



Editorial

Since the last issue there have been changes afoot across the Education & Society Strategic Business Unit, not least with the arrival of a new Director.

Professor Jo Beall joined us from Cape Town University and, as this edition is being finalised, is putting the finishing touches to the strategy for the SBU that will take us through to 2015.

The new corporate plan was also published, which featured an outcome for all our work in Society of 'societies whose citizens contribute to a more inclusive, open and prosperous world'. This is now the guiding principle for all our work; as you will be able to see from the articles in this edition, something that our projects and programmes around the world amply demonstrate.

This edition's focus is on voice and accountability, which the report *Measuring change and results in voice and accountability work* (SDD for DFID) describes as follows: "Governments need to listen to the communities they serve in order to understand issues, develop appropriate policies and deliver effective services. Support is growing for initiatives that raise people's voice in developing countries and improve awareness of their rights, so that they are able to talk with governments and hold officials to account. These initiatives are complex in planning, delivery and evaluation, as the effects are often intangible and any change depends very much on where you are in the world. Whilst measuring change may be complicated, donors are determined to demonstrate the impact that they are having in all areas of their work."

Articles range from the challenges of 'voice' work in the closed society of Myanmar, as seen by Governance Manager Matthew Shearer, to the rise of accountability through digital channels, in Patrick Kingsley's piece on 'slacktivism'. Staffan Lindberg examines the accountability relationship between MPs and citizens in Ghana, while the World Resources Institute considers the barriers preventing citizens from accessing environmental decision making processes. Colin Jacobs, Director Governance and Reform, looks at the agenda as it relates to socio-economic development in South Asia, and I'm also pleased that Jo Beall was able to offer her insights on the subject.

We hope later this year to offer a webinar for colleagues wishing to explore this issue in more depth. I'm currently exploring options with Social Development Direct, although they have been very busy recently working with British Council Nigeria on a successful DFID bid. Congratulations to Ben Fisher and all the team.

Contents

Editorial	1
Focus on Voice and Accountability	2
Voice instead of violence	
Avaaz: activism or 'slacktivism'?	
Voice and accountability: Bangladesh and Pakistan	
'Parental' responsibility and accountability in Ghana	
A seat at the table	
Global team updates	7
An enterprising visit	
Legal eagles in Nigeria	
Strengthening UK-China links	
Afghanistan—the work goes on	
Voice of a changemaker	
Social (enterprise) mobility	
A whole world of change	
Building for the future	

Contributions this edition come from Afghanistan, China, Croatia, Egypt, Philippines, Nigeria and Vietnam, and cover topics including judicial reform, social enterprise, youth activism and civil society.

Thanks to all contributors. Comments and questions to me, at the usual address; ideas for the next 'in focus' subject are always welcome too.

Christine Wilson
Editor, *Society Bulletin*
christine.wilson@britishcouncil.org

Voice instead of silence

Metaphors of voice are routinely employed to describe the situation in Burma.

“Silence” holds sway; political sentiments are “whispered”; “gossip” and “rumours” substitute for the black hole of data, statistics and serious analysis. As with all metaphors, they refer to a far more complex reality: decades of authoritarian rule have marginalised peoples and broken institutions of accountability, but necessity has bred invention even in the most difficult of circumstances.

For its part, British Council Burma has worked with civil society actors for the best part of a decade. When such work first began, at best it could only contribute to more informed discussion within civil society. This was heavily restricted, somewhat secretive and with little or no link to the state; far removed from Habermas’ ideal of a public sphere mediating between private and state interests. Our capacity building programmes imbued participants’ community development and civil society work with democratic principles and rights-based approaches, but also looked towards a future in which participants could begin to genuinely engage with and shape their polity. Now, despite well-documented limitations of the new political system in Burma, new opportunities may be on the horizon. Certainly, there’s a real buzz among participants on our current programmes.

These include our new FCO-funded ‘Women’s Empowerment’ training scheme, our support for marginalised ethnic groups through EU-funded training for rights-based approaches to development, and our ongoing support for almost a thousand active individuals in their well-organised network groups, as well as LSPs such as Active Citizens. Participants from past programmes, mainly run through the Council’s Teaching Centre, occupy increasingly influential positions in sectors such as journalism, law and humanitarian work. As they learn to manoeuvre in the new political spaces and find their voice, they offer their ideas of how dialogue and development should operate and construct models of legitimacy. Most pleasing is the criticality of activity within the newer civil society groups. This is vital – as organisations are better equipped to take on a representative or decision-making role, so an informed, critical engagement is vital to maintain the plurality and confidence of voices within public life.

Significant challenges remain. Some participants have begun to ask questions of and make demands on newly elected representatives; for many, however, a lingering distrust of formal institutions and unacceptable limitations on accountability mean they continue to wait for clearer signs of change. But many do see a foundation to work on, a nascent forum to participate in and contribute to. As many graduates from the capacity building programmes enter higher office within professional life, the participatory and rights-based principles and strategies which permeate all of our capacity building programmes now have the potential to construct debate and alternatives at an increasingly high level.

To continue this process, global input and guidance will be tremendously important. Decades of isolation have meant that Burmese tend to look inwards and miss opportunities for a comparative approach which could inform strategy, while poor connections with global networks limit exposure to the values, skills and ideas these can bring. Of course, these are never uniformly ‘good’ but this asks for more voices, not fewer. Just as the BC’s English language teachers tell us that better listening enables better spoken communication, carefully guided international exposure is vital for the effectiveness of Burma’s civil society groups in critically contributing to their country’s development. As spaces open and the salience of civil society increases here, the British Council’s role in facilitating those links and further developing capacity will only grow in importance.

Matthew Sheader is Governance Manager, British Council Myanmar

Matthew.Sheader@mm.britishcouncil.org



Avaaz: activism or 'slacktivism'?

Rupert Murdoch picks his massive nose, opens the door of the taxi, and steps outside to greet the bank of photographers, protesters and police officers massed next to Portcullis House, Westminster.

It is half past one on Tuesday, and Murdoch – along with his son James – will shortly be interrogated for three hours by MPs inside the building. So far so good: he smiles at the crowd, pauses for photographs, and strides towards the revolving doors.

But something's up, starting with that nose. It's unnaturally ginormous. And so too are his eyes, ears and cheeks. Has Murdoch got mumps? And why is his chaperone carrying a placard that reads: "Murdoch: Wanted For News Crimes"?

