



Making change: An exploration into volunteer contributions to social accountability in VSO

Conducted by IDS-VSO Social Accountability Learning Partnership

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Abstract

This report presents evidence from a scoping study of VSO volunteers to better understand the ways in which they are contributing to social accountability outcomes in VSO's programmes.

Introduction

This report analyses volunteers' responses and reflections on how they understand and act to promote social accountability (SA) according to their placement. It is the third output in a series of activities undertaken from February to May 2019, as part of a scoping exercise defined as a preliminary exploration of volunteer contributions to accountability. It aims to inform VSO's thinking for developing further SA research and practice. The findings presented in this report have been synthesised based on data drawn from interviews with volunteers, and by considering these data with reference to several key documents which set out VSO's vision and strategy for their volunteers' contribution to SA. This research emerged from a recommendation from the first Practice Briefing Paper of the Social Accountability Learning Partnership. The intention was to strengthen the evidence base on volunteer contributions to social accountability outcomes. VSO staff have gathered anecdotal evidence of cases in which VSO-managed volunteers have been accompanying or pushing forward accountability efforts. However, these do not seem to be captured systematically. This inquiry is based on skype interviews with VSO volunteers (international, national, and ICS). It is a preliminary exploration of volunteer contributions to accountability, and aims to inform VSO's framework for further SA research and practice. It should be understood as a scoping piece which could help VSO understand more about:

- Which volunteers are working on actions that can be considered as building social accountability locally or across the system, and in which country offices or contexts are they located
- What accountability wins and challenges have they experienced in context? Are there examples of good practice?
- What emerging cross-cutting factors might inform VSO's SA strategy and any future SA research initiatives?

Process of the Scoping

1. Selection of volunteers by VSO staff
2. Interview guidelines prepared by IDS and discussed with members of the LP who volunteered to contribute to design
3. Execution of semi-structured interviews mainly via Skype at times with participation of other LP members engaged with the scoping. 3 interviews were submitted in a written form and 3 interviews were conducted face to face
4. Generation of preliminary Analytical Framework based on the responses gathered through the interviews with contribution from LP members engaged in the process

5. Categorisation of responses was carried out according to framework by IDS staff

Summary of the main findings

Some of the main findings are:

1. VSO volunteers are mainly contributing to SA through building rights awareness, capacity and agency with primary actors and opening spaces for dialogue with duty bearers. However, the majority are not addressing barriers to people's agency created by invisible power and more information is needed to understand how rights are being understood and the quality and outcomes of the engagement
2. There is limited evidence that volunteers or VSO staff are bridging, linking, and building pro-accountability coalitions; some examples exist at local level but there is almost no mention of work done vertically. Moreover these coalitions do not appear to include other relevant and powerful actors such as the media and private sector.
3. VSO is working more on the demand side than perhaps has been the perception, although this may be because of the bias in the sample of volunteers interviewed. However, this investment in the 'supply side' does not appear to be enhancing the experience of working on SA for 'demand side' volunteers, since progress on the supply side has been inconsistent and not institutionalised.
4. The use of SA technologies was identified mostly by those respondents who have been trained on SA tools such as social audits, and whose one aspect of their placement is linked to accountability.

The document presents more detailed evidence of this across three sections: Section 1 situates the strategies identified by volunteers with reference to the 'Quadrant of Entry Points' through which SA may be practiced by VSO volunteers. Section 2 looks at the more specific actions for supporting accountability efforts according to VSO's Social Accountability Theory of Change (SA ToC) and maps these according to type of placement. Section 3 takes as a basis VSO's Relational Volunteering model to discuss gaps and potential areas to be addressed. Finally, Section 4 provides recommendations for the future development of VSO's work on SA.

Background information on respondents

A total of 24 interviews were scheduled, with a total of 19 completed. This number is above the 15 interviews initially envisaged. Table 1 presents some key characteristics of the interviewees.

Table 1. Characteristics of participants in the Scoping Research interviews

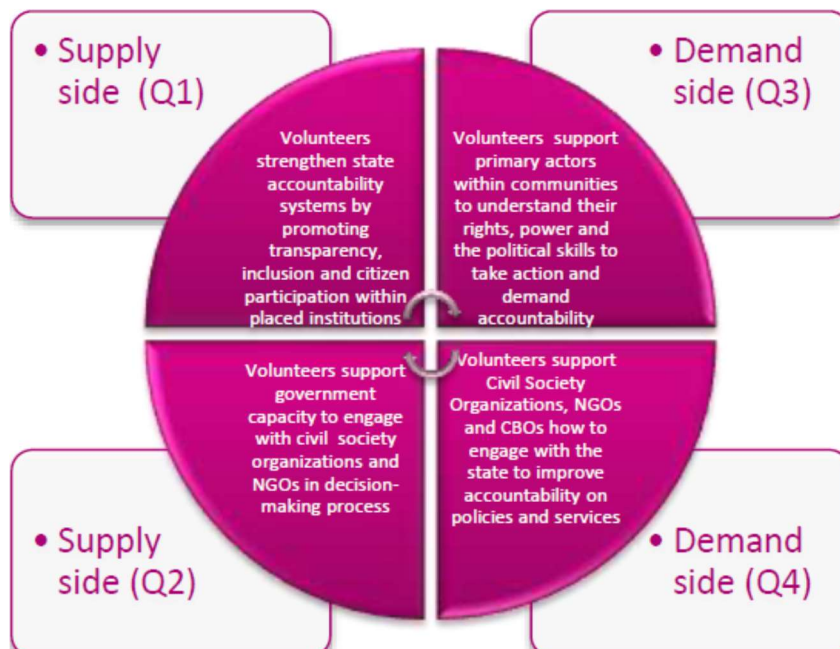
Country of placement	Type of placement	Sub-group	Theme	Based at	Age range	Gender	Ethnic min (Y/N)	Member of party (Y/N)	Involved in politics (Y/N)
Kenya	National		Education	CBO	26-34	F	N	N	N
Kenya	National		Education	Government institution	18-25	F	Y	N	N
Kenya	National		Education	Government institution	18-25	F	Y	N	N
Tanzania	International		Resilience and SA	Government institution	50+	F	N	N	N
Kenya	International		Education	Government institution	50+	F	N	N	N
Tanzania	National		Youth	Government institution	26-34	M	N	N	N
Tanzania	International		Youth	Government institution	26-34	F	N	N	N
Tanzania	Community	District youth council	Youth	VSO	26-34	M	N	N	Interest
Nepal	Community		All	CBO	35-50	M	N	N	N
Nepal	National		DRR and SA	NGO	26-34	F	N	N	N
Rwanda	National		Health (SRHR)	VSO HQ OFFICE	26-34	F	Y	N	N
Rwanda	National		Disability Inclusion and SRHR	VSO HQ OFFICE	26-34	F	N	No answer	No answer
Uganda	National	ICS	Youth and Liv	CBO	18-25	M	Y	Y	Y
Uganda	National	ICS	Youth and Liv	CBO	18-25	F	N	N	No answer
Uganda	International	ICS	Youth and Liv	CBO	18-25	F	N	N	N
Philippines	National		Health(SRHR)	CBO	35-50	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer
Kenya	Community	National	Liv and SA	CSO	26-34	M	N	N	N
Kenya	Community	National	Liv and SA	CBO	26-34	M	N	N	Y
Kenya	Community	National	Liv and SA	CBO	26-34	M	N	N	N

