radio, a model of radio expected to be inclusive of local voice and to champion local causes. The narrow agenda of such media outlets prevents them from being effective catalysts for change and giving voice to the powerless in communities that feel let down by the political elite. The question of who should or should not own frequencies

and how certain types of frequencies should be used has not been settled because of the lack of a broadcast law. The allocation of frequencies is skewed against community radio which is better positioned to serve local voices and interests, especially in the more remote areas of the country. Development communication models suggest the key role community systems rooted in local communities and sensibilities can play in catalysing development. Yet in Ghana, despite the development imperatives, frequency allocation suggests preference for commercial models of broadcast media. The result is that media resources and availability in Ghana are inequitable and skewed against the poor and marginalised. As one respondent put it there are "communication holes" in many pockets of Ghana not well served by conventional media and social justice issues relating to communication, including the urban-rural divide when it comes to availability and access to the internet.

Communities ill-served by radio stations rely on a low technology system of communication called COMPAS – Community Public Address Systems – for news and information dissemination. Numerous COMPAS systems are now deployed in rural areas throughout the country, but fall outside the radar of regulators. Yet they have been known, especially during election periods, to promote "dangerous statements" not normally tolerated on radio airwaves.

Political Partisanship: There is a common perception that there has been political capture of the media and that this is partly why journalists are unable to hold government and other power centres to account. As observed at the start of the STAR 1 "support to the media was made within a context of extreme polarisation along partisan political lines reflected in the media landscape and its reportage" (Ref). Data from these findings indicate partisanship in the media is still a barrier to prosecuting a good governance agenda and affects how media convene and moderate discussions, collaborate with relevant stakeholders as well as how robustly they choose to hold those in governance (Executive, Parliament, Judiciary, District Assemblies, etc.) accountable.

Lack of Training and Capacity of Journalists: STAR 1 programme reports also noted the media had "limited capacity for developmental advocacy; weak relationship between media organisations and CSOs; and minimal citizen voices in governance" (ibid). Such observations are still valid and were echoed by respondents who repeatedly expressed concern about the media's lack of capacity to properly identify and analyse issues of relevance to citizens and to further the developmental agenda. Respondents complained about sensationalism and trivialities in content and poor follow-up to important stories.

Related to that is the fact that media organisations send inexperienced journalists to cover places such as Parliament, the Presidency and District Assemblies (DA) where important decisions are taken requiring critical scrutiny. Even organised press corps such as is in Parliament lack the requisite skills to scruntinise the work of Parliament.

A large part of the problem is that many media practitioners, including journalists, producers, editors and managers, are untrained or ill-trained as well as poorly motivated. They therefore have poor professional standards and ethos which affects the quality of their work, undermines their ability to provide effective coverage on issues that matter when it comes to governance and development. One way of dealing with this problem is on the job capacity building but many media houses lack the resources or commitment to train their staff.

Especially challenged are local language media organisations who employ people based on their dexterity with the local language rather than their educational background and reporting skills.

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

A constant concern for regulators, CSOs and the larger public is how local language news is rendered, particularly the quality of translation and the general lack of capacity many local language reporters have to illuminate developmental problems.

Instability in Media Industry: Many media organisations are poorly capitalized and managed and this constitutes a challenge to business growth as well as professionalisation. The media industry also remains a young industry attracting young ambitious individuals who do not stay long in one place and so when trained and their capacity built move on to other media houses or other industries, especially public relations, where renmeration is better. This poses a challenge to capacity building intiatives aimed at improving media coverage and developing the professional skills of those who work within the media for long term sustainability.

3.1.2 Systemic Barriers and Challenges in Civil Society

Beyond the challenges related to the media are challenges when it comes to civil society which undermine their effectiveness in supporting media to promote citizen's voice and governmental accountability.

Crisis in Legitimacy: There is the growing perception expressed by some respondents that many civil society lack legitimacy and have a weak capacity to help hold government accountable to people. Part of the problem lies in their lack of capacity in convening people around important issues and successfully advocating for change, perhaps because of financial constraints. Respondents charge that in order to survive many civil society have become quasi consultancies who depend on doing work and services related to the public sector and government and thus invariably have become less vocal on the shortcomings of those they depend on survival.

Political Partisanship: Like the public, CSOs are also perceived as susceptible to party political partisanship and co-optation, thus their credibility has been compromised, rendering them ineffective in promoting good governance.