A little secret, then. Clad in an oversized cartoon mask, "Murdoch" is actually Sam Barratt – UK media director of online pressure group Avaaz. The placard-bearing accomplice is his colleague Amy Barry, and this surreal moment constitutes the latest in a series of Avaaz-led protests against Rupert Murdoch's stranglehold on British media. In recent weeks, these puppets have been a frequent sight around Parliament Square, and have also made their way to News International's Wapping offices, and the department for culture, media and sport (DCMS). It's hard work, protesting. The mask – created by two sympathetic theatre prop designers – is a few centimetres thick, weighs several kilograms, and is seemingly impregnable to sound. "Can you hear me?" Barry asks Barratt. Silence. "Sam?" Sam says nothing, and picks his massive nose.

Founded in 2007, Avaaz is not primarily known for this kind of direct action, or indeed any action outside of cyberspace. To most people, Avaaz is just the group that organises all those online petitions; that corrals anyone with access to the internet and a conscience into emailing politicians on subjects that range from homophobia in Uganda, to the EU ban on GM crops and political corruption in Brazil. In the process, Avaaz – which means "voice" in Farsi and other languages – has established quite a following. Nearly 10 million people across 193 countries have now taken part in its nigh-on 46m "actions" (as the group calls the emails, phone calls, fundraisers and rallies undertaken in its name).

Part of its success is down to the ease with which you can get involved. Once you access the site, and find a petition that's of interest, adding your voice to the campaign is as simple as typing in your email address. This simple gesture has the dual effect of a) sending the petition's target a standard-form message in your name, and b) subscribing you to alerts about future Avaaz campaigns. If there's a campaign you're particularly fond of, you can also quickly spread the word by clicking on the social media tabs; this in turn will post details about the petition on your Facebook wall or Twitter feed.

So clicktivism – as Avaaz's brand of online activism is sometimes known – is easy. So easy, in fact, that it often gets a bad press. Cynics argue that signing an online petition, like joining a Facebook group, takes mere seconds, achieves little, and doesn't encourage clicktivists to engage properly with the issues concerned. Sites such as Avaaz, suggested Micah White in the *Guardian* last year, often only deal with middle-of-the-road causes, to the exclusion of niche interests: "They are the Walmart of activism . . . and silence underfunded radical voices." More infamously, internet theorist Evgeny Morozov has called the likes of Avaaz "slacktivists", claiming that they encourage previously tenacious activists to become lazy and complacent.

There's also the issue of breadth. Clicktivist websites often cover a range of issues that have little thematic or geographical relation to each other, which leaves them open to accusations of dilettantism.

But Avaaz begs to differ. It argues that its work has both greatly engaged the public, and had comprehensive effects that extend far beyond cyberspace. For evidence, the group points no further than its anti-Murdoch campaign. "Our activism played a critical role in delaying the BSKyB deal until the recent scandal was able to kill it," Avaaz's founder, New York-based Ricken Patel, tells me via Skype. Last November, in collaboration with 38 Degrees, a similar online campaign group, Avaaz sent 60,000 complaints to Ofcom during its initial review of the BSKyB merger. Through the winter, Avaaz kept chipping away, shifting its aim on to David Cameron and culture minister Jeremy Hunt. Shortly before the New Year, 50,000 of its 700,000 British members sent the pair messages that called for a full investigation into the deal. In early March, after Jeremy Hunt decided that the merger would not compromise Sky's editorial independence, Avaaz mobilised another 40,000 complaints (which all had to be read by DCMS officials) and organised several stunts, including pickets outside the Royal Courts of Justice and Hunt's constituency surgery. Avaaz argues that this – coupled with its 160,000-strong petition in early July – led to the merger decision being delayed until September, then referred to the Competitions Commission, and finally junked by Murdoch altogether.

The whole operation is meticulously planned. I sit in on a 90-minute, intercontinental Skype conference call (one of two held each week between the 20-odd core Avaaz activists) and the level of detail at which they discuss the day-to-day minutiae of each local campaign is impressive. There's a brisk debate between activists in New York and Majorca about what kind of signage the London protest team should be using, and what each sign should say. Banner or placard? "News criminal", or "news crime"? Everything is decided methodically and quickly until, at the end of the session, 2,000 words of minutes have been compiled, on issues ranging from Palestinian independence, Indian corruption, and, naturally, British journalism.

Continued overleaf

Of course, Avaaz isn't the only clicktivist group at work. 38 Degrees, as mentioned, also ran its own campaign, while a new group, Hacked Off, pushed for a full judicial inquiry into wrongdoing at News International. And as more and more revelations emerged about the *News of the World's* conduct in the early part of the past decade, leftwing blogs such as Liberal Conspiracy, Political Scrapbook, and individuals such as Melissa Harrison began to encourage people to email and tweet the *News of the World's* advertisers, and ask them to boycott the paper. As with Avaaz's actions, this brand of online activism seemed to have a very real effect: within two days, all but four main NoW advertisers (Tesco, Mars, British Gas, and, unsurprisingly, Sky) had pulled their support, and the paper soon folded.

But it's Avaaz, perhaps due to its size, that has won the most plaudits. "Avaaz has been hugely significant," says Labour peer David Puttnam, and he should know. In 2002, Puttnam played a key role in the formation of the communications bill, the legislation that governed the BSkyB merger. "This was not a bunch of yahoos marching up and down," Puttnam adds. "This was hugely thought through." Indeed, Avaaz's tactics went much further than just online petitions. They took out adverts criticising Murdoch in the *Financial Times*, the *Daily Mail* and various newspapers in Hunt's Surrey constituency. They also paid – out of money raised solely from donations – for three separate pieces of legal advice that detailed how best to challenge the merger. The first picked holes in Hunt's initial judgment; the second investigated the possibility of a judicial review; the third explored whether the deal could be blocked by staging a quasi-takeover of BSkyB. (If the worst came to the worst, Avaaz planned to ask its members to buy shares in the company; a numerical majority of shareholders could then have voted down the takeover.) Other legal depositions were made jointly by Trinity Mirror, Guardian Media Group, Telegraph Media Group, BT and Associated Newspapers. But, according to Barratt, the Murdoch impersonator, without Avaaz's work "the deal probably would have gone through a month earlier". Meanwhile, argues Puttnam, as a result of Avaaz's campaign, "the process of government will never be the same again. Any responsible government adviser will now have to factor in the possibility of a crowd-sourced legal action before making a similar decision."