1. Volunteer contributions and strategies for advancing SA from different volunteer profiles, perspectives and placements

The research used the SA volunteer quadrant developed by VSO to locate the contributions of volunteers across the service delivery system- both demand and supply side. This led to two sets of findings:

1. Volunteer contributions to SA on both the demand and supply sides of the quadrant
2. Volunteer strategies to address accountability problems faced in their work

Figure 1. Social Accountability Volunteer Quadrant



Volunteer Contributions to SA across the quadrant

Social accountability *is interpreted differently according to volunteer type* (community volunteer/CV, national volunteer/NV, international volunteer/IV) as well as by placement type (government institution or civil society/community). Further, we found that understandings and practices of SA remain siloed and are manifested mainly amongst volunteers whose role is explicitly to work on accountability (e.g. promoting youth voice). Considering the sample of 19 interviewees (Table 1), there is very limited evidence that SA is embedded across all volunteering practice.

Considered by the SA quadrant, we find that:

Q1 approach (promoting the supply of accountability) was mostly manifested by NVs (and one IV), some based in government institutions, and some in national CSOs. More evidence came from CSO-based volunteers, who made reference to

reminding government officials of laws which support SA; attempts they had made to open up space for influence in local budget decisions; efforts to explain or provision of training on inclusion to officials, consultation with officials; and information provision to authorities. In particular, volunteers mentioned the need to change attitudes. From the 'inside' this was approached by two volunteers, through one-to-one mentoring and demonstrating inclusive ways of working. From the outside, this meant providing information, reminding officials of laws, duties etc. Those working with national CSOs (Rw, Disb Incl, NV; Kn, Edu, NV-01) were aware of laws and the need to promote and build understanding amongst state officials and change mindsets.

"The biggest challenge is getting through to government/government officials. Getting them to meet the people is not easy because they think they are busy and you don't appreciate that. I think if we continue to empower them about their duty and the fact that they are accountable to the people will get them to be more responsible" (Kn, Edu, NV-01, CSO).

Q2 approach (promoting capacities for duty bearers to engage with citizens)

was more mixed. There was significant evidence of efforts to promote capacities mainly by CVs and an IV placed with community-based organisations (CBOs); an NV and an IV placed with government; and an NV placed with a CSO. The role of CVs here overlaps with Q4 (see below). Activities mentioned that fit with the Q2 approach include: Taking officials to community meetings; supporting local government with resources or transport to engage with community; 'showing local leaders' evidence; 'empowering them about their duty'; setting up multi-stakeholder committees; 'triggering' – getting officials to think about accountability; and influencing or raising awareness amongst local officials about community engagement.

An IV emphasised her role in promoting awareness on the supply side; also in promoting spaces for government to come together with non-state actors, i.e. multi-stakeholder committees.

CVs mentioned some local-level efforts to encourage government to share information, and supporting forums to bring youth and government actors together. Some CVs critiqued government lack of engagement with civil society, and the frustration of promoting spaces for government to engage with civil society which are not accessed, or are not effective: the youth platform is perceived by government as threat; we meet with government, but government doesn't listen; 'we are trained to engage government but they aren't approachable, or want allowance'. Others mentioned how providing information to local government led to the volunteer gaining their trust as 'helpful', leading to positive outcomes (Np, CV, CBO), and an NV working with government to promote youth inclusion also experienced a change of attitude:

"I met up with the chairperson of district, explained how the youth were feeling, and so he decided to come back and do open interviews with all that were interested in the project. I had the opportunity to interview some of the youth, to select the best youth with minimum bias. I think that they realised that a new project needs to be open and inclusive to all the youth". (Tz, Youth, NV Gvt)

This would suggest that influencing government attitudes can be effective from the inside or the outside, but is difficult to achieve from either placement, and success may be because of personal relationships that were built (see section 3 on the relational model).

An ICS volunteer mentioned with relevance to this quadrant (and Q4) that *"We are trained to engage the local authority but they are not approachable. Anytime you go to them they ask 'Are you an NGO?' they expect Allowance, they expect to see an 'envelope put on the table' and this has made them inefficient and unreliable".* This would suggest the need for a cross-quadrant approach, building awareness from 'inside' and 'outside' where relational work has developed allies, in order to shift this kind of rent-seeking behaviour.

Q3 approach (supporting primary actors within communities to understand their rights, power and the political skills to take action and demand accountability) is reflected in the most responses from CVs NVs and IVs working with CSOs and CBOs. They reported activities such as mobilising with communities; translating rights into actions and claims; promoting youth voice in community meetings; providing information; providing communities with information on government structures; supporting NGOs and citizens to mobilise in campaigns (in this case an IV, who made the point that she couldn't personally sign - instead referred to VSO country office); empowering marginalised groups to have voice (disability); to recognise their rights (education); training to understand power relations; and communicating rights about services (health, youth).

In the context of Tanzania, a government-placed IV highlighted the need to work on the demand side, there is a need to build capacities of community members (e.g. young people) to *"do participation first to build leadership and character before going into SA"* this is a key aspect *"to get the right mindset to go into SA, because if volunteers are not oriented on how SA is done – I see people who have a very negative reaction, they will go to prison if they carry on in this way"* (Tz, Y, IV, govt). In addition, a NV placed with government mentioned the need to work with community leaders to ensure that they are *"politically neutral"*, as well as building their political awareness to understand and demand accountable services. Volunteers with CSOs and CBOs highlighted the importance of raising awareness about rights (to health, disability inclusion); about the SDGs especially SDG16; and community members knowing their *"rights, roles and responsibilities ... and know government plans and policies"* (Np, DRR&SA, NV, CSO).

A few also mentioned addressing inequalities and promoting understandings of power. A government-placed NV said *"during our social accountability training we had demonstrations and role play to understand the dynamics of power relations, those involved were community members and local authority"* (Kn, Edu, NV-02, Gov). Other aspects of Q3 emphasised voice and decision-making: *"teaching about how they [disabled children] can decide for themselves, not have others decide for them"* (Rw, Disb Incl, NV, CSO); and *"pushing the youth voice"* at barazas, and creating space for marginalised voices in community dialogues (Ug, ICS Youth, NV-02, CBO).