3.1.3 Systemic Barriers and Challenges in Citizens' Voice

Apathy: When it comes to citizen's voice the biggest constraint identified by respondents and suggested in surveys such as Afrobarometer is apathy and weak demonstration of agency by people. According to Afrobarometer although most people (about 65%) complain about services only about 33% report ever joining others to raise concerns and only a very small number (7%) have ever joined overt advocacy actions such as a protest march. Respondents to this Study also perceive that Ghana lacks active citizenship. One respondent diagnosed the extent of the problem as follows:

> *People do not understanding the importance of active citizenship which requires that you demonstrate or support people who will demonstrate, speak truth to power and not see it as an act of hostility. We defer to authority and we don't talk truth to authority even when they do wrong so they take the citizenry for granted.*

Weak Sense of Democratic Governance and Rights: Citizens do not understand the structures of governance – the role of Parliament and the Executive – and do not fully understand their democratic rights. For example, majority of citizens hold their parliamentarians accountable for development of infrastructure and the provision of better basic services and not for enacting enabling laws or for the crucial role they must play in oversighting the Executive Branch.

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

Political Ethnocentric Partisanship: Sometimes inability to act collectively in the interest of development or good governance results from political partisanship, misplaced ethnic loyalties or vested interests of those who benefit from the system not working. Ghana's paternalistic Executive Branch, which distributes patronage, including jobs and livelihood survival programmes, acts as a disincentive to citizens and communities that might want to raise issues relating to accountability, governmental transparency and responsiveness.

Polluted citizen's voice by serial callers paid by political interests constitutes another means by which true citizen's voice is undermined.

Lack of Requisite Information: Information is an important prerequisite in democratic arrangements, which call for citizens' participation and action. In Ghana however citizens encounter considerable difficulty accessing relevant, quality information due partly to the capacity deficits of the media as outlined above and by the lack of a means to compel public information from politicians and governmental entities. As noted earlier there is still no Right to Information legislation in the country.

3.2 Opportunities for Strengthening CSO-Media-Citizen's Collaboration

Despite the systemic barriers and challenges outlined above which constrain the effectiveness of non-state actors such as the media and CSOs as well as citizens to press for change, there exist opportunities for influencing in achieving systemic good governance and transformational change.

Convening Potential of Media: The proliferation and access to media and especially the increase in community level radio has encouraged people to listen in to programmes in their own languages, to be better informed, to interrogate information they hear and to provide feedback and contribute to public discussions. The increasingly widespread availability of relatively inexpensive devices such as smart phones which enable social media interaction are also helping citizens, including those at the local level to articulate views that can reach national attention. Social media has provided opportunities for convening people on discussion platforms, for example through the creation of Whatsapp groups of people with common interests.

Although not without challenges media organisations such as the GJA and GIBA constitute an organised group that can mobilise members, act as conveners of platforms where citizens' voices can be heard or collobrate with other stakeholders to achieve such objectives.

Catlysing Potential of Media

Community radio is often bottom up and reliant on volunteers within the community and thus it can act as both a covener and a catalyst to development as people can colasce around particular issues and press for change.

In general also media, particularly the more influential ones, have proven they have some capacity and the willingness to amplify voices from localities on important issues such as illegal mining (*galamsey*) and poor services and infrastructure as well as summon duty bearers to respond. Some media organisations, such as CITI FM, which have been supported through STAR-Ghana grants have succesfully piloted models that identify active citizens in local communities to act as citizen journalists by providing them with credible news, photographs and feedback. As one respondent noted, what can be more effective in compelling duty bearers to act than "*people who are living the daily problems of their communities, who know why a certain*

water body is being polluted, who are asking the community leaders why they have allowed that thing to continue."

Collaboration with Youth: The youth bulge in Ghana also represents an opportunity for action. The number of adolescents and young adults in Ghana is estimated at aboutt 5.3 million or 20 percent of the population (<mark>Ref?</mark>). Many young people feel dispossessed and frustrated with corruption and poor governance and are willing to speak up against it. These voices need to be properly harnessed to bring pressure to bear.

Collaboration with Local Empowered Voices: It was pointed out by some respondents that in poor communities economic empowerment is important in raising citizen's voice. As one person put it "where people are economically empowered, the voice comes naturally." This suggests that such groups be idenfied at the micro-level of society and actively engaged beyond issues of economic empowerment to exercise voice on governance and broader issues of development.

3.3 Priority Areas and Themes for Action

STAR 1 supported grantees who worked in a number of thematic areas, namely:

- Inclusive access to quality, basic education;
- Health services, particularly maternal health;
- Justice;
- Democratic governance and
- Oil and gas sector governance.