Not everyone agrees on the power of the online pressure group. "Angry about racism, the war in Afghanistan and foie gras?" asked a sarcastic Rod Liddle last week in an article about Avaaz's clicktivist ally, 38 Degrees. "Just press a key and they're gone – congratulations!" But Patel thinks this kind of debate misses the point. "It's important to look beyond the technology," he says. "You click when you go on iTunes or eBay, but nobody disputes that these sites have changed commerce." In any case, one protester outside parliament points out, the fact that Avaaz is online-based allows people with mobility problems to stay politically involved. "I'm still fit enough to go to the demonstrations," says north Londoner Thelma Stone, 68. "But my husband isn't."

Patel also feels it's unfair to suggest Avaaz is too middle-of-the-road, or unengaged with niche issues. When Avaaz was founded, he did initially fear it would be "dishwater-centrist, never taking a side or a stance". But four years on, he argues, they're often fighting quirky, unexpected campaigns, such as the one this week that calls for a reform of European fishing quotas. "People can get mobilised by the most unfashionable things," Patel says, recalling a 2009 campaign for energy-efficient refrigerators.

On many campaigns, Avaaz's core team takes guidance from people they call their "kitchen cabinets", or small groups of specialists. But frequently, the ideas for these campaigns come from the members themselves. Patel presides over 52 full-time staff worldwide, some of whom spend their days sifting through thousands of members' campaign suggestions. Avaaz then polls wider groups of members to see which ideas have the most currency. "My members are my boss," claims Patel, "and I don't think they've ever made a bad call."

They also now fund the entire project. Since 2009, Avaaz has not taken donations from foundations or corporations, nor has it accepted payments of more than \$5,000 (£3,100). Instead, it relies simply on the generosity of individual members, who have now raised over \$20m (£12.4m). Much of this money goes towards specific campaigns. This year, \$1.5m (£900,000) was raised to supply cameras to citizen journalists throughout the Arab world; as a result, much of the footage currently coming out of Syria was filmed on equipment provided by Avaaz.

Closer to home, Avaaz's Murdoch campaign may have been so far, so successful, but the team isn't letting up just yet. Avaaz is planning a US-based campaign in the next few days that will aim to get Murdoch to testify to Congress. In the UK, the team want members to push for a change in media regulation, to give the Press Complaints Commission back its teeth, and to ensure that no single party owns more than 20% of British media. But will the campaign maintain its pace? In the end, it'll be down to the appetite of the members.

"I'm still working out if I believe in the wisdom of all crowds," says Patel. "But I definitely believe in the wisdom of this one."

© Guardian News & Media Ltd 2011

Patrick Kingsley is a freelance journalist

Voice and accountability: Bangladesh and Pakistan

The latest World Development Report shows poor governance lies at the heart of many countries fragility and poor performance.

Voice and Accountability (V&A) is an approach to this that has real benefits for our thinking around governance; however, it needs also to be carefully examined. Its approach is to take the view from the citizen's perspective. In terms of society interests, its focus is on consumer needs, be they education, rights or public services. Additionally, governments need to be held to account to ensure they govern fairly and distribute services in proportion to needs.

A V&A approach primarily works through civil society to pressure governments to improve their performance. Individual citizens have limited influence, so funding agencies such as DFID have focused on channelling their support through NGOs and encouraging advocacy campaigns.

What is the evidence that this approach can work and are there other more effective alternatives? This article looks at the case of Bangladesh, where there is a long history of attempts at top-down changes in government and of an active civil society.

Over the last ten years it is notable that Bangladesh's socio-economic indicators have steadily improved. Health statistics and education rates in particular have seen a steady rise. Poverty levels (below \$1.25 a day have fallen from nearly 50% in 2000 to 40% in 2005). At the same time corruption levels have increased and the government is among the most inefficient distributors of services. Red tape and bureaucracy together with corruption and a lack of adequate infrastructure are rated as the chief deterrents to business. Political interference is also prevalent with power oscillating between the two major parties – the Awami League who are currently in power and the BNP.

Despite these impediments the country grows at a rate of 6% per annum, largely on the back of its competitive garments industry and a growing manufacturing sector. However, there is evidence of a growing number of marginalised poor concentrated in the slums of the major cities and a huge landless class. What solutions are on offer?

Decades of Public Sector Governance Reform (PSGR) have had little impact in developing countries. Zoe Scott's review, *Evaluation of Public Sector Governance Reforms 2001-2011*, states that it is widely acknowledged that, over the past decade, PSGRs in developing countries have been largely unsuccessful in measuring success in terms of implementation or impact. My own research on the MATT 2 programme – an £11m leadership programme focused on the Bangladesh Civil Service – presents a mixed picture. In terms of impact on over 1300 top civil servants, the results are impressive. There is evidence of both change in mindset and a more reform oriented approach which has helped deliver results. However, it is too early to be sure of its lasting benefit and it is ominous that institutional changes to the Human Resource Management System are much slower.

This reflects entrenched interests and a civil service which, since colonial times, has been seen as the tool of politicians rather than an independent body to serve government.

Yet Bangladesh's progress is enormous in comparison to that of Pakistan, where lack of stable government and a democracy has stymied development. Bangladesh is an imperfect democracy, but one with a healthy and vibrant civil society. There is a free press and powerful NGOs such as BRAC and the Grameen Bank. These, along with technological improvements, such as electronic banking systems for migrant workers, have helped develop a relatively liberal economy with increasing demands for justice and human rights.

In conclusion, it is possible to identify two sources for V&A. One is external and influenced by donors, but remains subordinate to the more important internal drivers for change. The evidence here is that major changes are not brought about by technical assistance. They can draw attention to the major injustices and provide access to international good practice, but play a relatively secondary role. Moreover aid is more easily directed at the centre of government. It is less effective in influencing changes not prioritised by host governments. We can see the very limited impact of attempts to decentralise services in Africa where they inevitably contradicted governments keen to hold on to the reins of power.

