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# INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE STRATEGY 2022-2027

April 2022 | Gender Equity and Governance Program



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*The Gender Equity and Governance Program seeks to foster inclusive societies so that all people, and especially women and girls, are able to fulfill their life aspirations. Focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico, and the U.S., we make grants to expand women’s reproductive and economic choices; increase governments’ responsiveness to the people they serve; and improve policymaking through the effective use of evidence.*

*The Hewlett Foundation has made this strategy public to partners, funders, and civil society as part of its commitment to openness, learning, and transparency. A [memo](#), very similar to this public document, was sent to the Hewlett Foundation’s board detailing this new strategy in January 2022.*

*The Inclusive Governance strategy refresh team included: Carla Aguirre, Amy Arbreton, Joseph Asunka, Aimée Bruederle, Jodie Clark, Diakhoumba Gassama, Lori Grange, Dana Hovig, Ouseynou Ngom, Alfonsina Peñaloza, David Sasaki, Pat Scheid, and Sarah Settle.<sup>1</sup>*

## Acknowledgements

*Thank you to the many individuals who informed this strategy, including current grantees and subgrantees, peer funders, and experts in the field. We deeply value your generosity in sharing your time, insights, and recommendations with our team. Our strategy is stronger as a result of your input.*

*We would like to particularly thank for their guidance, counsel, and invaluable contributions throughout this process: Nana Afadzinu, Ximena Andion, Aram Barra, Hyacinthe Coly, Cheikh Fall Mbaye, Rokhiatou Gassama, Sten Getui, Arame Gueye Sène, Irungu Houghton, Ibrahima Kane, Lenin Kazoba, Mamadou Bachir Kanouté, Miphal Lankoande, Sheila Masinde, Stephanie Muchai, Rachael Mwikali, Antony Ndolo, Maanda Ngoitiko, Sobel Ngom, Ken Opalo, Jeffrey Paller, Birahime Seck, Francis Uhadi, Charles Wanguhu, and Gilles Yabi.*



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## Introduction

Support for government transparency, participation, and accountability (TPA) has been part of the Hewlett Foundation’s international work since it launched a Global Development Program in 2005. During the first decade, our grantmaking focused on promoting open government and advancing global norms of government transparency, especially around revenue, budgets, expenditures, and contracts with mining and oil companies. Over time, we shifted emphasis to promote the use of public information by civil society, policymakers, journalists, and residents.

In late 2020, we launched a strategy refresh, which included an evaluation of the last five years of our TPA work and an external scan of the broader landscape. The refresh was heavily informed by our grantees, our funding partners, policymakers and thought leaders, and other organizations working at both the national and global levels. Based on what we learned, we believe substantial shifts are necessary and appropriate in both where and how we do our work.

Part I of this document provides a brief overview of our strategy to date, followed in Part II by a review of Hewlett work from 2015 to 2021, including lessons learned and how the governance field has evolved. In Part III, we draw on these lessons to refine our goal and draft our new Inclusive Governance<sup>2</sup> strategy for the next five years. Part IV concludes with a discussion of assumptions, risks, and our plans for tracking and measuring progress.

# I. The Previous Transparency, Participation, and Accountability (TPA) Strategy

For the past six years, our Transparency, Participation, and Accountability strategy sought to improve the quality and quantity of service delivery by governments in low- and middle-income countries. We hypothesized that poor service delivery resulted partly from weak transparency and accountability mechanisms surrounding the use of public resources. Recognizing that access to better information about government has not consistently translated into citizen action, much less government accountability, we gave particular emphasis to participation and looked for ways to enable ordinary people to engage meaningfully with government.

Our stated goal was “for citizens, civil society organizations, and journalists to use information about their governments to hold them accountable for their obligations, including providing basic services like health, education, water, and sanitation.” We believed that greater government transparency and citizen participation would naturally translate into increased accountability by governments, which would in turn improve the provision of public services. The strategy had global ambitions, with a geographic focus on East Africa, West Africa, and Mexico.

To guide the work, we framed the specific outcome we hoped to achieve with our grants as ensuring that “citizens receive high-quality public services leading to better outcomes.” As this proved too general to serve as a useful barometer of progress, the team created four substrategies focused on more specific issue areas:

- Our *fiscal governance* substrategy supported grantees at the country level to implement international norms and standards promoting disclosure of information about how governments raise and spend financial resources.
- Our *service delivery monitoring* substrategy sought to help citizens learn whether and how well government was delivering promised services in health, education, water, and sanitation.
- Our substrategy on *governance channels* supported efforts to strengthen the means for citizens, media, and civil society to engage with government about improving the delivery of public services.
- The *field learning* substrategy funded research and training to further understanding of TPA approaches among advocates and policymakers, giving priority to efforts generated in the Global South.

We awarded nearly \$190 million in grants from 2015 to 2020. Including grants that supported more than one substrategy, we estimate that 38% of our grants supported fiscal governance, 18% went to service delivery monitoring, 20% to governance channels, and 24% supported the development of the TPA field and our grantees. Two-thirds of our dollars were awarded to international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), while the other third was used to support national organizations.

## II. Looking Back and Looking Around

In early 2020, we commissioned an [evaluation](#) of our work from 2015 to 2021, coupled with a set of [TPA field scans](#). The scans covered (i) global trends in the TPA field, including practices respecting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); (ii) funding provided by private foundations and bilateral institutions; and (iii) a survey of governance indicators that other agencies use to monitor progress, including in selected countries. Separately, we commissioned an evaluation focused specifically on our more than [20 years of grantmaking in Mexico](#). The evaluators engaged a wide range of actors (including grantees and other funders) to understand the impact of our efforts over the past five years and to determine whether and to what extent we had achieved our intended outcomes.

### A. Evaluation Findings

The evaluators were unable to credibly assess our grantees' contribution to improving public service delivery or to determine just how much progress we had made toward our specified goals. This was so for two reasons: (1) our investments were too dispersed thematically and geographically,<sup>3</sup> and (2) we had not put a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning system in place to track progress and test assumptions about whether and how our grantees' specific work cumulatively contributed to our desired outcomes. The evaluators were, however, able to identify areas in which Hewlett's efforts had made a difference, especially at the substrategy level.

*First*, Hewlett has meaningfully contributed to building a TPA field whose norms are increasingly being adopted by national governments. Our support for more than 138 international, regional, and national grantees helped galvanize a global movement for the disclosure of public information of government revenue, spending, and contracts. The evaluators found that our grantees strengthened the willingness of governments to adhere to international norms and standards for open contracting, budget transparency, taxation, and the governance of natural resources. Grantees produced high-quality research about what works in the TPA sector, which has been shared across national, regional, and international networks.

*Second*, our efforts strengthened the ability of civil society organizations to mobilize residents into advocates of an open government agenda. Evidence for this is particularly strong in Mexico, where we have been active for 23 years. When the foundation started working in Mexico, transparency in budget and spending information was not a government priority. Our support for grantee coalitions helped foster a strong ecosystem of professional organizations working on a TPA agenda, and the Mexican government now regularly publishes information on spending, judicial sentences, and procurement contracts. In other countries, such as Ghana, Senegal, and Kenya, there is strong evidence that channels we supported — such as media, online platforms, knowledge hubs, policy events, etc. — are increasingly used by residents to engage government.

*Third*, our efforts to challenge gender bias in the TPA field had meaningful results. We collaborated with a number of grantees to promote a more gender-equitable and inclusive approach to governance. The evaluation found that more than 80% of our grantees now have diversity, equity, and inclusion goals or observe principles, internal policies, and values that embrace DEI.

## B. Lessons Learned

The field scan and evaluations offered important lessons to guide our reconsideration of the TPA strategy going forward. These include the following:

### 1. Transparency alone is not enough.

While we recognized this at the time of our 2015 strategy refresh, we continued to dedicate a significant portion of our grantmaking to access to information and freedom of information laws or similar mechanisms, and we didn't make as much progress as we had hoped in activating participation or in improved government performance. There is today strong agreement among both other funders and grantees that we need to understand more about how to activate popular participation and how to translate increased participation into government responsiveness and accountability.

### 2. Popular engagement happens locally. Global or regional normative convenings and commitments can be helpful, but are not sufficient alone.

This points in the direction of a strategy that emphasizes place-based grantmaking and the work of local organizations and actors. It dovetails with the evaluation finding that we need to focus on fewer geographies and substantive areas. Action at the country level may also yield proof points that serve to catalyze greater global or regional influence and impact.