Findings from this scoping study suggest there is still need to continue working around some of these themes, notably Education, Health (especially maternal health) and Good Governance. In addition thematic areas such as Water and Sanitation, and Decentralisation, Environmental Degradation (e.g. *galamsey*) and Economic Empowerment were identified as areas in need of STAR-Ghana support. It was felt that these are issues that are endemic across the country and therefore lend themselves to initiatives such as STAR-Ghana, which seeks to strengthen "effectiveness of accountability and responsiveness of actors within the wider development processes." Respondents also argue media is positioned to take up local level stories on such issues and by piecing them together, can highlight a larger national picture of systemic failure that government action must respond to through policy, legislation and stronger implementation efforts.

It was also strongly stated that some of the priority areas must emerge from communities in the course of STAR-Ghana's workstream and that civic education must necessarily accompany all engagements on thematic areas in order to strengthen citizen's ability to demonstrate voice.

3.3 Mechanisms of Engagement for Effective and Inclusive Citizens' Voice

Inclusivity of all Media Types: Findings from this Scoping Study indicate that although some media types, such as radio, appear more dominant than others (e.g. newspapers and social media) interventions should seek to utilize the broad spectrum of media types – radio, television, newspapers, online and social media. This will harness synergies amongst them considering that each of these media types have unique properties that contribute to the process of amplifying voice. For example, a typical breakfast show programme on radio or television makes reference and use to newspapers, online, social media in seeking responses and feedback on developmental and governance issues.

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

Local Media Matter: There was also recognition that despite the prominence and capacity strengths of national media, local media matter in harnessing voice from the grassroots. Programme interventions must therefore encourage linkages between local and national media in order to upscale voice and exact better accountability outcomes from both local and national level politicians and government officials. National level media are effective at setting the national agenda for discussion and getting the attention of top level politicians and government officials. However development and governance issues that matter to citizens perculate within local communities and are picked up on local media platforms. As someone stated, it is *"the local mobilization that will catch the attention of the national so you have to strengthen the media's capacity to find stories in local communities that matter to the people and strengthen the ability of local media to link up with national media and vice versa."*

CBOs Matter: A similar strategy of engaging community-based organisations (CBOs) and local associations to link up with national ones must inform civil society and public engagement strategies and collaborations with the media. There was strong recognition among respondents that any meaningful change relating to basic development will require local involvement. Therefore identifying change agents (citizens with voice) within local communities must be the starting point. Likewise working with community based associations and organisations, including faith-based, livelihood-based, welfare and gender-based organisations which are then linked to larger, more resources and organised CSOs is a strategy worth considering.

Identifying and Engaging Local Power Centres: It was pointed out that places of engagement on thematic issues must necessary include Das, regional coordinating councils and traditional authority as at the local level they exert more power and direct influence on the lives of citizens.

Identifying and Linking All Voice Centres: An essential engagement strategy suggested is one that aims at connecting the nexus of voice centres which are the focus of interest in this document – media, civil society and citizens – at local, regional and national levels. An example of linking media, CSOs and citizens at the local level was provided from an elections town hall model where town meetings are convened by CSOs or think-tanks to help citizens articulate and discuss their issues in an organized manner to the hearing of politicians seeking their mandate. In such arrangements the media are invited to cover and help amplify the issues, sometimes providing love coverage that allows those not physically present at the venue of the town hall meeting to contribute.

CSO Leadership as Engagement Strategy: While some respondents strongly advised that the media ought to work in strong partnership with the rest of civil society "as active participants in the empowerment process" and include civil society in their work others raised the risk of the media comprising their independence and ability to concentrate on their newsgathering activities should they respond to calls for them to find ways of amplifying citizen's voice. Those who hold this latter view argue that engagement strategies that seek to amplify the voice of citizens must start from the CBO/CSO level as this is the job they have undertaken to do. They noted that the responsibility of convening and sustaining platforms of engagement must lie with CSOs although CSOs must of necessity be asked to engage the media in their work. It was also argued that the competitive nature of the media business (as opposed to the co-operative character of civil society work) would limit the kinds of partnerships the media would be willing to forge in order for successful outcomes as may be outlined by STAR-Ghana's Calls.

Forming Strategic Coalitions: In view of some of the limitations and dilemmas raised above there were suggestions that STAR-Ghana Calls be exclusively targeted towards supporting

coalitions of relevant stakeholders around thematic issues rather than supporting individual media or civil society actors as some coalitions (e.g. water and sanitation) have proven resilient and sustainable. There was however little consensus or direction on what kind of state non-state actor (whether media or CSO) could act as the pivot for a coalition.