Too often donors and their projects can be grossly inefficient unless well co-ordinated. They can divert local talent to overseas training and study tours that benefit individuals but rarely extend beyond the lucky few. In Bangladesh, it is also clear that change in state institutions is a long-term game and needs to be matched by political incentive, or the benefits will be captured by a small elite. What is required is a multi-dimensional V&A approach – working in the formal sector (top-down) and informal sectors (bottom-up).

There is no simple blueprint that can be applied. Instead, approaches need to be designed with a good knowledge of where the levers of power lie, coupled with an awareness of how communities can be encouraged to express their needs. At government level this is essentially a political process. For civil society it will often carry risks for the individual, so it makes better sense to work with institutions. The strengthening of NGOs, however, is a difficult and long-term process. Better advocacy, campaigning and lobbying will all play their part but any approach must recognise that progress in one area depends upon reform of another. In short, a holistic and systemic approach is essential, combined with patience and continuity of policy. Unfortunately, these are the very qualities which are often absent in developing and fragile economies.

Colin Jacobs is Head of Governance and Reform, Education & Society SBU

Colin.Jacobs@britishcouncil.org

'Parental' responsibility and accountability in Ghana

Democracy has come a long way in Ghana since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1993.

In the process, the institution of MP has developed a hybrid character, consisting of a combination of standard formal expectations of constituency representation, legislation and executive oversight, and informal norms indicated by being a 'family head' of the constituency. Many of the features described above are probably not peculiar to Ghana, or perhaps even to Africa. The hybridisation of the MP's office may thus well indicate a more general phenomenon which has a series of direct and indirect consequences. The summary below is not an exclusive list, and since the negative effects of political clientelism in Africa are so well known, I also take this opportunity to highlight some positive effects of the hybridised MP institution.

The grafting of the informal 'family head' institution onto the MP role puts enormous pressures on office holders to be responsive to constituents' needs and priorities, and has also brought in an extra dimension for sanction. While sanction in the formal sense is possible at the ballot box every four years, the informal institution provides everyday tools of shame, harassment, collective punishment of the family, and loss of prestige and status. In effect, the accountability relationship between representative (agent) and citizens (principal) is much stronger than might appear from looking at the formal side of the institution only. There are already some manifest positive effects of this strong accountability relationship. Office holders feel pressured to speak on the floor of the House to bring to bear knowledge of their people's needs on the issues for debate. The norms of 'parental' responsibility that force MPs to contribute to the public discourse and constituency representation are positive in effect, even if at this early stage people seem less concerned with what is said by their MP, as long as they feel represented. With increased information and civic education, this may become a strong tool for effecting democratic responsiveness and make policy better adapted to the needs of constituents.

Most MPs report that the pressures for personal assistance, besides their negative sides, enhance their knowledge of the problems facing their constituency, which in turn improves their competence as law makers, although it rarely informs executive oversight. The informal institution of being a 'family head' also plays an enhancing role in making it a primary concern of MPs to bring development projects to their communities. Here it should also be noted that the traditional duties of the chiefs to represent and look out for their communities, rather than for certain individuals, also seem to play a positive role in promoting the provision of club and collective, rather than private and personal, goods.

A very interesting observation that may force us to refine some of our theoretical models is that the intense pressures for clientelistic accountability for strictly private needs can lead to office holders seeking to provide collective goods. When MPs seek general policy or at least community development solutions, as a means of alleviating some of the pressures for personal benefits arising from unsustainable clientelistic demands, the effect is the provision of collective goods. Widespread pressures to pay for individuals' hospital bills become a national health insurance scheme, invariant demands for payment of school fees become scholarship schemes, and so on. Political clientelism can endogenously undermine the conditions of its own existence.

Among the negative effects are, to mention but a few, the local party organisation members holding MPs accountable for increasingly expensive individual benefits; the executive demanding more or less absolute loyalty; and constituents' accountability pressures making demands on MPs' time and energy. These all act in ways that undermine serious legislative activity and executive oversight. In the case of Ghana, a contributing fact is the use of primaries in the two major parties, and the way these are structured to allow only local party executives to participate.

But part of the problem is also the lack of civic education and access to information which, in combination with poverty, makes clientelism a less expensive means of getting loyal followers than it is in a more affluent society.

In theoretical terms, this analysis suggests that while our existing theoretical models based on rationality assumptions take us a long way to understand the causes and effects of political clientelism, the literature has overlooked an important source of variation. Political clientelism is not necessarily prominent because state institutions are weak, as the current literature suggests. Political clientelism can also be prevalent when institutions are strong, just in ways that favour the provision of private good.

Staffan I. Lindberg is Research Director for the World Values Survey project Sweden, Research Fellow at the Quality of Government Institute, and Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This article is taken from *What Accountability Pressures do MPs in Africa Face and How Do They Respond? Evidence from Ghana*, published in the *Journal of Modern African Studies* http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/sil/downloads/Lindberg10_MPsinGhana.pdf

A seat at the table

The last 40 years have seen the blossoming of environmental rights and with them the ability of individuals to act to protect the resources they depend on.

Access to information, public participation, and access to justice have been critical in ensuring that individuals have a voice in decision-making. In many cases, such rights have not been put in place or remain unfulfilled; in others, access is progressing by leaps; in others, it slowly advances through long struggles.

Even in those countries where access rights exist, all citizens have not enjoyed these rights equally. A Seat at the Table shows that key barriers that are particularly acute for the poor still exist, and these barriers prevent them from influencing major environmental decisions.

In particular, individuals living in poverty face barriers of illiteracy, poor access to communication channels, high costs of access, risk, cultural expectations, and lack of official documentation. Yet the report also demonstrates some steps that governments have undertaken to design and implement policies and programs that address these barriers. The path to extending these rights will vary by country. Some do not yet have systems of governance conducive to basic access while others have more exhaustive procedures at most levels of government. Increasingly, however, governments, the private sector, and CSOs can learn from one another about innovations to include greater numbers of individuals in decision-making.

Most importantly, we hope that CSOs and individuals already working to expand access will take up the banner of more inclusive and useful access. CSOs can aim to establish standards, build up citizen demand for access, and hold governments accountable for providing access. CSOs engaged in legal battles can take on strategic cases that will help institutionalize the policy responses outlined in this paper.

