

# OPEN UP CONTRACTING

Media and Journalism

End-Term Evaluation of the  
Citizen Agency Consortium  
Open Up Contracting Program



# **Evaluation of the Hivos Open Up Contracting Programme – Media and journalism case study**

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# OPEN UP CONTRACTING PROGRAMME

## Case Study: Media and Journalism

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### I. Introduction

This case study synthesises evidence concerning the Hivos Open Up Contracting programme’s direct and indirect support for journalists and media. It begins with an overview of the evidence on how media contributes to more open and accountable government before moving on to describe the methodology used for the case and its limitations. A discussion follows on how and why the programme supported different media and journalistic endeavours across the seven programme countries as it relates to its theory of change and what this has achieved. In the last few sections, the case study discusses

issues arising from Hivos's work with media partners, draws some conclusions and ends with a series of questions for reflection.

## II. Evidence

Evidence on the links between journalism, the media and greater transparency, participation and accountability or open government [is contradictory and scant](#).<sup>1</sup> Causal pathways are multiple and complicated, but they can be separated into those that focus on assumptions related to media triggering citizen engagement or action that pressures the state to act and those that aim to influence policy reform and implementation through more formal advocacy. It is tempting to treat this difference as a distinction between a dissent public action (“outsider”) approach that challenges power and a dialogue (“insider”) approach where there are risks of co-optation. However, such distinctions tend to be somewhat blurred in practice.

### 1. Influencing citizens

The evidence supporting causal pathways that link media stories with citizen action is strong, in democracies at least. Transparency alone is generally insufficient to improve governance.<sup>2</sup> It is only when information disclosure, particularly through the media, shapes citizens’ political engagement and voting behaviour that it influences political incentives and thus reforms and other outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

There is also good evidence that powerful investigative journalism can influence public opinion in ways that have significant impacts on accountability and governance between elections. Reporters play roles as public interest watchdogs, not just by analysing data, but also by reporting public outrage. They can generate insight and public engagement in the democratic process, inform consumers, and hold powerful institutions accountable.<sup>4</sup>

One of the best-known examples of success is an investigative piece by the Philippines Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) that exposed presidential corruption. This played an important role in a popular uprising in 2001 that triggered a series of events that brought down President Estrada of the Philippines. Public action led to official inquiries, effective reform and recovery of funds.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Godfrey, A. (2014) What can we learn from field experiments on media communication and governance?, BBC Media Action, <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/democracy-governance-research-briefing.pdf>, (Accessed 20 May 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Khemani, S., Dal Bó, E., Ferraz, C., Finan, F. S., Stephenson Johnson, C. L., Odugbemi, A. M. & Abrahams, S. D. (2016). *Making politics work for development: Harnessing transparency and citizen engagement* (No. 106337, pp. 1-281). The World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/publication/making-politics-work-for-development>

<sup>3</sup> There are many obvious caveats here such as the credibility of the information source and of the inherent confirmation bias of most humans, who tend to discard information that does not conform to their existing beliefs.

<sup>4</sup> Global Investigative Journalism Network (2017), *Investigative Impact: A Report on Best Practices in Measuring the Impact of Investigative Reporting*, Global Investigative Journalism Network

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

In many contexts where democracy is weak, the links between media reporting, political engagement by citizens and accountable governance can be more tenuous. When media capacity is nascent and corruption is rife, journalists face threats or bribes. This is the case in the seven programme countries. It makes journalism an unattractive career and can reduce the quality of information citizens engage with and act on.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, the spread of digital media has added to the difficulties confronting investigative journalists. While investigative pieces can reach elites with good connectivity via the internet, traditional news organisations competing for relevance in a 24-hour news cycle see supporting such deep work as time consuming and costly.<sup>7</sup> This has led to innovations such as the use of short news beats to inform audiences of poor governance.