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATONS

4.1 Conclusions

This scoping exercise validates the centrality of the media in achieving the STAR 2 outcome of "increasing the effectiveness of citizen influencing in an inclusive manner"and confirms the importance of building strategic partnerships between civil society and the media as a catalyst for amplifying citizens' voice and helping citizens better hold duty bearers accountable. It echoes some of the aims and observations made in STAR-Ghana's Programme Completion report for the STAR 1 Programme in suggesting the importance of maintaining linkages across governance levels (community, district, regional, national, etc.) in order to exact better accountability outcomes. The Study makes clear the limitations of the more established CSOs in effectively engaging ordinary citizens in local communities and helping make their voices matter in governance. It suggests therefore that in order to strengthen the voice of citizens CBOs must be supported and enabled and included in media-directed linkages. Influencing would require political capacity not only of CSOs as noted in reflections on STAR 1 but also of citizens and communities that are the target of STAR 2.

The Study suggests that the key strategy in amplifying citizen's voice lies in fostering linkages amongst non-state actors and across all media types as well as governance levels. It may also mean convening and supporting relevant stakeholders to form coalitions around governance and development themes.

Capacity building and training were identified as linked to successful linkages and ultimately STAR-Ghana outcomes. It was noted that some capacity building was needed to help both media and CSOs to understand the work of each other, to identify important themes aligned to STAR 2 from bottom up (i.e. from citizens at the local level) and convene citizens around these issues.

Media literacy was also identified as an important component of capacity building as this can help strengthen the ability of citizens to exercise voice. There is need also to strengthen civic education in order to raise citizen's awareness about their rights and entitlements.

4.2 Recommendations for Star-Ghana Support

Based on the issues raised in the findings of this Study and the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations have been made to guide STAR-Ghana in deciding on how and through what mechanisms the media can be supported to play a more effective role in the development of a vibrant, well informed and assertive citizenry and what considerations must guide future Media Calls.

1. As with STAR 1, there is still need to support the media and build the capacity of media practitioners to work more effectively with other CSOs and citizens on advocacy aimed at greater transparency, responsiveness and accountability in governance and development however the overall emphasis must shift from national to more locally based media and CSOs.

2. In providing support for citizen's voice STAR-Ghana must look beyond established CSOs to grassroots associations, especially youth, women, and peasant occupational groups.

3. The media must be viewed as strategic partners working to bring traction to the work of CBOs/CSOs or the groups described in item 2 who are working around amplifying citizen's voice rather than positioned as media grantees expected to take up and implement advocacy projects. Support to the media should therefore involve media amplifying and scaling up advocacy of other non-state actors through the platforms they offer for publicity and public discussion.

4. While STAR-Ghana may want to reconsider issuing Calls which seek the media to undertake media-driven projects, it must maintain flexibility to support the capacity needs of those working on STAR-Ghana projects.

5. STAR-Ghana should consider supporting the creation of coalitions of advocacy groups in communities comprising of local CBO as well as well-established CSOs; local as well as national media and citizen's action groups working on thematic issues within the Programme's framework. Aggregating local issues around identified thematic areas to demonstrate widespread nature of particular governance and development issues will give impetus for more impactful advocacy campaigns that involve more than just one media organisation or CSO.

6. STAR-Ghana may consider seeking to engage and work more closely with CBOs and organisations which already convene citizens, including churches/mosques, markets, welfare associations, rather than only through established CSOs. The platforms such groups offer may be ideal for providing civic education and conscientizing citizens on issues of accountability and good governance.

7. Calls involving local media and CBOs should be advertised on platforms and spaces where local civil society organisations and media are likely to access them and designed in ways that make it easier for them to apply.

8. STAR-Ghana should consider reviewing requirements for grant support to make it easier for organisations with limited experience with and capacity to meet standard donor requirements in Calls.

4.3 Recommendations on Gaps and Further Studies

The Scoping Study has identified local media and community based organisations and associations as key in amplifying citizens voice and has recommended that they be the focus of STAR-Ghana support. However there is insufficient information on them, their bona fides and capabilities to undertake the kind of advocacy required. Further studies are needed to help determine the status of such organisations and how they might be supported.

REFERENCES

ANNEXES

Annex 1 List of Interviewees

Annex 2 Question Guide

Annex 3 Report on Consultative Meeting on Media

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

MEDIA SCOPING STUDY

STAR-Ghana
September, 2016