Governments can also introduce and champion new standards of access and build on existing standards, working for implementation, expansion, and institutionalization of access rights. Some of this work will take place in legislatures through the passage of legislation. Other work will be led by forward-thinking agencies and individuals seeking fair implementation of existing laws and rules. In other cases, judicial systems will play a role in clarifying rights and responsibilities around access to information, public participation, and access to justice. Areas for innovation that relate to securing access for the poor are promising in the area of climate change with plans for funding and capacity building to reduce emissions due to deforestation and degradation (REDD).

Donors from both domestic and international organizations can work with CSOs to ensure that there are adequate funds to defend the rights of poor individuals and to advocate for reform of existing decision-making processes. Additionally, they can help to build the capacity of governments and to foster knowledge sharing about access implementation.

Over the next several years, the Access Initiative as well as WRI will continue its work to advance and broaden access, help to ensure that all individuals have the ability to exercise their access rights, and assist institutions in expanding their capabilities to foster more inclusive societies.

Joseph Foti is Senior Associate and Lalanath de Silva is Director of the World Resources Institute

This is an extract from *A Seat at the Table: Including the Poor in Decisions for Development and Environment*, published by the World Resources Institute

<http://www.wri.org/publication/a-seat-at-the-table>

An enterprising visit

Sir Stephen Bubb, CEO of the Association of Chief Executive of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) visited Manila in August to deliver talks on UK social enterprises at the prestigious Ateneo de Manila University and at the Asian Institute of Management.

Whilst in Manila, Sir Stephen had the opportunity to meet and talk with budding and established local social entrepreneurs. They compared ideas and insights and exchanged thoughts on similarities and differences between social enterprise models in the UK and the Philippines. He shares here his thoughts on his visit.

I'm en route to make a key note speech at the Asian social enterprise conference in Manila, courtesy of the great British Council. First stop on arrival here was the Embassy. Then a geographically short journey, though one which takes an hour, to meet with Go Negosyo and to speak to a gathering of some 100 social entrepreneurs. An exhilarating meeting, where I learn as much about the state of the sector here as they learn from me; but then it's crucial that even slightly ageing leaders like myself continue to learn and be inspired by others.

Go Negosyo is an advocacy body promoting social entrepreneurs by arguing for change in "mindset and attitude". They say: "We believe that Filipinos can address poverty in the country by engaging in entrepreneurship and developing an optimistic, passionate, creative and innovative, resourceful diligent and persevering character. We encourage everyone to take charge and make the most of their resources and abilities."

They produce a range of great books and provide mentoring support and advice. I met Mary Canon-Abaquin, who has produced a best seller book for parents, *8 Simple Secrets to Raising Entrepreneurs*, on how to develop these skills in kids. They even have social enterprise on the curriculum, something the Social Enterprise Coalition has yet to achieve in the UK!

I speak about experience in the UK, but emphasise the importance of leadership development. I strike a cord when I tell them ACEVO believes the hallmarks of leaders in the third sector are professionalism and passion. Professionalism without passion is sterile, whilst passion on its own just gets you well meaning amateurs. I say it's the major defining difference between us and commerce.

I'm asked about the need for laws to promote social enterprise, but I explain there is no legal form for social enterprise in the UK; many are registered charities. I argue it's attitude that matters, not process. It's the message that Go Negosyo promotes. They are right.

The highlight of the tour: addressing the Social Enterprise Summit held at the Jesuit University, the Ateneo de Manila. This University is one of the foremost learning institutions in the country and is a forerunner in teaching a social enterprise course.

I was talking about "scaling up", because the key issue here is how to develop third sector social entrepreneurship and, if it is to make a real dent in rural and urban poverty social enterprise, it needs to go to scale.

An interesting reflection on our own sector when there is debate about large v small. Here though, they do not have the luxury of that debate: when half of Manila's citizens live in slums and some 18m people in rural villages have no electricity, then scale is urgent.

I argued that, in general terms, five factors are needed for scale.

- First, there clearly has to be opportunity to scale up. In the UK this is provided by public service reform and by a policy commitment to "big society".
- Access to capital is crucial for growth. This applies here as much as in the UK. And I'm glad to say there is not the same debate we have about grants v loans. Here there is a very clear understanding that loans are a crucial way of growing organisations; whether micro finance or social venture capitalists. They see the value of loans as empowering sustainable development. I talked of the Big Society Bank idea and the work of the Social Investment Business as "engaged investors".
- Government support: I argued crucial to sector development in the UK has been work with Government, advocacy and campaigning to get Governments on side.
- Collaboration and partnership: I argued that one way to achieve scale is through collaborative approaches across the sector between organisations and between the public, private and third sectors. I also stated that one way to secure scale without undermining the value of localism was to develop consortia that harness scale but involve a framework of local and small scale producers.
- Leadership: the bottom line is the quality of the people at the top of the organisation. You loan to individuals, not organisations. It's the attitude that matters. Whatever form of body you are, you need to have the attitude of social entrepreneurs. You need strong leaders and invest in their training and development.

I also spoke at a dinner later in the day for members of the faculties at the university and students, especially those taking a module on social enterprise. But the highlight for me has been meeting and visiting social enterprises. I had an amazing brunch with the founder trustees of GKonomics, five dynamic and elegant ladies who are clearly a force to be reckoned with. Their vision is to build a new generation of producers; building enterprises which produce world class products they then bring to market.

Earlier today I went to visit the "Echo Store". This is another social enterprise set up by a number of formidable women like Chat Juan (interesting how the social enterprise sector here is dominated by women). Chat ran her own successful coffee shop company until she sold it and went into developing the Echo store concept. The store sells a range of products from their own line of organic cosmetics, coffee, jewellery made from natural and recycled products, dog and cat products, wastepaper baskets etc.

Continued overleaf

They have grand plans for expansion and already have a farm and restaurant. They source their products from many rural or marginalised communities along both fair trade and organic principles.

My last visit of the trip was to see Jim Ayala of Hybrid Social Solutions. They are dedicated to supporting rural communities that have no access to electricity or usable water by developing solar energy and water purification plants. He showed me their solar lamp which will give enough light to light a room. This proves both inexpensive but also cuts out the use of dangerous lighting methods like kerosene lamps. You can even recharge your mobile off it!

The British Council have done me proud by organising all the visits in such an efficient way. The British Council is a fine organisation. It is often forgotten it is part of the third sector and indeed Vernon Ellis their current Chair was knighted at the same time as me! They have been doing a lot of work in Asia promoting the idea of social enterprise and bringing UK experience to help in the development of social entrepreneurs across the region.