### Data driven beats

Successful examples of investigative journalists trying to address the needs of 24-hour news cycles include data driven beat programmes. In one of the poorest areas of Pakistan, where self-censorship is rampant, the online publication Balochistan Voices used data to take on a corrupt, inefficient government and won. The interviewer explored Balochistan's corrupt procurement process. He showed how abuse of public funds had resulted in sicker, poorer, and less educated children than in neighbouring provinces. Following another story that exposed high numbers of road accidents he offered the government an easy way to save face and improve access to healthcare. It worked. Soon after the National Highway Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish five trauma centres along Balochistan's highways.<sup>8</sup>

Investigative journalism does not guarantee outcomes. The risks and challenges associated with accessing information mean many inquiries will fail and they often require significant collaborations and sharing of expertise to work.<sup>9</sup> However, when they do succeed and lead to the recoup of public funds, they achieve remarkable value for money.<sup>10</sup>

In areas where media is in crisis and poorly paid journalists face harassment and security threats, such as the countries where the Hivos Open Up Contracting (OUC) programme is being implemented, it can be difficult for journalists to spur citizen engagement and

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<sup>6</sup> The possibility of poorly paid journalists being co-opted by vested interests probably exists in all countries, but it was found to be more of a risk in Tanzania than Malawi and Kenya in a media scoping study commissioned by Hivos in 2018.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*,

<sup>8</sup> Davies, T., Walker, S. Rubinstein, M. Perini, and De Chiara, F. (2019). The State of Open Data: Histories and Horizons..

<sup>9</sup> Hume, E., and Abbott, S., (2017). The Future of Investigative Journalism: Global, Networked and Collaborative

[https://cmds.ceu.edu/sites/cmcs.ceu.hu/files/attachment/article/1129/humeinvestigativejournalismsurvey\\_0.pdf](https://cmds.ceu.edu/sites/cmcs.ceu.hu/files/attachment/article/1129/humeinvestigativejournalismsurvey_0.pdf) (Accessed: 20 May 2020)

<sup>10</sup> Global Investigative Journalism Network (2017); Davies, T., Walker, S. Rubinstein, M. Perini, and De Chiara, F. (2019)

action.<sup>11</sup> In such contexts, citizens' political agency may also be restricted by illiteracy. Thus, media must make the information it reports as accessible as possible.

Lessons from programmes such as Making All Voices Count suggest stories need to be infomediated, and intermediated to make them accessible—and useful. This often involves many actors and complicated vertical and horizontal relationships.<sup>12</sup> It is hardly surprising that disentangling media influence from a host of other relevant factors to assess whether these relationships lead to change poses a [significant challenge](#).<sup>13</sup>

But accessibility is not the only challenge to citizen engagement. Clientelist relationships, political violence and weak electoral institutions all mean that citizens may be too scared to take direct action. Therefore, other intermediaries have an important role to play in following up data driven news stories and advocating for policy reform, or in making accountability demands on citizens' behalf.

## 2. Influencing decision makers

The causal pathways by which journalists and media actors seek to influence policy makers also entail complex vertical and horizontal relationships and intermediation. Successful advocacy, for example in the Philippines on issues of land reform, has often involved journalists working in coalitions that link grassroots groups to national level CSO intermediaries who have access to policy makers.<sup>14</sup>

But strong evidence and access to policy makers do not guarantee sound policy decisions, as data on the [limits of evidence-based advocacy](#) suggests. Evidence is also mediated by power. [Oxfam's media work](#) in the UK shows that media influencers, such as newspaper editorials, columns, and even important political blogs, are more effective at shaping decision-makers' ideas and behaviour than general news coverage.<sup>15</sup>

It follows that the effects of media on decision makers are limited without specific advocacy. Recent evidence from Oxfam implies that timing and framing of advocacy messages are important and that headline numbers can be more effective than deep rigorous studies in an emergency.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the sources of information matter. Several studies suggest local

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<sup>11</sup> On the whole, the situations for journalists are bad. The 2019 Reporters Without Borders report identifies Bolivia, Indonesia, Guatemala, the Philippines, Kenya and Tanzania to be in a bad and worsening situations with intimidation and harassment of journalists on the rise. Malawi rated better, but only just.

<sup>12</sup> For a useful discussion on intermediation and translation of evidence see Results for Development's paper on evidence based policy. Brock, K., & McGee, R. (2017). More accountable and responsive governance: How do technologies help make it happen? provide useful definitions of infomediation that focus on the specialist processes of analysing and communicating data which is a distinct type of intermediation.