### 3. It is necessary to address economic and political power imbalances.

There is consensus among thought leaders in the field, as well as our partners and grantees, that state capture by elites for private gain requires sustained attention. Successes from promoting transparency and participation have consistently proved to be temporary in the face of powerful elites using their disproportionate social and economic power to recapture government processes and redirect public resources for their personal benefit. For example, regulatory and audit agencies that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s from efforts to increase democratization and establish institutional checks and balances failed to achieve the political independence needed to serve as effective counterweights to elite control over public resources.

There is, relatedly, growing concern about the durability of civic participation in the face of elite capture. Although the specific political contexts vary, recent events in Mexico and East and West Africa make plain the degree to which elites are using state resources to serve their private interests. This, in turn, reduces the effectiveness and willingness of the general public to put in the time and effort to participate in public decision making.

### 4. It is also essential to transform gender and power dynamics.

It has been the practice until recently for reformers in the development field to acknowledge gender and power dynamics and design their interventions around them — as opposed to actively seeking to change or transform them. Experience suggests this is insufficient: Real and enduring progress requires transforming gender and power dynamics by tackling systemic inequities (as opposed to promoting opportunities for individual self-improvement).

This broad insight applies to the TPA field. Most stakeholders acknowledge that although women, youth, people with disabilities, and refugees are among the most marginalized members of society, current TPA approaches are not uprooting the deep socioeconomic practices and norms that limit the voice and power of these historically excluded populations. Our field, broadly, and our own efforts specifically, require a stronger gender and power lens to foster government responsiveness to the most excluded members of society.

# III. Looking Forward: Our New Inclusive Governance Strategy

## A. Revisiting the Problem

In light of what we learned from our evaluation and review, we believe our refreshed strategy should focus on overcoming elite capture of public resources. This conclusion — driven by our own experience as well as the findings of our evaluation — finds support from governance scholars, who increasingly point to elite capture as the chief reason democratization has failed to produce shared prosperity in Africa and Latin America. As the Ghanaian scholar E. Gyimah-Boadi writes, “...in many countries, what has been delivered is not democracy but a political system that looks democratic from the outside but operates on the basis of a very different logic.”<sup>4</sup> He continues:

“The political systems introduced in the early 1990s have not been run according to democratic principles. For example, they often lack fully independent judiciaries and electoral commissions, and feature a civil service that is run on the basis of clientelism and favoritism rather than meritocracy. This has often been described in terms of the problem that corruption poses to effective government, and it is clear that grand corruption and graft take vital resources away from the state while undermining the provision of essential public services. In reality, however, corruption is a symptom, rather than the cause, of the problems facing many African democracies today... Democracy capture occurs when a few individuals or section of a supposedly democratic polity are able to systematically appropriate to themselves the institutions and processes as well as dividends of democratic governance.”

Elite capture of the institutions that manage public resources is enabled by social, political, and economic power imbalances that favor a small minority of society while systemically excluding entire populations based on their gender, birthplace, class, ethnicity, or other aspects of their identity. The roots of such power imbalances are historical, as Migai Akech makes clear in describing the continued dominance of Kenya’s elites throughout its independence and quasi-democratic development:

“The Kenyan state was not designed to be democratic. The paternalistic and despotic colonial government decided what was best for Africa, without consulting them. Following independence, Kenya’s political elites retained the autocratic structures of the colonial system of government. Independence for the most part, therefore, meant continuity, as the independence government sought to maintain the colonial edifice. The culture of authoritarianism, now taking the form of an “imperial presidency,” thus persisted.”<sup>5</sup>

This matters, because these sorts of historically contingent developments, while “sticky” and so difficult to overcome, are neither fixed nor permanent. They can be changed and corrected.

## B. Our New Goal

We restate the goal of our strategy to indicate its emphasis on empowering those whose voices have not been heard because of elite capture. Our new goal is this:

To promote the efforts of **underserved** populations — especially women and youth — to exercise **power** so as to make government more responsive to their needs.

Note two words in particular that are essential to our new approach: “underserved” and “power.” By *underserved*, we mean people whose voices are not heard and whose needs are not being addressed by governments. And by *power*, we mean the ability of an interested community or a group to mobilize, be heard by, and influence the actions of political decision makers.



## C. Obstacles and Outcomes

### 1. Obstacles

We see four main challenges to overcome in addressing the problem of elite capture:<sup>6</sup>

#### *a. Underserved populations lack power.*

The limited power and influence of historically underserved groups is seen in their relative absence from political leadership and the limited value placed on their electoral demands and contributions to public life. Multiple groups and coalitions are working to overcome these shortfalls, but they are resource-poor and face powerful elites that want to maintain their grip on power.

#### *b. The media ecosystem has also been captured.*

African and Mexican journalists frequently run into editorial interference when they seek to expose corruption. Publishers are often part of the same elite or, even if not, depend on government and corporate advertising. Having been left out of the national narrative, underserved populations find it difficult to build public sentiment for greater government accountability or even to build coalitions across areas of concern.

#### *c. Data and analysis often ignore or neglect underserved populations.*

At present, most policy organizations do not prioritize the needs or demands of underserved groups when analyzing and assessing government programs, leaving them out of public policy agendas when it comes to determining government priorities, allocating public resources, or implementing policies and programs. Even where such information exists, underserved communities are seldom in a position to use it effectively.

#### *d. Underserved populations lack representation.*

Because they are effectively controlled by elites, there is little incentive for political networks, coalitions, and government institutions to share power and to rarely face pressure — either inside or outside — to diversify their representation.

### 2. Outcomes

We will address these obstacles over the coming five years by aiming to achieve four particular outcomes that we believe address the problem of elite capture and will create better conditions for good governance. We list these here and will provide a more detailed illustration in the case study in Appendix 3.

- **Outcome 1 – Resourcing movements and coalitions:**  
Increase the resilience and resourcing of movements, coalitions, and membership organizations working to increase the power of underserved populations, especially women and youth.
- **Outcome 2 – Supporting independent and pluralistic media:**  
Enable an independent media that both monitors government and reflects the perspectives of underserved populations.
- **Outcome 3 – Making use of key government information:**  
Enable underserved populations to use government data and information to support their activities and aspirations.
- **Outcome 4 – Spreading lessons from our country-level partners' experiences:**  
Where our efforts on the first three outcomes will be focused on priority geographies, our efforts to elevate what we learn about best practices, new innovations, and other insights (including missteps and mistakes) will be global in nature.

Note how our first three outcomes directly address the first three obstacles described above. It is unclear to us whether we can or should tackle the fourth obstacle (lack of representation and inclusion in government). While we have not yet made this one of our primary objectives, we have begun making exploratory grants to determine whether we should do so. Meanwhile, we will also investigate opportunities to collaborate with the Gender Equity and Governance (GEG) Program’s [Evidence-Informed Policymaking](#) and [Women’s Economic Empowerment](#) teams on improving government responsiveness to the needs of underserved populations.

As will become clearer in our Kenyan case study in Appendix 3, the three country-level outcomes are mutually reinforcing. For example, grassroots women’s movements cannot build power without media visibility and information about their rights. Similarly, independent media cannot monitor government or report about the needs of underserved populations without access to public information.

## D. Priority Populations

**Women** and **youth** represent a whopping 73% of the world’s total population. Yet in many places they remain excluded from public life and underserved by their governments and societies. According to the United Nations, women are underrepresented as voters and in leadership positions, whether in public office, civil society, or the private sector. As of March 2021, only a fifth of the gender gap in political empowerment has been closed globally. Across Africa, and notwithstanding a few exceptions like Rwanda or South Africa, only 24% of members of parliaments are women. The story is no better if we consider young people — defined as people between the ages of 15-39. The engagement of youth in public life matters in shaping democratic economies, not to mention ensuring future governments are democratic, responsive, and inclusive. Yet according to the United Nations, the average age of Africa’s political leadership is 65, while the median age of its population is 19 and a half. Little wonder that in sub-Saharan Africa, more than half of the youth population report that they do not trust lawmakers to make decisions in their interest.

We will prioritize serving the interests of women and youth in our refreshed strategy. This is not a one-size-fits-all proposition, of course, as the historical and social context of their exclusion varies by country. Thus, we may prioritize the interests of indigenous women in southern Mexico, while in Kenya it may be more appropriate to serve the interests of Muslim women on the coast. The challenges of exclusion and elite capture exist in each country, but the contextual obstacles that stand in the way of building power will surely vary.