In terms of **Q4 , 'supporting Civil Society Organizations, NGOs and CBOs to engage with the state'**, some examples were provided from every placement type, and sector (i.e. not only SA specialists), although most responses came from those working with the youth platforms in Tanzania, education in Kenya, livelihoods and SA (Kenya) and community development in Nepal. IV and NVs working on youth voice and participation in Tanzania, are involved in teaching skills on political engagement 'in the right way'; teaching political neutrality. An NV and a CV (both with a CSO) described signposting to community members who to go to /petition, how to understand the system. An IV (in govt) described a role of linking people/information to government agencies, and a CV (with a CBO) works on connecting, working with both authorities and community. Indeed, CVs, NVs, and IVs (in govt, CSO, or CBO) in

some ways **described their role as mediators, opening spaces, making links between people, navigating how to speak to power**, etc.

"We tend to make the balance, see where they aren't ready for SA, where they need to learn to speak, be an ally with government. When the young people know the Youth Officer, and know they can drop by, that opens doors. Part of our role is as mediator". (Tz, Youth, IV Gvt)

Others spoke of specific SA tools that they were using: NVs and a CV placed in CSOs (Np, Kn, Tz) are using the complaint box, community scorecards, and several NVs (govt, CBO and CSO placed), described supporting or creating platforms and supporting dialogues for people to engage with authorities (Kn, Edu, NV, 01 CSO), (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 01 CBO), (Tz, Youth, NV Gvt).

2. Volunteer strategies taken to address accountability problems

In this section we seek to outline the roles and relational approaches (strategies) that volunteers adopted to operationalise social accountability and address accountability problems or deficits in their placements. This may be picked up in further research. In a further section below, we identify "allies" that volunteers are working with to deploy these strategies. More work is needed to better understand **how** and **with which stakeholders** volunteers work, to use their position and influence to effectively deploy these strategies.

Roles and relational approaches

Below, we group volunteer responses under 8 types of strategies. We use their own words and descriptions as much as possible, to give a sense of what they did. The following roles and relational approaches were identified:

1. Promoting accountability via community monitoring and vigilance
2. Facilitating citizens' understanding of their rights and the possibility of taking action
3. Building capacity of government officers
4. Bridging the distance between authorities and citizens (enabler, mediator, communicator)
5. Influencing policy formulation and decision making
6. Providing information and skills, awareness raising (no explicit mention of SA)
7. Promoting participation for more efficient programmes and services
8. Listening to the community's priorities and demands

i) Promoting accountability via community monitoring and vigilance and government transparency

Some of the volunteers are explicitly participating in formal accountability mechanisms (i.e. councils, committees, etc.) or in certain instances, as part of their work with VSO, creating them such as the case with public audits. These spaces are important but often are only accessed via an invitation from relevant authorities; the rules of engagement are only clear to individuals with certain education and trajectory; hence, can be exclusionary.

Information as a means of empowerment and platforms for transparency, that can help leaders to be accountable: in Kenya, Education International and National volunteers are active *'in all the committees to influence policy on allocation of funds, on how funds are used, how to monitor, assist to design tools to monitor funding, expenditure, gender equity, disability, indigenous, language etc ... We advise, advocate and influence policy, and design tools.'* (Kn, Edu, NV, 01)

On the demand side, in Nepal, a national volunteer working with an NGO was able to open up space for citizens to inform themselves about DRR programming:

'The most important thing we have done so far is the Public Audit by inviting people to attend a meeting at the beginning to learn about the programme and later on another meeting to show the expenditure. Also setting up a Monitoring Committee: one member of the locally elected representative and one or two from DMC and also local community members. Existence of a community notice board where all is communicated; activities' and budget allocations/breakdown. There was approval from the Municipality to start the project; they and the Ward authorities also had access to this from the beginning'. (Np, DRR & SA, NV)

Another aspect of their role is sharing information with citizens, in particular related to the new mechanisms in place appearing after the decentralisation process: *'We did some dissemination programme community on the right of persons in the constitution to citizen participation in government programmes- what they need to ask- role of government, etc. ... Use community scorecards making sure they know the programmes governments do, for example County Integ[rated] development plans and share information on how they go about for example a petition.'* (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 01)

In the health sector, information was also seen as vital to build family and community awareness of SRHR: *'[...]my mission is to break that misconception among the parents and young children. It is my hope to educate them to know that parents can educate young people to gain more information and the right information about sexual reproductive issues [...] Through this education, they can know the negative effects of teenage pregnancy, school drop outs, malnutrition and teenage motherhood. They can gain more confidence to support them in their decision making.'* (Rw, Health, NV)

ii) Facilitating citizens' understanding of their rights and the possibility of taking action

An additional aspect is enabling citizens not only to have information but to understand how it relates to rights, and to know how to act. Creating the awareness of rights is central to any initiative aiming to strengthen citizens' capacities to demand accountability. Substantial work is undertaken by VSO volunteers on this regard and there is potential for growing these actions as they are deemed as highly valuable and transformative. Ultimately, building people's capacities should be an ongoing process and integrated to most actions.

This was particularly highlighted by the volunteers working with youth councils in Tanzania. They see their work as 'directly 400% connected to accountability – we're trying to strengthen the youth council, so that young people have their own power, and can hold those in power accountable. Young people have their own ability, understand their rights and entitlements, we want them to have power to claim their rights.' (Tz, Youth, NV)

Also in Kenya, volunteers in two domains (livelihoods, education) highlighted the importance of this link between information and action, which can achieve a response from duty bearers: It's very important for them to understand who to follow or chase if they require support- we empower them with knowledge when they go to petition or ask for something (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 01); (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 02) my mission is to empower the most marginalised youth through information of available resources. (Kn, Edu, NV, 01) we empowered the citizenry on independent budget analysis and participatory budget planning. So after empowering them, we were able to contact the member of the County Assembly for a public hearing meeting just with the people. The members asked questions in relation to the county budget; what was allocated to the various schools in the county budget and they questioned the various figures. After the questions, the member of the county assembly responded.

In Uganda, ICS commented on how they facilitate citizens' understanding through community dialogues: We also do community dialogues which focus on the issues that are set up by the people themselves. VSO does not influence this. Recently they set up issues around alcoholism, the voice and participation of the authorities and livelihood. This dialogue provide space for them to voice out issues they could not have had the chance to voice out. (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 02)

Volunteers used their personal skills and networks to engage with citizens around their rights: Largely he goes with his own identity both known as someone who works for an NGO but also a peer interested in the wider community so he has no problem in meeting a family personally [translator]. When there are more specific problems in a sector, then a community group is formed to try to solve them. (Np, All, CV).