<sup>13</sup> Abraham-Dowsing, K., Godfrey, A., & Khor, Z. (2014). Reframing the evidence debates: a view from the media for development sector. *Bridging Theory and Practice, Research Dissemination Series Working Paper, 7*. [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/research/working\\_paper\\_reframing\\_the\\_evidence\\_debates.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/mediaaction/pdf/research/working_paper_reframing_the_evidence_debates.pdf) (Accessed: 20 May 2020)

<sup>14</sup> Acheron, J. (2018) Going Vertical <https://accountabilityresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Going-Vertical-e-book-14may2018.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Green, D. (2009) Who do governments listen to? Some intel from the Oxfam media team <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/who-do-governments-listen-to-some-intel-from-the-oxfam-media-team/> (Accessed 20 May 2020)

<sup>16</sup> Evans, D. and Goldstein, M. (2018) 8 lessons on how to influence policy with evidence - from

level state actors may be more responsive to community generated data and video evidence than other sources.<sup>17</sup> Community perceptions, stories and photos have been found to be particularly effective in engaging local government actors as they work on emotions.<sup>18</sup> In addition, comparative information is more effective than information on single cases or communities.<sup>19</sup> Studies on how information triggers audience reactions, show that the nature of the comparison matters. While shaming governments can work in some places—as in the Pakistan case—‘name and fame’ comparisons that use positive role models to inspire duty bearers to improve can work better in others.<sup>20</sup>

In summary, the means by which journalism and media can improve procurement and contracting to spur more accountable governance are multiple and complex. However, there are common dimensions of change: compelling stories, awareness and engagement, shifts in policies and practice as well as capacity-building of networks of journalists, infomediaries and other intermediaries. All these dimensions have helped inform the conceptual framework for this case study, which is unpacked in the methodology section.

### III. Methodology

At the start of the evaluation the Hivos OUC programme team had identified several questions of interest to guide the evaluation work:

- What is the role of media, particularly of investigative journalists in transparency and accountability reforms?
- What factors are at play to make the evidence of investigations useful for advocacy or other forms of accountability demand and response?
- Investigative stories on ‘big corruption-scandals’ can be seen as confrontational by government and power holders. How can potential collateral damage of L&A that uses more collaborative strategies be mitigated? (the dialogue and dissent dilemma)

During the inception phase we were not able to identify existing outcomes that would have allowed us to explore the stories above. Hence, we touched on the original question themes in the section on evidence above and revised the questions to make them more evaluative and reflective of where the programme was in its implementation.

#### Revised evaluation questions

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Oxfam’s experience, World Bank <https://blogs.worldbank.org/impac evaluations/8-lessons-how-influence-policy-evidence-oxfam-s-experience> (Accessed 20 June 2020)

<sup>17</sup> An example from Guatemala can be found in Flores, W. (2018) [How can evidence bolster citizen action?://accountabilityresearch.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Accountability-Note2\\_English\\_2-22-18.pdf](https://accountabilityresearch.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Accountability-Note2_English_2-22-18.pdf). (Accessed 20 June 2020)

<sup>18</sup> Flores, W. (2018)

<sup>19</sup> Naeve, K., Fischer-Mackey, J., Puri, J., Bhatia, R., & Yegbemey, R. N. (2017). Evaluating advocacy: an exploration of evidence and tools to understand what works and why December 2017.

<sup>20</sup> See more in. [Williamson, V., & Eisen, N. \(2016\). \*The impact of open government: Assessing the evidence.\* Brookings.](#)