## E. Geographic Focus

Based on both experience and the evaluation results, we plan to reverse our approach to global and country grantmaking — making national-level grantmaking primary, and seeking opportunities to spread the resulting insights and innovations to other countries through global networks. In addition, we will concentrate our national-level grantmaking in a select few countries. Achieving the kind of transformational change we seek requires a critical mass of coordinated efforts based on deep knowledge of culture, context, and political economy — something best done by limiting our work to a few countries so we can facilitate coordination across our portfolio, among grantees, and with peer funders. We believe this approach will also yield the best opportunities for cross-country learning to be facilitated and spread by regional and global organizations.

We chose four “priority” countries in which to focus based on an assessment of five relevant factors: (1) the availability of government information and channels for citizen engagement, (2) support for DEI among grantees and by the national government, (3) the presence of peer funders, (4) the independence of democratic institutions, and (5) the number of existing Hewlett Foundation grantees. Based on these selection criteria, **our priority countries are Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, and Senegal**. In addition, we identified two “pilot” countries in which to support new approaches and test new hypotheses: **Burkina Faso** and **Tanzania**. (We expect in these “pilot” countries to grant about 20-25% of what we spend in our priority countries.) A pilot country could become a priority country over time, if an existing priority country “graduates,” or if it becomes too hard to work or make progress in one due to changes in the political context.

The fourth outcome listed above — to spread lessons from our country-level partners’ experiences — will leverage our work in priority and pilot countries. Until now, our main focus was helping to set global transparency and open government norms, which we hoped would lead to commitments and follow-through from national governments. Going forward, our support for global institutions will instead focus on finding levers and platforms that can disseminate to other countries and regions best practices, exemplars, and innovations that emerge from the work in our priority and pilot countries.

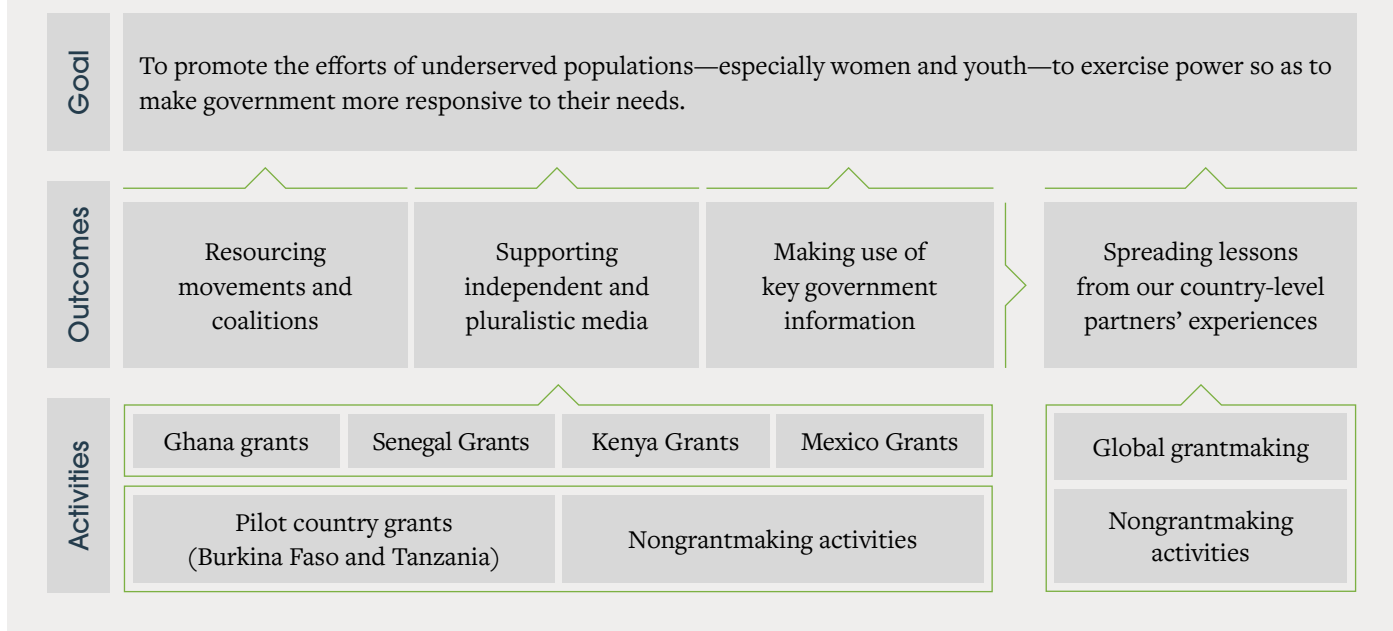
Our resource allocation will shift in line with this change in goals and strategy. Where we used to allocate approximately two-thirds of our budget to global work and one-third to national work, our plan going forward is to reverse these proportions. Of the national funds, roughly 90% will be awarded in our priority countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, and Senegal). This transition in spending will not take place immediately or all at once given commitments to our current grantees, and we expect the process to occur gradually over the next few years.

We also expect to engage in nongrantmaking activities that advance our goal, such as supporting shared learning among our grantees, amplifying their voices, coordinating with peer funders, looking for opportunities to influence other relevant stakeholders, and the like.

## F. Theory of Change

As depicted in the chart below, we believe that (i) investing deeply in select countries to advance greater power of underserved populations, especially women and youth, (ii) by resourcing and amplifying movements and coalitions, increasing their use of government information, and strengthening independent and pluralistic media, (iii) will increase government responsiveness to the needs and priorities of underserved populations in those countries, and (iv) generate ideas and practices that can be disseminated to influence positive change in other countries and regions.

Figure 1. Theory of Change



This figure depicts the general outline of our approach. We will work with our grantees and funding partners to develop customized implementation plans in each of the four priority countries to help guide our work over the next five years. These country plans will serve more as bounded maps than a detailed set of directions, leaving room for learning, iteration, and course correction. Our work must be tailored to the particular social and political contexts in each of our focus countries, and we will adapt as we learn and those contexts evolve.

## G. Summary of Major Strategic Changes

The table below provides a summary comparison of our present and future work, detailing what we are continuing, what we'll be doing that's new, and what we will be winding down.

Continuing/Deepening	New	Winding Down
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote participation in governance at country level.</li> <li>Learn and share knowledge to contribute to the advancement of the governance field globally (but with lessons learned and evaluation of our specific outcomes in our focus countries).</li> <li>Challenge ourselves and our grantees to strive toward a gender and power transformative approach in their work.</li> <li>Promote peer learning among grantees.</li> <li>Collaborate with other funders to invest in high-impact grantees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have an explicit focus on building the power of underserved populations, especially women and youth.</li> <li>Transition toward place-based grantmaking with a focus on priority countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, and Senegal) and pilot countries (Burkina Faso and Tanzania).</li> <li>Focus most of our time and effort on in-country work.</li> <li>Promote lessons learned, best practices, exemplars, and innovations from the national to the regional and global, and not the other direction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support grantees only aiming to improve public service delivery without a clear linkage to our new outcomes and focus countries.</li> <li>Invest in global norm setting and building the global field and architecture around transparency, accountability, and participation.</li> <li>Make grants primarily along lines of substantive areas.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>Spend the majority of our time and effort on global organizations lacking a clear connection to our theory of change at the country level.</li> </ul>

## H. Roads Not Taken

In assessing our strategy, we considered and rejected several other options for advancing our goal. We considered choosing more than four priority countries, but decided to keep our focus relatively narrower, given lean staffing and limited resources. Instead, we added two pilot countries, mainly for experimentation, but partly to maintain openness to geographic shifts down the line.

We considered continuing to organize our work around particular thematic areas, such as procurement reform or natural resource governance. That had been the structure of our prior work, but as each country may have different needs and opportunities, we want to be more flexible. We can best enable system-level change by understanding each country's specific context and needs, and working through those in strengthening movements, facilitating the use of government data, and enhancing independent media (the focus of our first three outcomes). Specific thematic areas could emerge as we implement the strategy, but most likely as a secondary lens for in-country grantmaking.

Lastly, as noted above, we chose to move away from investing in global norm creation. Successfully building a global transparency architecture was necessary work, and it has yielded a great deal of progress. But it is not sufficient, as we've seen that many commitments haven't been kept, and we believe a national-level focus will at this stage have more impact.