Sir Stephen Bubb is CEO of ACEVO

The full account of Stephen's visit can be found on his blog <http://bloggerbubb.blogspot.com>



Legal eagles in Nigeria

The Justice for All (J4A) Programme is a partnership between the Nigerian Government and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and is managed by the British Council.

The five year programme (2010 – 2015) is the successor to the Access to Justice (A2J) and Security, Justice and Growth (SJG) Programmes, also managed by the British Council. Here, Programme Manager Bob Arnott explains more about the progress J4A, as well as the partnerships enabling it to have impact.

The passage of bills into law is typically a slow and painstaking process and Nigeria is no different. The proposition of new laws and amendments to existing legislation is a continuous cycle as the legal framework strives to keep up with evolving customs, societal perspectives and advancements in science and technology that affect everyone. A new bill may be initiated for many reasons – for example to reflect the special needs or interests of a particular group in society, to strengthen and underpin the work of a mandated body or to close a loophole in an existing law that has become outdated. As a natural consequence there are many overlapping and conflicting interests that come into play when competing for the time of key officials who are needed to make essential contributions during the process of law making and the passage of any bill.

The Legal Aid Act Amendment Bill

Broaden the scope of Legal Aid Councils to make support more widely available Provide for greater representation of women and therefore women's needs at board level.

Establish a legal aid trust fund to increase access to legal aid for the most vulnerable.

The Legal Aid Amendment Act Bill was into Law in July 2011

At many points on the journey and for any number of reasons, a bill can be thrown out, stall indefinitely or return to an earlier stage in the process for reconsideration. With maximum access to influential support and strong champions, an executive bill can take up to three years to become law. In contrast, a private members bill, particularly one that is relevant to a smaller interest group, or the vulnerable and voiceless in society can take anything from four to twenty years to make its journey into law. A sustained cooperative and coordinated effort in respect of lobbying and awareness raising in parallel with highly specialised legal input are the critical factors affecting the outcome of an endeavour that can last more than a decade.

The Legislative Advocacy Core Group (LACG) is a coalition of state and non-state actors established in 2009 with the support of the DFID funded Security, Justice and Growth Programme (SJG). The group engages with a range of stakeholders to raise awareness of and pursue Justice Sector Bills that are before the National Assembly.

"The law affects every member of our society, so we all have an interest in ensuring that it is relevant, responsive, effective, accessible and just. Your participation in the ongoing renewal of our legal system is essential. Get involved and make a difference!"

**Senator Umaru Dahiru
Chairman, Senate Committee on Justice, Human Rights and Legal Matters**

In October 2010 the LACG and Justice for All (J4A) collaborated to shortlist bills that underpin the work of Justice for All (J4A) partner agencies such as the Nigeria Police, formal and informal justice sector organisations and anti-corruption agencies. The bills that were selected were those that would benefit most from intensive support and stand a reasonable chance of being passed before conclusion of the legislative session.

Over the following months, J4A supported the LACG to develop strategies for lobbying activities, media campaigns, round table discussions and public engagement. Most importantly, LACG was able to influence multiple interest groups to identify areas of common interest and support fewer, but mutually beneficial bills, replacing a number that were aimed at addressing very similar underlying issues.

The impact of this collaboration was threefold: it reduced the number of bills being pursued, it intensified support for the issues that mattered most to stakeholders and it countered bills in similar topic areas that stakeholders felt would be particularly detrimental to marginalised interest groups. An example of this was the Violence Against Persons Bill which ultimately subsumed eleven bills aimed at addressing violence against women as the core issue.

The Human Rights Commission Amendment Bill

Independence of the Commission free from Government or other political interference.

Decisions of the Governing Council of the Commission are now equivalent to that of the High Court in relation to investigations and hearing complaints.

Provides for a trust fund to compensate victims of human rights abuses and to the research and policy work of NGOs / CSOs.

Provides for the establishment of a Legal Aid Fund to increase access to legal support.

The Human Rights Commission Amendment Bill was the first of the supported bills to be passed in February 2011

Continued overleaf

The LACG and J4A engaged with over one hundred senior influencers – members of the National Assembly, heads of civil society organisations and legal specialists who met regularly and worked tirelessly to ensure that strategically positioned advocates, champions and media groups were kept informed of core issues. Through its network of over two hundred civil society organisations, LACG mobilised more than one thousand representatives and members of the public to attend public hearings at the National Assembly where well informed stakeholders were able to meet resistance head on, in person.

LACG has achieved significant success in the pursuit of key bills, including the National Human Rights Commission Act Amendment, Evidence Act Amendment Bill and the Legal Aid Council Act Amendment Bill. LACG also played a vital role in the Money Laundering (Prohibition) and the Terrorism Prohibition Bill that have been passed into law. As a direct result of their work, the Violence Against Persons bill has gained support from members of the National Assembly. The bill has been through public hearing where more than 100,000 members of the public participated. The report of the public hearing was presented at the floor of the National Assembly for consideration in March 2011 and efforts are being intensified for its passage into law.

Bob Arnott
National Programme Manager, J4A

Bob.Arnott@sjg.britishcouncil.org

The Violence Against Persons Bill

Defines specific offences and police powers in relation to acts that disproportionately affect women and children, including:

- Sexual violence, harassment, exploitation, assault, spousal battery and people trafficking
- Traditional customs that are harmful including genital mutilation, child marriage and widowhood practices

The Violence Against Persons Bill has been adopted and is undergoing other necessary procedures prior to passage

The Prison Act Amendment Bill

- Emphasise rehabilitation from first contact
- Fully apply the provisions of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners
- Better use of bail to reduce overcrowding
- Remove the provision for hard labour
- Special provision for the treatment of HIV infected prisoners
- Require the establishment of legal service offices for inmates in prisons

The Prison Act Amendment Bill has been passed by both houses and awaits President Assent



Strengthening UK-China links

“This trip was more exciting than I ever expected. We visited a range of social enterprises in the UK and had really useful discussions with senior staff. I truly believe a social entrepreneur network between China and UK has been created after our visit. I’m looking forward to learning more and collaborating with UK peers through the network.” Zhang Junru

Ms. Zhang is one of nine dynamic Chinese social entrepreneurs invited by the British Council Beijing office to attend a study visit to the UK this August. The visit began with a visit to Spring Gardens to meet Education & Society’s Andrew Picken and Christine Wilson, who lead the British Council’s social enterprise work. They gave a broad overview of the Skills for Social Entrepreneurs project at a global level.