Volunteers' own learning and proactivity also featured as important. In Rwanda, a volunteer increased her knowledge and training through linking with a national CSO: 'There's a National Organisation of the Deaf, they have the policies, I take books from there, and try to read it, so that I can share them and use them in the advocacy (Rw, Disb Incl, NV). In Kenya, a volunteer has studied the laws and reviewed the youth policy, and has done summaries of information and presented in presentations. He uses the data and evidence to provide proof in holding them to account, and his role is to support people to understand who is accountable and the channels available to demand accountability. He also highlighted 'We explain the differences between the national and county governments – also clarifying the different functions of government branches' for more effective accountability efforts (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 03).

An education sector volunteer also highlighted the link between information and the possibility of action: Empowerment centres on information sharing and explaining mechanisms:

If it's about the budget, we let them know the allocation for them in the budget and tell them to try and make follow ups. When we also have access to some strategic documents like the financial bill we share it because there is a requirement that any public document need to undergo public participation before any billing [...] if there is a public hearing we get to the communities and tell them, there is a public hearing in

this your area on this day so get ready and participate and ask all the questions you have on that issues. (Kn, Edu, NV, 01)

Several IVs also highlighted that sharing experience from other countries of working with government officers and citizens to promote accountability is valuable (Kn, Tz, IVs).

iii) Building capacity of government officers

Government offices in most of the contexts are either unaware of accountability processes or unwilling to be scrutinised by society. However, volunteers showed that by providing trainings and modelling different ways of working when placed in government offices opportunities for collaboration open.

In the Philippines, a volunteer saw this as empowerment of officers: '*I empower staff to work with community and stimulate citizen participation*' (Ph, Health, NV). These activities rely on personal relationships, on trust and an understanding of the situation and limitations of government counterparts. An IV in Tanzania who placed herself as working both in social accountability and resilience, described her strategies to build accountability as mostly within the government organisation, through modelling new ways of working:

I always involve the 3 staff in all of the discussion we have at work. It is always best to hear their views and incorporate it in the report. This method allows my teammates to develop their analytical thinking and at the same time encourage them to understand the issues we need to address for the benefit of our stakeholders. The SG also started involving the rest of the team when we need to do document review. This is an indicator of a good leadership style, where you involve all members of the organization by allowing them to share their views and comments.

To an extent that can be seen as plugging service-delivery gaps where 'the issue is capacity, the school directors aren't trained, they lack capacity to do a development plan, they get national training but come back home and can't implement it. So we go out to schools and help them to implement (Kn, Edu, IV). More specifically, government officer awareness and behaviours for accountability can be improved through working closely with them. In Tanzania, a national volunteer highlighted their role in building the awareness and capacity of government partners: 'they should know that they are accountable ... govt officials know they are accountable but they develop behaviour that is not, even though they know this, so when we thinking of SA, it must start by getting them to understand how they are accountable, triggering them, what they are accountable for ... what they should do' (Tz, Youth, NV). This can also be achieved by making officers aware of citizens' realities and challenges: Yes what we actually do is, we find out from young people what their challenges are and we would often hold meetings and bring TVET managers to hear the concerns of youth and to find solutions (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 01).

iv) Bridging the distance between authorities and citizens

In many contexts, contact between citizens and duty bearers happens (if at all) during election campaigns; in most places, authorities remain far away from communities' problems. A critical relational role of the volunteer is to bridge the communication (and physical) distance between government officers and citizens. Volunteers have helped to bridge this gap by carefully opening spaces for authorities and citizens to

speak, listen and dialogue possible ways forward. This can mean increasing the communication capacity of deaf children and also working with parents and teachers is both to 'address the communication gap' and 'to help them to know that the person who has disability can help in the development of the country' (Rw, Disb Incl, NV). It is also manifested in examples of promoting citizen participation and linking citizens with authorities:

'Yes we've been able to organize forums inviting the youth and government office of the departments dealing with the youth. They have been able to read the opinions of these young people – e.g. National Youth Policy- we were able to show them how planning early ... We had CLM meeting and invited all youth dept and finance dept. We had drawn young people from various wards to come together to determine influencing for example on the 30% and the youth policy'. (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 03)

(Ph, Health, NV) advocacy/engaging with community council: *if people know what they are due, then they can make demands to government to receive them. They can do this e.g. in the core group in the community e.g. a group of indigenous people in the community may have a demand, they can go to the core group, which will lobby it. The core group is the municipal mayor, administrator, health officer, and also religious leader, dept of social welfare and development. This core group has a power, influence to the leaders in the govt and community leaders, [Note: there was no reflection on whether core group listens to marginalised groups]. And in Nepal, (Np, All, CV) volunteers talk to the local government officials and bring them to the village to meet the community.*

Again, the personal characteristics and networks of the individual volunteer were highlighted by some as critical in this work at community level. A local volunteer can perceive themselves as informed, well-placed, motivated, neutral, even a 'saviour discourse' was seen:

As a local volunteer it is easy for me to do this as I know the location, the issues. I do this (i.e. demand accountability) because I want to do it (as opposed to an NGO staff) not because I was assigned a task. I also know the local officials, so I'm helping the NGO to reach the local government

Trust makes the difference, because I'm perceived as acting on my own initiative.
(Np, All, CV)

Being an honest and transparent convenor, having no selfish interests was identified: *as I've been a social worker for years, people know that I rise above my own interests/vested interests. (Np, All, CV). Our role starts with the organisation of the dialogues, and during the dialogues, we let the communities own the discussion at first. After getting the issue they would like to discuss, we call in the local authority to come in and respond to the issues they raised. We do not take a side. (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 01).*

ICS volunteers in Uganda identified how community training taking place with local authority officers present, can enable SA awareness and skills:

'In doing this life skills training, we do them in the presence of the local authority on the ground. We encourage the youth to hold their leaders accountable as well as letting them know that they are also leaders. They should not just be waiting on their leaders but to let their leadership also start now.

Volunteers were aware of the need to manage the tension between state and citizens, to support the latter to claim rights and the former to listen and respond. As an IV in Tanzania commented:

Some young people are very vocal, angry with youth officers who never visit – so we tend to make the balance, see where they aren't ready for SA, where they need to learn to speak, be an ally with government. When the young people know the Youth Officer, and know they can drop by, that opens doors. Part of our role is as mediator. We understand that the youth officer has limitations ... they want to do fieldwork but don't have resources. So when we go, we invite them. They can add their official agenda onto our meeting. They see us as an ally? Yes, it's scratching each other's backs (Tz, Youth, IV).

v) Providing information and skills, awareness raising (no explicit mention of SA)

Some volunteers spoke of raising awareness around rights, without explicit mention of SA. This demonstrates how placements which are not set up with an emphasis on SA, can still contribute to building capacities on the supply and demand sides:

- (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 02) Many examples, different activities which raised awareness, e.g. 'We had a radio talk show on SDGs, reaching out to the community and let them know about them, how we can work together to achieve them. Both UK and national volunteers spoke out so well to explain the goals. We had questions coming in from the community'.
- (Ug, ICS Youth, IV) SA is not really part of the ICS placement. There is a mention about the activities linked to: 'Awareness raising of the SDGs; in particular Goal 16: strong institutions / increased transparency. She has had to undertake rights dissemination activities including: Radio talk show discussing each of the SDGs and call-ins to give opinions, etc. Sports events that also have a component of raising awareness of the SDGs. Quizzes on schools and other institutions. Mural painting'
- (Rw, Health, NV) It is all focus around providing knowledge about Health Rights: [...] Working with young adolescents, we sometimes start with their rights because some of them do they not know their rights but it's their right to request for some information from adult health care providers such as nurses, doctors and any other person along this chain. We also engage the parents on how they can request and confirm the rights of their children. For example, if a parent has a young adult who has become pregnant and loses the opportunity to come to school, we educate them on how they can confirm these rights so that their children can get back to school, interact with their peers, community members and access other services such as family planning.
- (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 03) partnering with other organisations to do talent search, trainings and events on employability, drugs and substance abuse, agribusiness, engage youth to participate on local forum and decision-making.

vi) Promoting participation for more efficient programmes and services

As above, in some placements non-SA related service provision was seen to be enhanced when citizens play an active role:

- Yes, for example in CIDP, it's a key thing...if the citizens are not playing a key role those progs won't work (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 01)
- Importance of co-ownership in decision making with authorities; sense of co-responsibility 'by participating it makes the decision theirs, therefore they will also be responsible for whatever the government makes' (Kn, Edu, NV, 03)
- Others had a clear mandate to deliver SA activities:
- (Np, DRR & SA, NV) Role focused on delivering social accountability as a plan: Achieving the number of meetings planned, getting the trainings on social accountability delivered, etc. These actions are all set out in the Workplan for the whole project activities since the launch of the programme consisting on step-by-step SA plan.
- (Ug, ICS Youth, IV) Specifically tasked with coordinating an event but also in facilitating some community dialogues and in general incentivising people to join the activities organised by ICS mostly linked to Livelihoods.

vii) Influencing policy formulation and decision making

In Kenya, Education International and National volunteers are active 'in all the committees to influence policy on allocation of funds, on how funds are used, how to monitor, assist to design tools to monitor funding, expenditure, gender equity, disability, indigenous, language etc ... We advise, advocate and influence policy, and design tools'.

In Tanzania, volunteers are 'currently leading the advocacy process for the elaboration of a position paper that we will present to the Ministry of Health, Com. Dev. Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC) for the finalization of the NGO Policy in Tanzania (Tz, Res & SA, IV).

viii) Listening to the community's priorities and demands

Finally, volunteers highlighted the need for care, empathy and resourcefulness when working with communities:

(Kn, Edu, NV, 03) Empathy and listening to the community by changing work plans to accommodate community needs: *Working with the community needs patience and ability to relate to their problems*

(Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 02) Clear knowledge that talking to communities is fundamental to his placement and activity planning: *Reaching out to community (youth) hearing their views on challenges and being able to come up with sustainable solutions from youth themselves- not just on govt- using our own strength and resources consultations with young people informs our workplan*

Stakeholders perceived as allies for accountability

Given the centrality of the relational approach to VSO's volunteering model, it is important to note which actors emerged in the interviews as key in accountability strategies. Sometimes overlooked in accountability initiatives, **religious, traditional and 'natural' leaders** emerged as significant, because of their influence in the community, their potential to shift attitudes, and to mobilise communities:

- In Kenya, the monk is a respected leader in the LCC - 'the monk can be involved, to help to mobilise the community – the monk can speak and support the school, he's an opinion leader' (Kn, Edu, IV).
- In the Philippines, religious leaders need to be involved in family planning work: 'in the community we have Muslim community religious leaders, one way we work is to encourage these leaders to help us implement the family planning in the Islam context'. (Ph, Health, NV).
- Indigenous organisations and other community-based groups: 'people's organisations and indigenous people's organisations: we work with them for advocacy on health, and with Madrastras (groups of mothers), to raise awareness of child early forced marriage and adolescent health'.
- In Uganda, traditional leaders are key. We work with them in the areas of mobilisation, people empowerment and they also offer moral advice to the people. They encourage the local communities given that the communities listen to them more. (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 01)

A multi-stakeholder approach was mentioned by national volunteers (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda) who used their leverage or role to encourage a range of stakeholders to work together or coordinate for greater accountability. In Tanzania, (Tz, Youth, NV) the volunteer highlighted the importance of working with local government, community leaders, ward chairman, community chair etc. They work with NGOs as service delivery partners, mainly but an issue is to coordinate when there are no training funds available. In Kenya, a range of stakeholders are encouraged to attend school management committees: If the activity involves community participation/mobilising the school management committee, we often tell the head teachers to invite the chief, village elder, the local leaders, the traditional leaders to come in and participate because this issue of local participation is not only about the school but about community participation. (Kn, Edu, NV, 01). In Uganda, national volunteers are engaging with the National Youth Council, local leaders, private sector, village bank, business association, INGOs, etc. (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 02)

Engagement with other civil society organisations was the most frequently cited alliance to build accountability. NGOs/CSOs were seen to share goals, facilitate access to new communities, although often lacked capacity. Partnership working with other CSOs was perceived as a way of strengthening work, but also of building the capacity of CSO partners. CSO partners were also seen to complement and inform volunteer efforts:

- (Kn, Edu, NV, 03) NGOs are here to spearhead change. Mostly we have a common/goal agenda just different strategies used
- (Np, All, CV) The respondent spoke of solidarity, common objectives and collaboration. The NGO where he is placed, is connected to other higher levels so it is well regarded because of its reach. They haven't found challenges getting support from other NGOs.