## I. New Strategy Name

We believe the change in strategy warrants a change in strategy name to better reflect the nature of our work going forward. As the strategy's stated goal is to inspire and support governance that is more inclusive in responding to the needs of underserved populations, we believe "**Inclusive Governance**" is more apt than Transparency, Participation, and Accountability. Despite the name change, and as depicted in Section F above, many priorities from our previous strategy remain — such as facilitating popular participation in governance, enabling widespread access to government information, and the importance of supporting increased agency to residents to hold their governments accountable.

## IV. Assumptions, Risks, and Measuring Progress

Frequently, underserved communities are excluded because their coalitions and movements are under-resourced, they are ignored by media, and they are uninformed about government programs and policies that might afford them useful opportunities. It is these conditions we hope to change.

It is unlikely that every grassroots coalition we support in any country will be successful in increasing government responsiveness to its needs. Nor will sporadic “wins” undo the problem of elite capture of public resources. It will take multiple successes building on each other to produce the kind of structural and systemic change needed for truly inclusive governance. The challenge is daunting, yet real opportunities exist for meaningful systemic change that meets the demands of underserved groups — opportunities of a type that reflect and are well suited to its grantmaking approach.

That said, capturing these opportunities depends on some underlying assumptions and involves some identifiable risks. We discuss these briefly here.

### A. Assumptions

#### 1. General Assumptions

Our strategy rests on several assumptions about the political and economic landscape in our selected countries. First, we assume all these countries will remain politically and economically stable enough over the next five years for our team to make grants and our grantees to conduct their activities. We also assume that the current democratic governments will not backslide into more autocratic regimes in our six countries. Finally, we assume that adequate donor funding will be available for the governance sector and not be redeployed at large scale to COVID vaccines or other emergency needs.

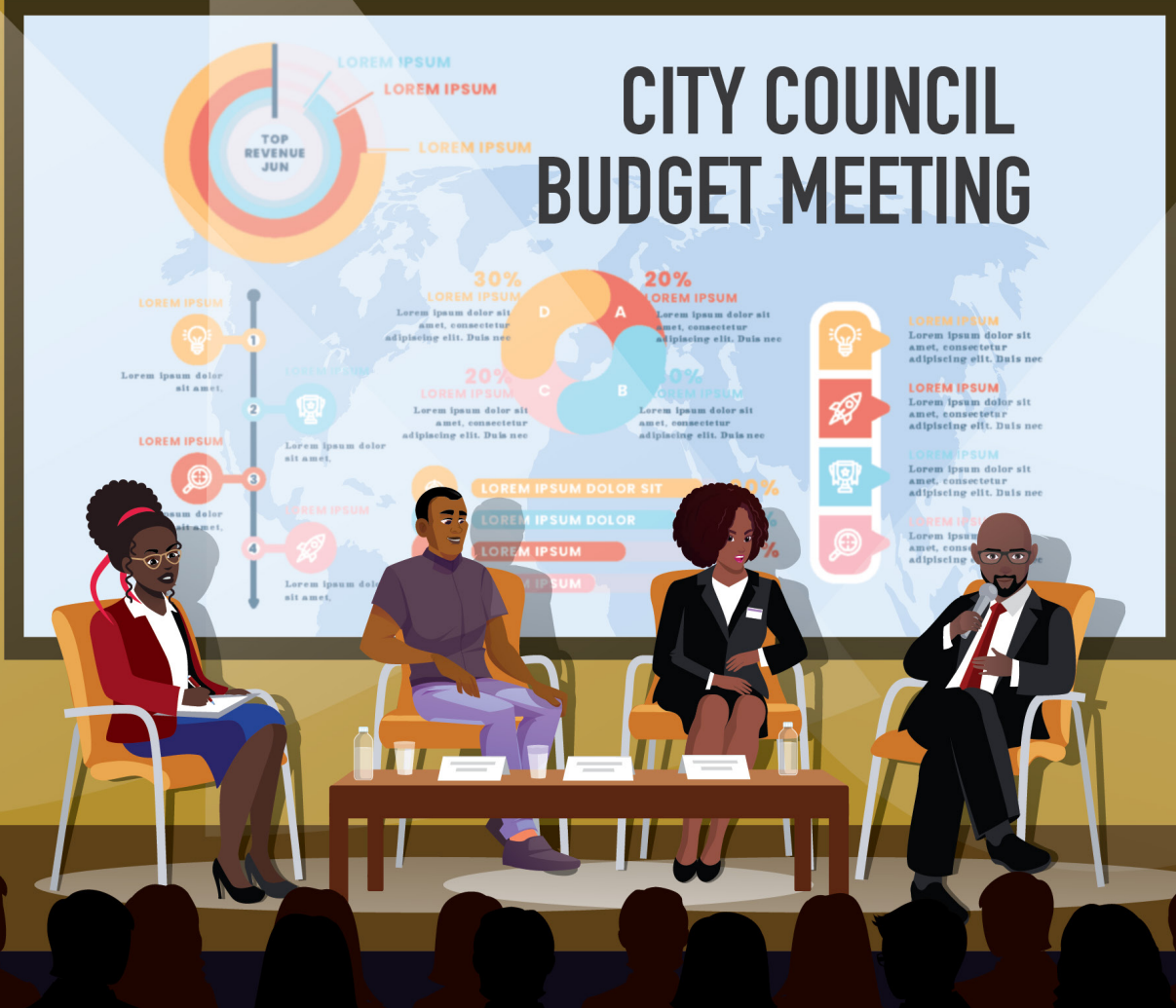
There are obstacles in addition to these that could stand in the way of achieving our goal. These include such things as limited education among key populations; lack of trust in public institutions, including political parties; deep-seated beliefs that government is inherently corrupt; lack of legal accountability among public officials and the elite; and the demonization of activism and investigative journalism. Fortunately, challenges such as these are being tackled by organizations such as USAID; the United Kingdom’s Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, formerly DFID); the World Bank; the African Development Bank; various United Nations programs; sector-specific initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE); and the Ford Foundation, Luminate, and Open Society Foundations, among others. As such, we assume we do not need to intervene directly in these areas.

#### 2. Programmatic Assumptions

Three additional assumptions are particular to our strategy. The first is simply that our theory of change makes sense. That is, we assume that by working with social movements, coalitions, media organizations, and actors aiming to increase the use of key government information by underserved populations, we can help to build the power of these populations and improve the responsiveness of governments.

The second assumption is that we are more likely to achieve systemic, structural, and bureaucratic change by narrowing the scope of our work to a limited set of countries. As explained above, we believe this makes sense as it will enable us to better understand the contexts in which grantees work and identify the right grantees to enable systemic change.

Finally, we assume there are enough strong local players (or national offices of international NGOs) for us to fund in our priority and pilot countries. Put another way, we assume there are organizations working on our issues at the national and subnational levels capable of absorbing our funding and doing good work with it.



*Credit: Illustration by Anthill Studios.*

We also make some assumptions that are particular to each of our four outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** We assume that social movements and coalitions are willing to accept funding from foreign donors and able to maintain legitimacy while doing so. We will test this assumption early on, but feel confident given prior experience working with coalitions. We also assume that our vetting process will enable us to determine if these movements, coalitions, and membership organizations are good representatives of their respective communities.
- **Outcome 2:** We assume that the legal and political cultures in our priority countries are amenable to the development of an independent and free media. We also assume that we can fund grantees working in media without inappropriately undermining or influencing their editorial integrity.
- **Outcome 3:** We assume that government information is available and remains so, is reliable, is of sufficient quality, and can be made accessible and understandable to residents and their representative organizations.
- **Outcome 4:** We assume that global dissemination of our key insights, best practices, exemplars, and innovations will influence other governments. Toward that end, we also assume that (1) we can identify exemplars that are replicable in other geographies, and (2) we can identify grantees that have platforms capable of disseminating our country-specific insights and best practices in ways that will be noticed in and used by other countries.

## B. Risks and Mitigation Strategies

In addition to these assumptions, we've identified risks that we'll need to monitor closely over the next five years.

### 1. Contextual Risks

We face the threat of democratic space contracting and autocratic tendencies expanding in our focus countries, a risk exacerbated by the pandemic. Several of our focus countries are at risk of democratic backsliding. We have limited ability to control such contextual risks but will take them into account as we help grantees navigate the times. One historical strength of the Hewlett Foundation is our practice of providing unrestricted funding (which maximizes the ability of grantees to adapt) and our willingness to adjust our funding as needed to address any contextual challenges that might emerge.

### 2. Programmatic and Operational Risks

Another risk, or rather set of risks, relates to the capacity of prospective national-level grantees. Can they absorb funding at the levels we think necessary? Will they be able to work with a U.S.-based funder and our due diligence requirements? Can they access information about grant opportunities?