In the following days, the Chinese social entrepreneurs met and talked with a wide range of inspiring UK social entrepreneurs, including Remploy, Divine Chocolate and Coin Street Community Builders.



Photo: the Chinese delegation visits social enterprise Remploy

This study visit was funded by the ArcelorMittal Foundation as a part of the annual award scheme of the Skills for Social Entrepreneurs project in 2011. It is a non-cash award providing Chinese social entrepreneurs this unique opportunity to visit social enterprises in the UK. There was also a ‘World café’ arranged around issues relevant to social enterprise, such as branding and marketing and corporate engagement.

Engaging strongly with a wide range of partners has been a crucial element of the success of the project in China. Since it was formally launched in June 2009 it has worked with the China Social Entrepreneur Foundation, the Narada Foundation and the More Love Foundation, and has granted nearly RMB 5 million of awards (approx. £ 500,000) to 35 Chinese social enterprises.



Photo: Skills for Social Entrepreneurs Project Award Ceremony in Beijing, 24 January 2011

In addition to financial awards, we have also formed partnerships with corporate partners like Diageo, ArcelorMittal and EMC to provide non-cash technical support to Chinese social entrepreneurs through consultancy services, study visits and online dialogues between Chinese and UK social entrepreneurs.

And finally, following a study visit, a truly positive signal! In 2007, two advisors from Beijing Municipal government’s policy advisory institute joined a British Council study tour to the UK to look at Social Innovation and Social Enterprise. They were deeply impressed by the development of the SE sector and the UK government’s support to the sector; on their return, they concentrated their efforts on introducing the concept to government officials and have advised the Beijing government on innovation in social management. On June 3rd 2011, a policy paper on innovating social management was approved by the Municipal Party Committee of Beijing, in which it states it should ‘proactively support the development of social enterprise and develop social services’. This is believed to be the first time that social enterprise has been mentioned in any official government policy paper in China. This is a policy breakthrough that we are able to take some credit for and, hopefully, it’s the first of many.

Up to now, 580 practising or potential Chinese social entrepreneurs have attended the four-day residential skills for social entrepreneurs training. The British Council is now seen as the leading international organisation in China helping foster the social enterprise sector and evidence of this success and positioning is clear to see from the willingness of partners to work with, and fund the project. This strong partnership funding has given the project a grant to income ratio of 1:1.64 after just two years, ensuring the team is able to deliver a broad-based approach to supporting the sector.

Yanni Peng
Assistant Director Social Development, British Council China

[Peng.Yanni@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:Yanni.Peng@britishcouncil.org.cn)

Afghanistan – the work goes on

The Nordic+ donors in Afghanistan have developed the Tawanmandi programme to strengthen Afghan civil society to advocate improved governance.

Denmark, DFID, Norway and Sweden are funding the programme, with Finland possibly contributing later. DFID is the lead donor and is responsible for contracting the supplier.

The purpose of the programme is to strengthen selected civil society organisations to improve the Afghan government's accountability, responsiveness and respect for human rights. Tawanmandi, which means 'strengthening' in the Dari language, will focus on a number of key sectors to increase civil society organisations' capacity for advocacy and constructive engagement with government. Civil society organisations will be invited to submit proposals for funding which focussing on the following five themes: human rights; access to justice; anti-corruption; peace building and conflict resolution; and the media. 'Women and youth' and 'outside Kabul' are two important cross-cutting themes.



Photo: DelPHE Afghanistan
©Oleg Shipin

The contract to manage the programme was awarded to the British Council after a competitive tender process, under the DFID Framework Social Development in Conflict Affected Environments Agreement in August 2011.

The programme is worth £23.35m over 24 months. Most of this budget (approx. £18.5 m) is a grant fund for Afghan civil society organisations.



Photo: DelPHE Afghanistan
©Oleg Shipin

The project started in August 2011. UK and international staff have been working from Manchester, as plans to depart for Afghanistan were disrupted by the attack on the British Council compound. The team of three have been in Kabul since the first week of September, with a view to commencing project inception. The scheduling of activity for the first 6-month inception period and, more specifically for the project's first 2 months, has been agreed.

David Knox
Senior Adviser, Social Development, Education & Society

David.Knox@britishcouncil.org

Voice of a changemaker

On the flight from Cairo to London, so many things were running through my mind. I was contemplating how interesting it would be to meet Tunisian activists after what I'd seen on TV happening in their country; how great it was to meet young people from the UK and discuss our societies; and how valued I felt that the British Deputy Prime Minister wanted to meet us and listen to what we have to say.



The British Council invited young activists from Egypt and Tunisia to meet their English counterparts, as well as meet Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, as well as government officials and NGO representatives to discuss the current situation in the Middle East and the potential role of the UK in supporting social development. There were three days of intense meetings, with a lot of debates, questions, aspirations, concerns, plans and more debate. I needed time after it was all over to start putting things together in a way that made sense.

It was absolutely amazing to meet some of the young people who have triggered the Arab Spring all across the Middle East. We discussed the similar challenges we faced in our countries and how we overcame them. We talked about our fears, but also our hope and commitment to push our communities forward.

The most interesting conversation I had was with Ziad, a young computer engineer from Tunisia who had been part of the revolution from day one. He expressed his fears to me that Tunisian women would lose all the gains they have made – including prohibiting polygamy and supporting equal employment opportunities – if extremists make it to power. I too feel passionately about this, but I am sure that as long as there are men like Ziad, and women like Wassila and Samar – other activists I met – Tunisia will only go forward.

During our time, we also had the opportunity to meet Martin Davidson, the British Council's CEO. We discussed the UK riots, and it was very interesting to talk about the marginalisation of young people in that was one of the factors. We also talked about social cohesion in Egyptian and Tunisian societies, as well as the need for change in the UK, from a consumer culture to an inclusive one, stressing social solidarity and equal opportunities for all.

When asked about the role of the British Council within the UK in the coming phase, he stated that it is not too wise to jump to conclusions and take immediate actions, but better to analyse the situation and take action after careful planning, when more variables are clear. It was a point I really agreed with, since I believe that most of the time we tend to fix the symptom and not the real cause.