- (Kn, Edu, NV, 02) Sees CSOs and CBOs as faced with many challenges but lacking both technical and financial support We are at initial stages of partnering with an NGO working in the same area [...], we are looking to incorporating communities that they work with. This volunteer works closely with members of staff of the NGO where she is placed to complement each other's knowledge.
- (Tz, Res & SA, IV) As an umbrella organization of all NGOs/CSOs, we organize forums and dialogues. Arrange meetings and even include them in the preparation of NaCoNGOs Strategic Plan
- (Ug, ICS Youth, IV) Spoke about a general positive experience both with civil society as well as certain authorities: Strong relationship with the Vocational training institutes; they've made suggestions, been proactive, it seems they know the benefits of this. Also, [we work closely] with the local 'youth champions' are the main partner because they act like middle-men
- (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 02) Collaboration is recognised as important with other organisations which they meet regularly, including VSO: Make work easier and you learn from one another.
- (Kn, Edu, NV, 01) Other CSOs also give us useful information that we also give to our citizens to promote public participation. We have partnered a CBO called United Disabled Persons. It's not only the partnership but also about building their capacity in different ways including giving them training about taking care of disabled persons, human resource, finance etc. When we go the field, we make sure that we involve at least one person from this CBO so that they help in creating awareness about disability.
- (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 03) We meet at least once a week with other partner organisations
- (Tz, Youth, NV) Working with the Youth Council (national, district) to build capacities:
- 'Youth council has to be transparent - I believe if they can be transparent and responsible with their own money they can ask government to do the same'.
- (Rw, Disb Incl, NV) National CSO: 'There's a National Organisation of the Deaf ... they help me to get information, they gave me training in sign language, and how to teach other people'.
- (Tz, Res & SA, IV) Her placement has the specific objective of coordinating work with a vast number of organisations. However, as this is a recently started post she personally has not yet worked with them. She noted:
- *The review of the NGO Policy was conducted in a democratic and participatory approach where we involved 1,320 NGOs and CSOs in the whole of Tz Mainland. This activity is on-going process. We completed the 2nd phase and is now preparing for the 3rd phase of the project [...] based on their contributions during the plenary discussion, I would say that they are resilient to change and eager to know what is best to sustain their small organizations.*
- (Ug, ICS Youth, NV, 01) coordinates with various organisations at the local level:

- *We work with other organisations. We partner with local institutions at the local level [...] we have partnered with a school called Lakel Memorial School which has accepted for use to paint and write on their walls the 17 SDGs which we think will work with the whole communities since everyone will be able to read the SDGs. We also partner with another organisation which is specialised in financial issues and they educate the people (savings groups and farmer groups) on financial matters, savings and loans.*

Other VSO Volunteers play a role as allies, principally for the advice and training they could provide (mentioned by all). The VSO office was mentioned by a few as a source of support, information etc, and few mentioned contact with other volunteers:

- (Kn, Edu, NV, 03) Other VSO volunteers are seen mostly during trainings
- (Np, DRR & SA, NV) Working in close coordination with the government and the Ward office but not with other organisations. Just with VSO support
- (Kn, Liv & SA, CV, 01) For them (i.e. CSOs and CBOs) to be effective they have to engage and have a close link with VSO... We meet with VSO frequently

Most volunteers talked of the need to change attitudes and behaviours in local government officials, but in Rwanda, (Rw, Health, NV), one volunteer spoke extensively about **the positive relationship and encouragement from the local authorities**, and saw NGOs as supporting this work:

Anything I want to deliver to the students I first of all notify the district what I'm going to do, I present to them my work plan and so because they focus on the reproductive health they give me go ahead or sometimes they give me another contact and through them, I can make follow ups.

The government appreciates our work because, we are accepted in the regions and districts where we work in. they know about our work and they go through our plan and assist us to link up with the school.

The local government knows, and we have worked with them for a long time and so through them they know more about what we do and when we invite them to our programmes they do not hesitate to come. The Youth Corners (in health centres) concept was started by the government and it's for the government but the NGOs are supporting the processing.

The following section (3) considers these volunteer strategies with relation to the SA volunteering Theory of Change.

3. Relating volunteer strategies to the SA volunteering Theory of Change

Based on VSO's SA Theory of Change, volunteers may support achieving SA in 8 more specific ways that are closely linked to the Quadrant presented in Section 1. Based on the data from the interviews, we found the following.

1. A total of 8 volunteers refer to opening spaces for dialogue amongst citizens, and between citizens and duty bearers

NV = 5

IV = 1

CV = 2

The spaces convened are at local level. Except for the IV whose realm is within national level.

2. Only 4 volunteers:

NV=2

IV= 3

Spoke about unveiling power relations and strategizing with others. None spoke about enforcing sanctions.

3. 6 volunteers spoke about seeing changes in duty bearers actions:

NV= 4

IV= 2

Changes were mostly related to raising awareness and understanding rather than changing internal governance or becoming more responsive.

4. This was seen as the weakest. The interviews showed that only 1 CV and 1 NV had done multi-stakeholder /multi-sector meetings trying to reach beyond the local level.

5. A total of 5 volunteers are using various approaches to enable primary actors to question or demand changes.

CV=2

NV= 3

6. Four volunteers mentioned that they try to make policies known to people:

NV= 3

CV= 1

Often this is on the behalf of policymakers.

7. This is the most prevalent action mentioned by far. Out of the 19 volunteers interviewed a total of 10 mentioned their work on rights awareness:

CV = 4

NV = 5

IV = 1

However, the vertical engagement did not go beyond the local level authorities.

8. Only 3 volunteers explicitly mentioned actions to understand power, via trainings, or proving contextual knowledge on local or sectoral dynamics:

NV= 1

IV = 1

CV = 1

1. VSO and volunteers help open, convene and facilitate spaces and platforms at all levels (local to global) for primary actors to engage with power holders and elites

2. Volunteers support primary actors to strategize to address power relations including through rights based coalitions, enforcing sanctions or shifting incentives

3. Volunteers help strengthen duty bearers' internal governance and their incentives to engage and respond to citizens

4. VSO broker linkages between different levels of gov, other sectors and interlocutors to strengthen incentives for duty bearers to engage

5. Volunteers and partners Support primary actors to monitor public policy and services through contextually appropriate tools and social technology (scorecards, SMS etc.)

6. Volunteers Support duty bearers to make information on policy and services accessible and available to primary actors

7. Volunteers help Build primary actors' awareness of rights and their capabilities to engage vertically and horizontally

8. Volunteers help build understanding of context, power and political economy conditions that impact on rights and political space for accountability work

The figures presented provide a snapshot of where volunteers have been able to take action, or to incentivise primary actors to do so; the scoping is based on a small sample hence by no means representative of all the work being done by VSO. Nonetheless, it is evident that volunteers feel that the most progress achieved so far is on raising awareness and getting communities to understand their rights and the possibility of demanding these are respected. The statement below resonated in most interviews with certain nuances.

"People are aware of their rights, roles and responsibilities, before they were unaware (...) but nowadays they are empowered, building their self-confidence. That is very important and we are also very happy seeing this in the community; talking about the sanitation, the personal hygiene, legal procedures[...] now people even know about the government's plans and policies" (Np, DRR & SA, NV, CSO)

Furthermore, many volunteers declare being able to facilitate spaces for citizens to meet with authorities. What is impossible to gauge from these interviews is *the quality* of this engagement. In certain contexts, the mere fact that a person with authority is willing to be in the same space as a common person is considered an important win. But in other contexts a lack of action or visible changes after numerous encounters can only leave people frustrated and can discourage participation.