We can (and will) mitigate these risks by deploying a variety of tactics, including the use of local consultants to find potential grantees, and intermediaries and regrants to fund smaller organizations. We will adapt our grantee selection criteria and due diligence processes in appropriate ways, while using Organizational Effectiveness grants to strengthen grantee organizations.

### 3. Institutional Risks

There is some risk that national governments could perceive the foundation as working primarily with civil society, which for some translates to “working against government.” We can refute this perception by pointing to the totality of the GEG Program's efforts, as many of our teams work directly with governments, and to the many grantees we'll be supporting that already work with governments on a wide range of policy issues.

Our work with social movements and coalitions could, conversely, be seen by governments as “working with the opposition.” In which case, also in like fashion, we can point to many counterexamples of support for grantees working directly with government. In addition, our support for grassroots organizations is still focused on creating long-term change, as opposed to movements or coalitions aiming for immediately disruptive outcomes. This is something we'll need to communicate clearly and effectively to the field.

Another institutional risk is that the foundation could be perceived as “pursuing a foreign agenda” or “interfering with editorial independence” when investing in media organizations. To mitigate this, we need to ensure that our funding to media organizations remains nonpartisan in spirit as well as law and, more important, does not inappropriately influence their content or operations.

Finally, our shift in focus from the global to the national level, and from the building of global norms to building the power of underserved populations, will likely prove disruptive to our existing global grantees. The foundation may be perceived as abandoning the TPA field it did so much to build. This risk, too, can be managed by a combination of clear communications and proper management of any exits in our current grantmaking. We will need to make clear that we are not abandoning our focus on improving government responsiveness, and that transparency and participation will continue to be essential to our work, albeit no longer serving as ends in themselves.



*Credit: Illustration by Anthill Studios.*

## C. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning

We want to be intentional about how we track progress, learn, adapt, and hold ourselves accountable. To those ends, we've adopted a monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) approach.

- **Monitoring:** We'll track trends and changes at the system level in our focus and pilot countries and at the activity level for both our grantees and foundation grantmaking.
- **Evaluation:** With extensive input from our grantees and other stakeholders, we'll develop an evaluation plan that offers timelines and clear rubrics and definitions for what progress we hope to see, for whom and how.
- **Accountability:** We'll strive to uncover any unintended consequences of our work on our grantees and the communities we hope to impact. We'll also put in place a MEAL system to collect data and monitor progress, and we'll share what we learn openly and transparently on a regular basis.
- **Learning:** We'll keep our strategy adaptable and adjust it based on what we learn from our grantees and other partners, as well as from research we commission. We'll develop a formal learning agenda to improve our knowledge and decision making, and we'll use annual retreats as opportunities to reflect. We are committed to sharing broadly what we learn.

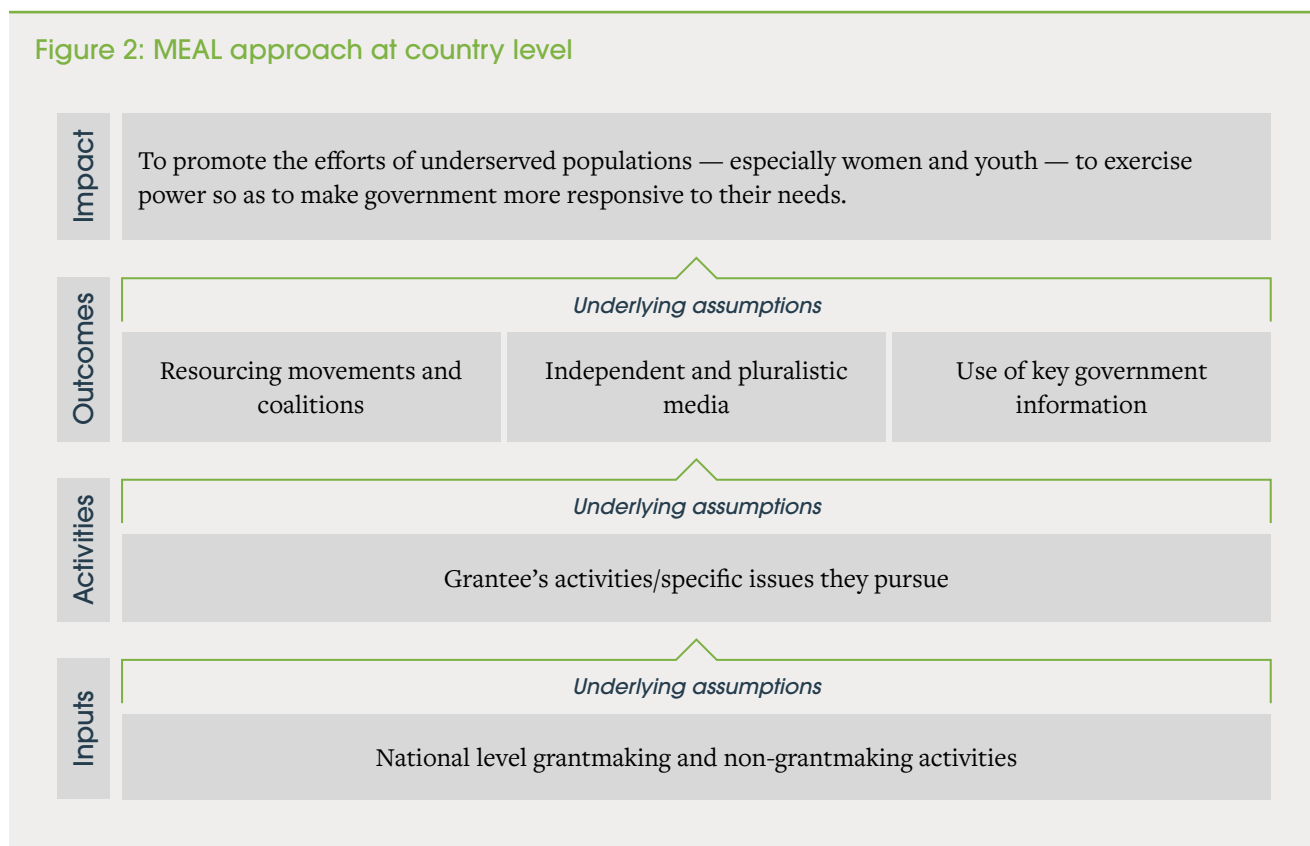
Further details of our MEAL approach are in Appendix 1.



# Appendix 1: Details on Our Approach to Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

In our MEAL framework, we'll look at our inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goal — this reflects our country-level theory of change and its underlying assumptions (see figure below). Inputs, in this case, are the full suite of our grantmaking and nongrantmaking activities at the country level. Activities refer to our grantees' work while outputs refer to the results of that work. The outcomes and goal are those that we have defined for our overall strategy; they are the same across all our focus countries.

Figure 2: MEAL approach at country level



To further develop our MEAL plan, we will hire an external consultant, shortly after our strategy is launched, who can help us to prioritize among the many indicators and implementation markers listed below; consult widely so that we co-create our MEAL plan; collect baseline data for prioritized indicators and implementation markers; and establish our aspirations for the change we (and our key partners) hope to see over the next five years. In addition, we anticipate that the external consultant will help with ongoing data collection and review, as detailed further below.

In the meantime, we provide further details on our MEAL approach below at each “level” — systems change, activities, and progress toward the strategy’s outcomes.

## Understanding system-level change

In order to understand the general direction of change in our four priority countries, we'll track macro-level implementation markers (i.e., short-term outcomes, information about the context, and measures to help us understand progress toward our five-year outcomes) based on our judgment, and data from various sources. We will also ask external experts to conduct independent assessments of systems change. Table 1 provides a set of illustrative indicators and implementation markers — our external consultant will help us to triage these down to a manageable number in year one. For now, we've flagged with an asterisk (\*) those markers for which we will collect baseline or historical data. For many of these, we'll also review historical data (i.e., going back 5-10 years) so that we can establish trend lines going forward.