Another highlight was that Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg allocated time in his busy schedule to be with us. He was honest about the UK interest in the region and admitted making the mistake of favouring stability in the Middle East over reform in the past. And it was ironic to find Mr. Clegg talk about the UK's commitment to invest in young people in Egypt and Tunisia and encourage investment to provide more job opportunities, while inside the UK youth unemployment is on the rise, the costs of living have become high and higher education fees are skyrocketing from next year.

During our visit, we also saw a presentation by the Young Foundation's Mark Williamson on wellbeing. This stated that it can be misleading to depend solely on GDP as an indicator for how well societies are functioning, since studies have shown that happiness and increase in income are not necessarily related. Wellbeing and Life Satisfaction can now be measured and, together with other economic indicators, it can give us a more concrete analysis of how our societies are performing.

We discussed different aspects of wellbeing, including, spirituality, social equality, and the surrounding environment.

Finally, we met Christian Turner, Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for a mutually challenging discussion on many levels.

The world is changing, and it is our generation that is actively changing it. Information nowadays can no longer be blocked. We are better educated, connected; we are creative and passionate. The time has come when the whole world wants to listen to us and know what we have to say. We are driving things and taking matters into our hands. We are cautious about where we are going, but we are proud.

Yasmin Galal
Project Manager, Political Empowerment of Women, the Alliance for Arab Women

Social (enterprise) mobility

The Croatian British Council team has been successful in another bid to the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo da Vinci. This funding encourages partnership, mobility and best practice exchange among organisations.

As part of the Skills for Social Entrepreneurs project, Leonardo funding will ensure additional training for eleven local trainers and policy makers in the field of social entrepreneurship, in the form of short working attachments with various UK organisations, social enterprises and institutions promoting and developing social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new concept in Croatia and, although it is an underdeveloped area, there is a growing interest in it. Our partnerships are wide ranging, including the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, the Governmental Office for NGOs, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the Social Entrepreneurs' Forum.

In the UK, partners who are hosting the visits include are the Young Foundation, the National Social Marketing Centre, Social Enterprise Europe Ltd, i-genius, Third Sector Hebrides and Skillbuilders CIC.

The study visits will provide Croatian policy makers and social entrepreneurs with opportunities to learn from the UK's rich experience in social enterprise. During these visits, the participants will gain practical knowledge, exchange ideas with British colleagues and experts in the fields and develop new links with the UK organisations.

Rosana Besednik
Arts, Science and Society Manager, British Council
Croatia

Rosana.Besednik@britishcouncil.org.hr

A whole world of change

Change Your World is a campaign initiated by the British Council's Global Changemakers, in collaboration with the UN Programme on Youth, to support the International Year of Youth and celebrate International Youth Day. 12 August is a day of awareness recognised by the United Nations, which aims to draw attention to youth issues around the world. 12 August 2011 was the end –and highlight – of this campaign, with young people all over the world organising events.

Working with the UN Year of Youth team, we started the Change Your World 2011 campaign earlier this year. We wanted to showcase what young people are doing on International Youth Day. The reactions are beyond our expectations. Within no time, we had 6,000 fans on Facebook and many inspiring discussions. But it is not just 'clicktivism', as the campaign sparked hundreds of activities taking place all over the world, ranging from town hall meetings to sport events, from beach clean-ups to awareness raising marches.

In Afghanistan, a Changemaker organised a [basketball match](#) for girls and women - and in Sri Lanka, Changemakers broke the World Record with thousands of young people forming a [human mosaic](#) of the word YOUTH! In Sierra Leone, a Changemaker worked together with the local British Council and organised a peace conference. And these are just a few examples of the hundreds of activities that took place all around the world.

The campaign that the British Council ran with the Year of Youth team was a great way of continuing and building on a partnership with the UN. More importantly, it acknowledged the work of young people making real change in their communities.

Katherine Hermans
Head of Communications, Global Changemakers

Katherine.Hermans@britishcouncil.org



Building for the future

In Vietnam, the Doi Moi or ‘Renovation’ process has brought about enormous change for Vietnam. It has brought the benefits of economic growth; however, there are still significant gaps in terms of inequality and access to basic social services.

This presents an opportunity for Social Enterprise to step in to the limelight as a model to continue economic growth, through combining successful business with social responsible outcomes.

So we’re delighted to be able to announce that, in partnership with the Centre for Social Improvement Programme (CSIP), we have successfully selected another ten excellent social enterprise projects that will attract seed funding making the total numbers of SE supported initiatives to 30 for Vietnam.



We have also just made a big step forward with the first ever multi-stakeholder Social Enterprise conference in August 2011. The aim of the conference was to bring together influencers, including Government, to take a leadership role in developing the sector. The event attracted 70 participants from different agencies of the Government and Central Party of Vietnam, from donor communities and investors, domestic social enterprises, international consultants, civil society, researchers and the media.

On day one we organised a field trip for the participants to three outstanding social enterprises in Vietnam: KOTO, Morning Star Centre (Sao Mai Centre) and Bao Lam Fertiliser Company. KOTO recruits and trains hospitality and restaurant service skills for homeless and street children, while Sao Mai Centre is widely known as a non-profit organisation that provide early diagnosis and intervention and care service for children suffering autism and mental disorder. Bao Lam Fertiliser Company was selected for the field trip because of its initiative to produce fertilizer out of urban waste, which helps solve the urban pollution problem, create jobs and contribute to the general development of the economy.

This provided an excellent platform for a rich dialogue on day two, where we explored the legal environment in Vietnam, management capacity and the role that Government’s play in other countries such as the UK and Thailand in providing a conducive environment to grow the sector.

One particular highlight was that the Ministry of Planning and Investment expressed interest in working with us to accelerate the development of a suitable and adequate ecosystem for social enterprise to grow in Vietnam.

We are very confident that in the last three years, we have laid a very strong foundation for the development of the social enterprise sector in Vietnam. The focus of the next phase will be on lobbying for the establishment of a favourable ecosystem to nurture the development of this emerging and important sector in Vietnam. Through our national and international partnerships, we will explore ways to do this.

Cao Thi Ngoc Bao
Assistant Director, British Council Vietnam

Bao.Cao@britishcouncil.org.vn