Unsurprisingly, actions with duty bearers are less consistent; in some contexts changes are felt in attitudes and behaviours but in others the lack of interest, carelessness and even actual intimidation, are still seen as the main challenges to overcome. This is counterintuitive to VSO's assumption that their volunteers would have more leverage/influence with authorities due to its historical approach of placing them in government agencies.

4. Volunteer responses, the relational volunteering model, gaps and missed opportunities

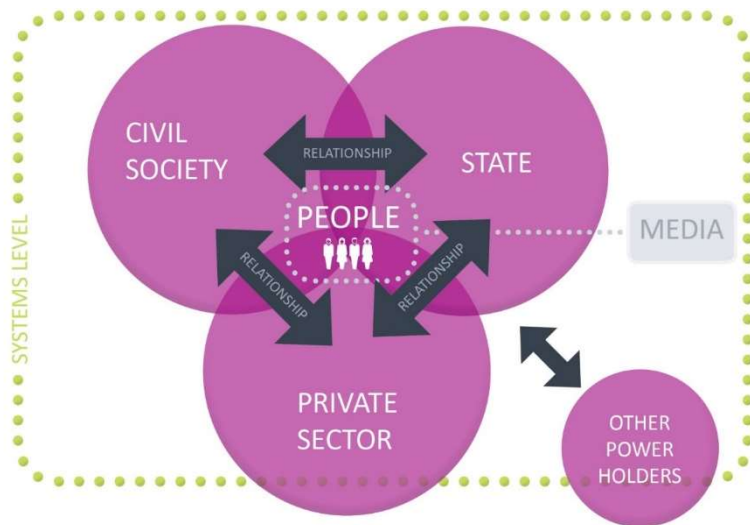
In previous sections, volunteer responses were mapped against the four quadrants and the SA ToC demonstrating that a range of activities and perceptions can be logged against each of these, with slightly greater activity falling on the demand side. A further observation is that these activities relate to working on more formal and visible manifestations of power relating to accountability. **Gaps emerge in terms of volunteers' understanding and strategies for working on hidden and invisible power, for example through challenging and shifting discriminatory social norms, inequalities and injustices** which often are perpetrated by duty bearers, but also by community elites (i.e. religious leaders, traditional chiefs) who most volunteers regard as important allies and guardians of interests.

In this section, we consider the data with reference to VSO's Relational Volunteering Model document and critically reflect on each of the elements within the three pillars of the Model.

According to the SA ToC, Social Accountability initiatives in VSO are seen to be necessarily primary actor-led and supported by VSO's relational volunteering approach. The Actor Relational Model of the SA area of work refers to the range of actors with and through whom VSO has a relationship and works to influence and change the system in the interest of the poor and most marginalized. As seen in Figure 2, the social accountability approach **focuses on the interaction between all the major actors in the relational system i.e. primary actors, state, private,**

civil society, traditional leaders, volunteers and all those who hold power in the delivery and protection of citizens' rights.

Figure 2. The VSO social accountability actor system



The actor relational model for social accountability is supported by three pillars. These are:

- (i) People-Centred;
- (ii) Bound by Rights, Responsibility and Accountability;
- (iii) Pervaded by Power, Interests and Incentives.

VSO staff, their partners and volunteers are expected to consider these pillars when developing SA plans and undertaking actions. With reference to the interviews with volunteers, we present some gaps which indicate that these pillars are not yet solid, and need to be strengthened. In particular, a lack of power awareness and analysis limits the possibility of understanding and shifting informal power, discriminatory, exclusionary and corrupt practices. We suggest that such understanding is necessary to advance and sustain social accountability. Some recommendations are made in Section 4.

(i) People-Centred

The data discussed in previous sections supports Pillar 1, in that VSO volunteers report how they are building relationships with both primary actors and duty bearers in service delivery monitoring and other engagement processes such as public hearings or *barazas*. However, the interviews showed that this engagement happens mainly at the local level, and it is unclear how this engagement leads to SA outcomes beyond. Only one interviewee, an international volunteer placed at a national level government office, mentioned being connected to national-level policymaking processes or being invited by VSO country staff to participate in meetings or other actions beyond the immediate realm of the volunteer endeavour.

There is a gap between engaging with primary actors and duty bearers by facilitating dialogue, and linking primary actors or volunteers into formal local and national policy processes. As mentioned before, citizens and authorities can be in the same room but if that does not translate into real changes either in practice or policy; accountability

is not being achieved. Thus, the idea that VSO 'as an international development and civil society actor, acts as convenor and facilitator operating at both national and local levels has the ability to help connect up local and national level governments where there is disjuncture or gaps between policy and service delivery' (SA Toc 2018), seems aspirational and not yet realised.

Pillar 1 relates to VSO's approach in broadening the range and diversity of actors who partner with communities to bring about change. In particular, its vision that development initiatives supported through volunteer and partnership networks, will create and open up spaces and platforms from the local to global levels. While some volunteers expressed positive opinions of the work of other CSOs and groups, only in a few cases was this translating into concrete coalitions, campaigns or any other joint action to demand rights. Only in one country these efforts to connect seem to be consolidated:

"It's about networks. One thing about the VSO office here is that, it has built networks with the county government, other CSOs around and service organisations. So when there are forums, we involve each other and this has been good for us [...] Each organisation has a set of rules and objectives so what VSO does is that we identify those that have similar objectives with VSO and partner with them" (Edu, NV)

Other windows opening up are working with local/traditional leadership as allies (although this risks power-blindness as discussed below), and the youth movements which are organised in more formal structures in Tanzania and Kenya. One of the young community volunteers was aware and vocal that due to the large proportion of young people in their country, there is a need to campaign for formal representation in Parliament and was pushing this idea forward through the youth movement structures.

However, alliances with other actors, such as local independent media or the private sector were not mentioned. As well, we found that contact amongst different types of volunteers mostly happens on an *ad hoc* basis and it does not seem part of a strategic approach to promoting SA across the system. The couple of volunteers who mentioned being connected to the wider VSO network in-country found it a valuable experience:

"I also work with other VSO national volunteers because I work in a school and there are national volunteers in charge of education programme so I work with them so that they can join in giving guidance to help make us the best in the team" (Health, NV).

Hence, this seems something to capitalise on, but requires a better understanding of why the organisation as a whole is not being more strategic about it.

(ii) Bound by Rights, Responsibility and Accountability

The strategies discussed above are an important stepping stone, but not sufficient for primary actors to attain rights, to find those responsible of wrongdoing and hold them accountable for their actions.

Rights are integral to SA, but 'rights talk' may conceal some superficial approaches and trade-offs. Rights are not achieved for all through efforts to improve service delivery (the technical approach), although access to social rights for many may be enhanced. The lack of volunteers' critical reflection on structural inequalities and

invisible power suggests that SA efforts relating to rights are focused on formal and visible power relations and structures (see iii below).