**Table 1: Implementation markers to track system level change at the goal and outcome level in countries**

Implementation Markers	Frequency of data collection	Responsible	Source	BL
<b>Goal: To promote the efforts of underserved populations — especially women and youth — to exercise power so as to make government more responsive to their needs.</b>				
Power distribution by socioeconomic position	Annual	Hewlett team	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)	*
Participation/civic engagement	Annual	Hewlett team	Afrobarometer/ Latinobarometer	*
Voice and accountability	Annual	Hewlett team	Worldwide Governance Indicators	*
Government effectiveness	Annual	Hewlett team	Worldwide Governance Indicators	*
Accountability index	Annual	Hewlett team	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)	*
Civil Liberties	Annual	Hewlett team	EIU Democracy Index; Freedom House	*
Voter turnout for women and youth	Context specific	Hewlett team	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	*
Participation, rights, and inclusion	Annual	Hewlett team	Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance	*
Public perception of overall governance	Annual	Hewlett team	Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance	*
Political transformation and governance index	Annual	Hewlett team	Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI)	*
<b>Country level outcome 1: Resourcing movements and coalitions.</b>				
USAID CSO Sustainability Index	Annual	Hewlett team	USAID and FHI 360	*
Increase in the funding to movements and coalitions in each of our countries	Baseline, mid-term, and final	External expert	Independent study or evaluation	*
Increase in the resilience of the movements we fund	Semiannual	External expert	Independent study or evaluation	*
Increase in the # of alliances and new coalitions in each country	Baseline, mid-term, and final	External expert	Independent study or evaluation	*
# of commitments of parity laws, or other similar legislation in our countries	Baseline, mid-term, and final	External expert	Independent study or evaluation	*

Table 1: (cont.)

Implementation Markers	Frequency of data collection	Responsible	Source	BL
Changes in targeted knowledge, attitude, or behavior of policymakers, the public, or other key actors	Semiannual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports	*
Adoption of specific new practices among individuals or organizations targeted by the campaigns of movements and coalitions	Semiannual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports	*
Increase in the participation of the local communities, especially women and youth in the activities and campaigns of movements and coalitions	Semiannual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports, expert interviews	*
<b>Country level outcome 2: Independent and pluralistic media.</b>				
Civic space developments	Annual	Hewlett team	CIVICUS MONITOR	*
Press Freedom Index	Annual	Hewlett team	Reporters Without Borders	
Freedom of expression and belief	Annual	Hewlett team	Freedom in the World	
Media corruption	Annual	Hewlett team	Varieties of Democracies (V-Dem)	
Extent of the coverage of issues related to underserved groups in media	Baseline, mid-term, and final	External expert / Grantees	Monitoring of media sources at national and subnational level	*
Extent of the inclusion of underserved communities in the media sector	Semiannual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports, expert interviews	*
<b>Country level outcome 3: Use of key government information.</b>				
Global Right to Information Rating	Annual	Hewlett team	Centre for Law and Democracy	
Rule of Law Index	Annual	Hewlett team	World Justice Project	*
Extent of the progress on access to information policies	Annual	Hewlett team	Article 19 + Open Government Partnership	
Public participation in budgets	Annual	Hewlett team	Open Budget Survey	
Digitization Index (DiGiX)	Annual	Hewlett team	BBVA Research	
Corruption Perception Index	Annual	Hewlett team	Transparency International	
Global Open Data Index	Annual	Hewlett team	Global Open Data Index	
Increase in the use of government information (i.e., tax, budget, contract, etc.) by residents in their campaigns (by a few leading feminist and youth groups — and not by everyone)	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Grantee interviews, grantees reports, etc.	*

**Table 1: (cont.)**

Implementation Markers	Frequency of data collection	Responsible	Source	BL
<b>Global-level outcome: Spreading lessons from our country-level partners' experiences.</b>				
Reach of the reports, learning sessions of our global grantees on best practices, learnings, exemplars, and innovations (#of readers)	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country analysis, expert interviews	*
Extent of the collaboration of global grantees with governments or decision makers in countries outside our portfolio country and/or with (sub) regional bodies	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, OGP evaluation reports	*
Proportion of other funders, intermediaries, adopting power shifting approaches	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country analysis, expert interviews	*

## Tracking our activities and our grantees' activities

We'll track a few additional implementation markers — including several intended to highlight any backsliding in our activities or outcomes — to help ensure that our strategy implementation stays on course. In Table 2, we've flagged with an asterisk (\*) those markers for which we will collect baseline data. Again, our external consultant will help us in year one of the strategy to reduce the number of activity-level implementation markers to a manageable level. As noted earlier, we will share our progress on these externally, as one mechanism for holding ourselves accountable. We will also spend time in year one developing a shared understanding as to what progress looks like on these markers.

**Table 2: Implementation markers to track our activities**

Implementation Markers	Frequency of data collection	Responsible	Source	BL
<b>Hewlett team's activities</b>				
% of annual grant funding spent on priority countries vs. pilot countries	Annual	Hewlett team	Hewlett portfolio data	*
% of national grantee organizations vs. global organizations in the portfolio	Annual	Hewlett team	Hewlett portfolio data	*
% of budget dedicated to youth and women	Annual	Hewlett team / External expert	Grantee financial reports, Hewlett portfolio data	*
% of grantees' budget coming from Hewlett alone	Annual	Hewlett team / External expert	Hewlett portfolio data, grantee financial reports	*
Amount of funding crowded by Hewlett for grantees	Annual	Hewlett team / Grantees	Hewlett portfolio data	*

**Table 2: (cont.)**

Implementation Markers	Frequency of data collection	Responsible	Source	BL
% of grantees applying gender or power sensitive or transformative lenses in their work	Annual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports	*
# of transnational peer learning activities and convenings organized or supported	Semiannual	Hewlett team / Grantees	Grantee reports, international reports	
<b>Activities toward the outcomes at the country level</b>				
<b>Country-level outcome 1: Resourcing movements and coalitions.</b>				
Effectiveness of funded movements and coalitions in reaching their self-determined goals	Semiannual	External expert	Grantee reports, CSO assessment tools (Movement Capacity Assessment Tool by Global Fund for Women)	*
Extent of government reaction (positive or negative) to actions of movements and youth	Annual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports, expert interviews	
Growth in the membership and demographic diversity of movements and coalitions	Semiannual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports	*
Improvements in the capacity of movements and coalitions to achieve their goals	Semiannual	External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, country-specific reports	*
<b>Country-level outcome 2: Independent and pluralistic media.</b>				
Extent to which media questions government priorities and performance	Annual / routinely	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Grantee reports, monitoring of national media	
Extent of partisan bias in the range of issues covered by media	Annual / routinely	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Monitoring of media sources at national and subnational level, external data sources such as media bias of varieties of democracies	
Portrayal of our grantees in movements and coalitions in the media	Annual / routinely	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Monitoring of media sources at national and subnational levels	
<b>Country-level outcome 3: Use of key government information.</b>				
Extent of the collaboration between grantees in our media outcome and coalitions and movement outcome	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Grantee interviews, grantees reports; etc.	*
Reports of government restrictions on access to information	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Access to information indicators, reports from civil society and grantees	
Extent of government manipulation of information on its performance and priorities	Semiannual	Hewlett team / External expert / Grantees	Access to information indicators, reports from civil society and grantees	

## Understanding the link between our grantees' activities and our outcomes (illustrative examples)

Country-level MEAL work will involve consistently investigating the most critical assumptions at the country level: the links between our grantees' activities, their outputs, and our strategy outcomes. This approach will help us identify on an ongoing basis the gaps or challenges to tackle, the crucial learning questions to pursue and additional partners to bring on board.

### Learning questions

In addition to tracking progress toward system-level change and our strategy implementation at the country level, we'll pursue several learning questions through commissioned studies and through research and engagements we conduct alongside our grantees, peer funders, and others. We've divided our initial list of learning questions into two sections: goal and outcomes. As discussed earlier, we'll tailor these questions to the country context and theory of change and use them to investigate our underlying assumptions. This is just a starter list — we'll also review and amend these learning questions as we establish a baseline for our MEAL indicators, develop our four country plans in year one, and consult further with our partners and grantees.

#### Goal

- Are we working with the right set of outcomes to achieve our goal?
- Where is the strategy more or less effective for and with different populations that we are hoping to influence and support?
- Do we increasingly need to work on “government readiness” for greater inclusion?
- What are effective strategies to enable organic collaboration between the different national-level actors working on our outcomes?
- What are the most captured political, social, and economic spaces in each of our countries and how do our grantees effectively engage in those spaces?

#### Outcome 1: Resourcing movements and coalitions

- How do we know that we are making progress in our outcome on social movements and coalitions?
- What is the organizing model of social movements and coalitions across our countries and what can these groups learn from each other?
- What are the capacity gaps of grantees that need to be bridged for them to work successfully toward their outcomes?
- What are innovations for increasing the meaningful participation and influence of youth and women in coalitions and social movements?
- How do social movements, coalitions, and membership organizations build consensus and resolve disagreements?

#### Outcome 2: Independent and pluralistic media

- Are some media types more effective than others at elevating the voices of underserved populations? If so, which ones?
- What are approaches and tactics that media actors can use to work more effectively with underserved communities?
- What innovations can spur women and youth to use key government information?
- What revenue models ensure editorial independence, reach, and sustainability?
- What are models to build and engage audiences across partisan divides?

### Outcome 3: Use of key government information

- What type of information and formats are missing, and are most useful for underserved groups? What information is being generated and not used? Why?
- Who are the most effective intermediaries between published government information and movements of underserved communities?
- What are the challenges to fully implementing access to information policies in our countries and how do we address them?
- How are groups of underserved communities already using information most effectively?
- What are the most effective channels for bringing about change in the regions where we work?

### Outcome 4: Spreading lessons from our country-level partners' experiences

- How do we leverage other platforms, organizations, and networks to ensure that lessons learned through our work can be applied appropriately in other countries?
- What are the appropriate roles for global and regional organizations to play in sharing lessons learned, and what are roles that these groups should avoid?
- What are the most successful approaches to peer learning and experience sharing in the different regions where we work?

## Overall evaluation plan

In 2022, we'll engage our grantees in adapting our new strategy to each country's context, better understanding the learning questions, stress testing some of our assumptions, and identifying the country-specific enablers of success for our goal and outcomes. We plan to organize online and in-person forums to collect feedback and share the new strategy.

In addition, in the first half of 2022, we will develop our country-specific implementation plans and a concrete action plan for our MEAL. Once we develop our country-specific plans, we'll use the rest of 2022 to collect and synthesize baseline and historical data for our outcome and implementation markers in each country. Gathering this foundational data is a necessary step before we can measure change and progress in our focus countries and complete our other evaluations.

Each year, we'll conduct an annual retreat to reflect upon and learn from our ongoing activities. These retreats will provide an opportunity for us to review trends in our implementation markers and discuss their implications, track progress toward the implementation of our strategy, reflect on what we've learned about the goal and outcomes in our countries, revisit pilot countries, and adapt our strategy as needed.

In early 2024, we plan to conduct a midpoint evaluation both to determine if we want to pursue a fourth country-level outcome and to revisit the role and outcome of our global grantmaking in light of the progress made so far. Throughout the next five years of strategy implementation, we will also support grantees to conduct evaluations, and potentially fund cluster evaluations of multiple grantees working on the same theme or in the same geography where that makes sense. The midpoint evaluation and these other evaluation inputs will help us to look at whatever lessons, innovations, and exemplars are beginning to emerge in-country and assess whether or not we should rethink our global grantmaking. This evaluation will also help us formally gauge the progress we've made in our transition from a global focus to a national focus, and in applying a gender equity and social inclusion lens to our work. Lastly, it will help us take stock of what we've learned about the pathways for change in each of our country-level outcomes, and whether we should adjust our strategy.

Finally, in 2026/2027, we will conduct our five-year evaluation to assess progress toward our outcomes against the initial baseline and what we and grantees define as our shared measures of success, providing a basis for the next strategy refresh. This evaluation will also help us better understand the effectiveness of our national-level approach in achieving our goal of improved government responsiveness, especially to the needs of underserved communities. As we have done with the strategy, we will ensure that our evaluation is guided by gender and social inclusion principles, making an explicit effort to disentangle outcomes for different populations and prioritizing bringing a diverse range of voices into our final assessment of progress.

## Appendix 2: Mainstreaming Gender and Social Inclusion

As our new goal implies, going forward we intend to apply a strong gender and power lens to all of our work, including our internal operations. For us, gender and social inclusion refers to the strengthening of status, voice, and ultimately, the power of women and other historically excluded communities. We will consider them in all of their diversity (i.e., those living with disability, as a religious or ethnic minority, as a refugee, in the bottom two quintiles of the poverty distribution, etc.). Some aspects of our grantmaking will incorporate a heightened sensitivity to gender and power dynamics and inequities, while others will actively seek to transform the root causes of gender discrimination.

We will strive to *transform* gender<sup>8</sup> and power dynamics in our grantmaking focused on supporting movements and coalitions. We will prioritize opportunities and grantees that are tackling root causes of gender and power inequality — work that goes beyond simply including women as participants, but rather seeks to tackle underlying social structures, policies (e.g., gender responsive budgeting, social protection policies, equitable labor policies, etc.) and broadly accepted social norms that perpetuate and legitimize gender inequalities. Potential grantees might include, for example, organizations that aim to strengthen women’s agency in order to improve their social position (i.e., status and value in the family, community, etc.). For our own operations, we will need to learn more about gender and power in movement and coalition building, and about gender and power issues in our priority countries—and then translate that learning into practice. We will be flexible in our grantmaking and learn alongside our grantees.

Our approach to grantmaking in support of independent and pluralistic media and the use of key government information will be one of *greater sensitivity* to gender and power dynamics. We will prioritize organizations that acknowledge and design around gender and power dynamics, without seeking to actively influence them. More specifically, this means working with organizations that consider the political, economic, and social realities of men and women in the design and implementation of their activities.

In all of our grantmaking, we will not consider organizations that operate using gender-blind approaches — such as not consulting women when designing programs, not considering women’s representation and participation, or making decisions based solely on men’s activities or the assumption that women and men have the same needs and face the same realities in society.



## Appendix 3: An Illustrative Case Study: Kenyan Citizenship Rights

As noted above, the approach we have outlined above requires adapting to each country's particular social and political context, meaning implementation may vary from place to place. To help clarify what the strategy will look like in practice, we thought it helpful to provide a detailed illustration from one country — in this case, Kenya. The discussion below describes both how elite capture frustrates inclusive governance and how it can be mitigated or overcome.

### A. Obstacles to Inclusive Governance: the Problem of Elite Capture.

Kenya is one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, with annual average GDP growth of nearly 6% between 2010 and 2018. Kenya is also one of the world's most unequal countries, with the wealthiest 0.1% of the population (8,300 people) holding more wealth than the bottom 99.9% (more than 44 million people). According to the latest World Bank data (from 2015), 36.1% of the population lives in poverty — an increase from the previous decade. While some parts of Kenya have made progress toward reducing economic inequality, new [research](#) from the University of Nairobi and Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics shows that inequality has worsened in most of the country. In short, Kenya's economic growth has not translated into increased prosperity for millions of its citizens, especially women and youth, because a small elite has found ways to use the state and public resources for its own benefit.

Take, for example, the drought-stricken county of Elgeyo Marakwet, where only 16% of people have tap water, and most residents are forced to buy water from vendors when rivers and wells run dry. In 2017, the government responded to calls for improved water supply with ambitious plans to fund two hydroelectric dam projects that would have provided both electricity and water for irrigation to the region.

They never happened. A lengthy investigation uncovered a complex system of kickbacks and inflated contracts organized around a businesswoman, eventually leading to the arrest and removal from office of Kenya's finance minister — but not until after millions of dollars had been paid out to friends and connected insiders. The two projects would have provided irrigation for over 50,000 farmers, and 80 megawatts of electricity to the national grid; instead, no dams were built, and the government lost \$235 million. Affected community members, mostly poor farmers who wield little political power, received nothing.

The corrupted water project in Elgeyo Marakwet is just one of dozens of recent stories and academic studies exposing elite diversion of public resources. And while what was named “Stella's Web” involved outright embezzlement, much of this misappropriation is done within and through legal forms. Ryan Sheely studied how participatory planning interventions that sought to give local residents greater say over their local development plans were routinely captured by elites in north-central rural Kenya. Andrea Rigon studied the same dynamics of elite capture over participatory initiatives during “slum upgrading” projects in Nairobi. At the federal level, a new report by Wachira Maina argues that traditional anticorruption initiatives that address information asymmetries between bureaucrats and residents won't succeed so long as a small minority of elites control the media and can redirect state institutions to support private profiteering.

Each of these examples illustrates the four obstacles we described in Part III-C and seek now to address. Take the limited power and influence of underserved populations when it comes to the exercise of public authority. On paper, Kenya's 2010 constitution is one of the world's most progressive and inclusive. Article 27 mandates that “the State shall take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programs and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination.” The same article required parliament to enact a new law by 2015 to ensure that “not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.”