But it is evident that:

1. Few volunteers are aware of the legal frameworks and state mechanisms they can rely on to seek redress or formally punish an authority or service provider for wrongdoing;
2. Corruption and self-interest were cited as constant challenges to overcome, but no one spoke about state or non-state actors leading actions to address them; nor about ideas on how to do so;
3. Accountability processes and actions undertaken by VSO volunteers still 'lack teeth' because they are not using, or tapping into others' experience of using mechanisms that could lead to sanctions that would deter duty bearers from wrongdoing.
4. Rights-based work is complex, and will need to combine relational work of different types, and at different levels, to shift attitudes and open spaces. The data suggests that work on rights currently emphasises 'informing about rights', but lacks evidence of steps taken or considered in order to move from information to action, the options for action, which actors are best placed to take which action, and the associated risks entailed. However, this is an assumption made by talking to volunteers; in order to gain a more complete picture, this inquiry could be extended to citizens themselves.

(iii) Pervaded by Power, Interests and Incentives

Pillar 3 of the Relational Model emphasises the importance for all social accountability activities initiated by VSO, to be informed by a rigorous political economy context analysis (PECA) - with particular attention to gender and social inclusion- and the accountability problems and features of context that impact on accountability work. The interview data show that some volunteers seem to have tacit knowledge about this, but most still speak about barriers to accountability in a rather oversimplified way; lacking technical understanding of the processes behind policy and decision making. Therefore, a recommendation to complement and extend the PECA, is that VSO together with the volunteer, undertakes a careful assessment of how each volunteer is placed in local power dynamics, and how this relationship changes as social accountability work is undertaken. None of the interviews provided any evidence to say that this has been done; moreover, the knowledge of the background of community volunteers by VSO staff is sometimes limited. The interviews did point to a tendency for volunteers to act beyond self-interest, aiming for the common good, the improvement of their countries or global social justice. Few expressed more individualistic incentives for volunteering.

The interviews evidenced a lack of awareness amongst volunteers in this study of the need to work with informal and structural power in SA processes; only a couple of volunteers raised issues linked to invisible power dynamics. A greater understanding of these aspects of power relations could strengthen VSO's work on SA. More work on informal processes is needed, with awareness of the different challenges according to type of placement (government, NGO, CBO), and for volunteer type - CVs, NVs or IVs. Can training be tailored to help them to identify and work with these processes? How might they influence 'soft power' from their position? It will be useful to get more

clarity on what is meant by 'community volunteer', what is expected of them, what skills they need (e.g. facilitation, power analysis etc, see below).

5. Recommendations for improving SA practice

In VSO SA Guidelines it is recognised that to achieve change and realize rights, primary actors require important 'political' skills to strategize and address power relations. This means, they "*need a range of accountability change pathways to do this based on the context. These may include a) collaborative strategies with the state in a joint effort to find answers to primary actors' demands (answerability); or b) contentious strategies that seek the enforcement of sanctions associated with corruption or poor performance (enforceability) or c) politically smart strategies that seek to understand the interest, incentives and institutions (rules) that motivate decision-makers and leverage allies, interlocutors and elite at various levels*". Based on the findings of this scoping exercise, we offer some recommendations for VSO to strengthen the contribution of volunteers to the achievement of SA.

Recommendations for developing/refining SA strategy and programming:

- i. Consider the organisational implications for VSO if primary actors choose to take a pathway for accountability that is
- ii. collaborative,
- iii. politically-smart, or
- iv. contentious
- v. How does VSO influence this through the PECA, so that volunteers can be supported to move between these, with training and the opportunity to reflect on the changing context? (see Recommendation iii). In relation to taking more contentious pathways, is VSO aligned on a common vision, or can each country office make their own decision?
- vi. To complement and extend the PECA, VSO may undertake, together with the volunteer, a careful assessment of how each volunteer is placed in local power dynamics, and how this relationship changes as social accountability work is undertaken.
- vii. In coordination with (ii), draft and discuss ethical guidelines for working on SA at community, local and national levels. This could be linked to the PECA, and involve reflection and dialogue around the risks of engaging with informal and formal power in different political contexts (e.g. authoritarian, fragile, closing civic space, etc). Consider both volunteer and VSO appetite for risk, VSO duty of care, etc.
- viii. VSO country offices should design strategies for supporting volunteers of in different types and placements to connect across the system as this would

allow for sharing learning but also tapping into the knowledge, political savviness and other skills sets.

- ix. The data in this study does not tell us if volunteers are aware of how communities are 'interpreting' rights. Additional research could be conducted by community volunteers, using participatory methods to work with primary actors to understand and analyse together their understanding of citizen rights, leading on to a collaborative approach to identifying barriers to the enjoyment of rights by different groups within the community, and developing strategies to realise these rights and promote accountability.
- x. The organisational dynamics that volunteers experience have an impact in the quality of the work, it is important for VSO to understand better the role of their non-governmental partners in country on building accountability: What are their values? How are they selected? What is their standing and legitimacy *vis a vis* other organisations, government and private sector in the country and perhaps regionally? Do these organisations have the required skills, connections and political/social capital to facilitate entry points to volunteers and primary actors for advancing SA?
- xi. Recommendations for volunteer recruitment and training:**
- xii. Review the messaging of all promotional and introductory materials for all volunteer schemes in order to look at the discourse being put forward by VSO. It is important that these materials and events highlight both hard and soft skills VSO wants to promote amongst their volunteers; placing in the same level of importance the technical skills of the placement (i.e. knowing how to develop a business plan) as well as those which relate to having sensitivity of the local dynamics and customs, listening and valuing local knowledge, and understanding that inequality is derived from power imbalances at all levels and spheres of a persons' life.
- xiii. Review current volunteer induction and training materials to ensure critical knowledge and skills to promote accountability are embedded.
- xiv. Ongoing and iterative training, support and reflection for volunteers to understand how they are positioned and the implications of their engagement with primary actors, duty bearers and other actors in the system. For example, if we achieve a change in one behaviour, issue or point in the system, what are the implications for our strategy? What are the new challenges, opportunities and risks created through this change? What actions are needed next? Whose role is it to take these actions forward (may not be the volunteer themselves)?
- xv. Regularly use and update the "VSO Mapping the Volunteering context tool".
- xvi. Integrate power analysis into training for all volunteers, including those engaging in 'technical' capacity-building work. This to strengthen volunteer skills in observing and understanding dynamics of in/exclusion, structural power, whose voices are missing/heard, what discriminatory norms are in operation, what are trade-offs in supporting or not engaging with particular actors.

- xvii. Support for training and reflection in power as knowledge, to recognise that there are different 'truths' within one community, that the volunteer does not own the truth, and to avoid the risk that the volunteer becomes the driver rather than the facilitator of community processes.
- xviii. Facilitation training including the use of participatory methods to access different perspectives and experiences (e.g. of rights) within 'the community'.



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