More than a decade later, Kenya's parliament has yet to enact the law. Women's representation in the national assembly has still increased some — from 10% in 2010 to 22% today — yet women candidates continue to face political and societal obstacles when running for office. Kenya's political parties do not comply with the requirement to allocate 30% of public funding to women's campaigns, nor have they developed internal regulations to advance gender equity and address threats of violence against women politicians. In fact, researchers found that Kenya's top-down mandated gender quotas have contributed to a political backlash, because they were not implemented with “a parallel bottom-up process of transforming gendered power relations alongside top-down institutional efforts.”

Meanwhile, Kenya's media system helps perpetuate elite control, rather than provide a counterweight for disempowered peoples. In March 2018, eight journalists and columnists working for Nation, one of Kenya's most influential media houses, quit en masse in a public letter expressing their concern over state capture. Kenyan journalists must frequently self-censor to avoid editorial interference from publishers wary of losing public and private sector advertising or, worse, to avoid the arrests and threats of violence suffered by less cautious peers.

In 2018, the consulting firm Reboot studied how elite capture of Kenya's media ecosystem excludes coverage of underserved populations and stifles accountability journalism in the public interest. The same report identified opportunities for philanthropy and civil society to support a new generation of independent and pluralistic media platforms that provide coverage of excluded populations and scrutinize government actions to meet the needs of underserved groups.

The ability of underserved populations to help themselves is further limited by lack of information or knowledge to use information about how government allocates resources and makes and implements policy. Consider the case of Turkana County, a poor region located in northwestern Kenya. Turkana's exclusion from policy priorities — a practice begun under colonial rule — should have been addressed in 2010, when Kenya's new constitution devolved governance to county governments, providing more resources and decision making to Turkana's local leaders. This newfound financial and political autonomy could and should have kept a manageable drought in 2017 from turning into a hunger catastrophe. But county officials were themselves distant from their rural constituents, and rural villagers were unaware of the policies and budget allocations that might have protected them from malnourishment they suffered because of poor governance.

Lastly, underserved populations in Kenya lack representation and full inclusion in the government itself. In addition to the underrepresentation of women discussed above, ethnic and religious minorities have yet to achieve proportionate representation in elected office or public service, despite affirmative action programs. Most Kenyan political parties are built around ethnic groups, which produces county assemblies whose ethnic compositions are determined primarily by electoral and political boundaries that map poorly onto actual demographics. Meanwhile, youth have been systematically excluded from Kenya's political parties and public agencies, which may explain why the vast majority say they feel disconnected from their government. (Youth are a group that matters, too: A 2020 report on youth attitudes toward Kenya's government notes that three of every five Kenyans are under 25. “Young people aren't ‘the future,’” the report observes, “they're the majority right now.”)

## **B. Overcoming Obstacles to Inclusive Governance: Kenyan Nubian Citizenship Rights**

While the obstacles to inclusive governance in Kenya are daunting, we have seen how they can be addressed by shifting and building power among underserved populations. We draw, in particular, on the example of a grassroots coalition that came together among Kenya's Nubian population to address discrimination in obtaining legal documentation of citizenship.

The British brought Kenya's Nubian population from Sudan to Nairobi in the 1880s to serve in the British Army. They settled in a part of the city now known as Kibera. Though Nubian soldiers fought for the British in both World Wars, they were largely forgotten by colonial administrators after World War II. Nubians were not recognized as an official community when Kenya gained independence in 1963. Their claims to land in Kibera were ignored, and they faced challenges obtaining the national ID cards necessary to enroll in and receive public services, start a business, or purchase housing. Kenyan Nubians thus faced all four of the obstacles we've described: limited power and influence, near invisibility in Kenya's media, scant government information about their conditions (they weren't even included in the census until 2009), and no representation in parliament or the civil service.

For years, grassroots legal advisors in Kibera worked to help Nubian residents obtain national ID documents in individual cases. Their stories are inspiring, but this sort of work could help only a tiny fraction of the more than 18,500 minority Kenyans estimated to be without citizenship documents. To address their problem, they needed to change the government's process more broadly, so ethnicity and surname would bear no influence in who can obtain an identity document.

A political opportunity for systemic change emerged when Kenya's government proposed a national biometric identity program backed in part by a \$750 million loan from the World Bank. A grassroots coalition of Nubian supporters came together hoping to seize this opportunity to draw attention to the existing identity system's discriminatory structure (which would otherwise have been carried over in the new program). The coalition launched a media campaign — attracting the attention of influential digital media startups — and partnered with strategic litigation organizations to file a lawsuit against the new program's exclusionary aspects. The campaign succeeded in early 2020, when Kenya's High Court ruled in the Nubian community's favor and suspended the biometric identity program until the government enacts laws to protect data security and prevent discrimination against minorities.

An opinion from Kenya's High Court ordering the government to make its national ID application process less exclusionary will not magically undo decades of discrimination against Kenyan Nubians and other minorities, but there are signs that the government is becoming more responsive to minority needs and more inclusive in their governance overall. Following the High Court's ruling, the government granted citizenship to 1,670 Shona people and another 1,300 stateless people of Rwandan origin, which has given hope to other minority groups, including Nubians.

This tenacious effort to combat discrimination against Kenyan Nubians illustrates how the four prongs of our new strategy can contribute toward systemic change:

1. *Resourcing movements and coalitions.* A coalition of three grassroots organizations documented systemic patterns of government discrimination against Nubians and mounted a campaign that helped produce systemic change when the political opportunity emerged.
2. *Independent and pluralistic media.* When Kenya's mainstream media proved too dependent on government advertising to risk criticizing a flagship program like Kenya's new biometric identity, digital startups began investigating the issue and attracting attention on social media. At that point, traditional media were compelled to follow, and the perspectives of Kenyan Nubians were finally represented in Kenyan mainstream media.
3. *Use of key government information.* The grassroots campaign was strengthened and legitimized by policy analysis and legal research provided by partner organizations. Nubian Rights Forum's lawsuit included both direct testimony of Nubian experiences of discrimination, data compiled by grassroots legal advisors, and careful policy analysis of the exclusionary aspects of Kenya's identification policy.
4. *Spreading lessons from our country-level partners' experiences.* Most governments are considering the adoption of national ID systems linked to biometric information. Kenya's experience challenging exclusionary practices and privacy concerns has informed debate in other countries across Africa, as well as in France.

Over the past five years, Kenyan Nubians have increased their power and visibility, and with that, the government's responsiveness to their needs and demands. Years of persistent, grassroots mobilizing positioned the community to take advantage of a political opportunity when it unexpectedly emerged. A combination of media savvy and support from influential policy organizations compelled the government to respond to their needs.

## Endnotes

1. Joseph Asunka, Alfonsina Peñaloza, and Pat Scheid participated in the initial stages of the strategy refresh process, while they were program officers at the Hewlett Foundation.
2. We are changing our strategy name from “Transparency, Participation and Accountability” to “Inclusive Governance.” The reasons why are outlined on page 10.
3. The TPA team worked across 13 thematic areas, including open procurement/contracting, participatory budgeting, open budgets, tax, legal empowerment, social accountability, aid transparency, media and journalism, and several more. Similarly, the strategy worked across Africa, in Mexico, and in South Asia at times.
4. <https://democracyin africa.org/democracy-capture-and-the-shadow-state-in-africa>.
5. [http://democracyin africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Democracy-Capture-Report\\_WITH-FINAL-EDITS.pdf](http://democracyin africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Democracy-Capture-Report_WITH-FINAL-EDITS.pdf). We return to the case of Kenya in Appendix 3, which unpacks the problem of elite capture and illustrates our new theory of change.
6. The four challenges described below are not the only obstacles to progress. Other things, like unequal internet access and economic austerity programs, also hamper government responsiveness. Some of these challenges are being addressed by other funders and actors, while we are not well-positioned to address others. We return to these in our discussion of risks and assumptions in Part IV.
7. By substantive areas, we mean issues like fiscal governance (e.g., public contracting/procurement, tax, extractives, budget transparency/advocacy, international aid transparency), governance channels (e.g., media, legal empowerment), and service delivery monitoring (e.g., water, health, education).
8. “Gender and power transformative” is defined as actively seeking to transform gender and power dynamics, often by tackling root causes and systemic inequities as opposed to promoting individual self-improvement. Other options across the spectrum could include “gender and power sensitive,” which is defined as acknowledging and designing around gender and power dynamics, without seeking to actively change them. “Gender and power blind,” is defined as not intentionally accounting for gender and power dynamics or exclusionary dynamics, which can either reinforce or strengthen existing gendered power differentials.