- Did media organisations engage with programme directly, how and why?
- Did the programme contribute to the capacity of media to play a role in transparency and accountability reforms? Did it support the development of skills to access relevant data and information, analyse and understand, and play an intermediary role reporting it in ways that are relevant, accessible and useful to other media actors or ordinary citizens or marginalised groups? What contribution did it make versus other factors and actors? How and why was it successful or not?
- Did the programme contribute to relationships that enhanced intermediary roles? What contribution did it make versus other factors? How and why was it successful or not?
- Do different actors consider these relationships and skills have contributed to sustainable capacity of media actors to influence ecosystems or not? How and why?
- How did the programme mitigate risks associated with a dissenting strategy? How did it address the dialogue and dissent dilemma?
- Were particular risks to sexual violence confronted by women journalists been considered? Were there mechanisms in place for this specific type of support?
- Was evidence reported by journalists used by civil society organisations and or citizens to make demands? Why or why not? How did different factors influence this?
- Did the programme enable media to trigger responses from government actors or not? How and why? What role or contribution did it make compared to other actors? How - did it create incentives? Why or why not: how did different contextual factors influence this?
- Were there any positive or negative impacts on climate/environment or inclusion? Did inclusion or climate change/environmental considerations in programme support play any role in the above?
- Was the programme sufficiently flexible to allow learning and adaptation?
- What can be concluded about the lack of access to knowledge resources, evidence based lobbying and advocacy campaigning skills and networks being the main barrier for journalists?
- What lessons are there concerning factors that help or hinder media support?

We then selected potential partners to be the focus of media case study research and used information from reports and early interviews to refine questions for deeper exploration and follow up with the partners concerned. Where necessary we tried to snowball sample to locate additional perspectives from informants who might be able to triangulate internal perceptions and fill data gaps.

During analysis we reviewed and organised material from interviews, partner reports, outcome harvests and articles to answer the evaluation questions. These data summaries can be found as annexes at the end of the case study. They are intended to provide the

team undertaking the final evaluation with an overview of the evidence we have been able to collect up until now.

We have elected to write the case study up with reference to the conceptual framework presented below. It is adapted from a report by the Global Investigative Journalism Network on how to investigate impact in journalism, and many of the concepts derive from the evidence presented earlier. The framework is to facilitate learning discussions by Hivos staff and partners relating to their assumptions on how journalism and media work to support more open and accountable contracting during the events Hivos has planned for sensemaking and learning.

It goes without saying that journalists and media actors played various roles in the OUC programme theory of change and ecosystem. And it follows that causal pathways by which media actors and journalists were expected to contribute to policy reforms and accountability are complicated. However, broadly speaking most media and journalism projects were assumed to contribute to engagement that would lead to shifts in policy and practice. At the same time, Hivos's media work aimed to build capacity and relationships between journalists and media actors for stronger power to influence the ecosystem. And that required working politically and being able to adapt.

### 1. Conceptual framework

| Aspect  | Why is it important  | Measures   |
|---|--|--|
| Dominant media theory of change                     | Source of ideological and practical dialogue and dissent dilemmas, which can reflect fundamentally different assumptions on power and how change happens.                                    | Efforts to directly engage ordinary citizens<br>Efforts to use media stories for a watchdog role<br>Efforts to use media stories for policy advocacy |
| Compelling data driven stories broadcasts (Outputs) | Stories need to be evidence based, interesting and made accessible to key stakeholders. <i>(Hivos main media tactic was to support capacity in this area)</i>                                | Broadcast release, publication of stories, awards, positive reviews  |
| Engagement (Outcomes)                               | Critical building block for individual or social change<br>Suggests framing and infomediation has had some influence on target audience (government or citizens) attitudes and/or behaviours | Audience size, diversity, amount of press coverage, comments, shares, reviews  |
| Shifts in policies and practice (Outcome)           | Goal   | Shift in public attitudes/ action<br>Government response<br>Policy change  |
| Capacity to influence the OC ecosystem              | Indication that journalists and media organisations belong to  | Relationships between journalists and other actors   |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| (Outcomes)                                   | networks with potential to informmediate in ways that produce impactful stories and contribute to collective action or more effective oversight and advocacy   | Community groups or advocacy organisations using stories or films,<br>Q&As with policy makers,<br>Use of stories/use cases to build capacity of others,<br>Mention in policy discussions |
| Working politically with adaptive management | Investigative journalism is dangerous and unpredictable. Requires dialogue and dissent<br>Stories can prove high value for money but many fail. Work in this field requires preparedness to fail and flexibility | Training on risk management, protection<br>Use of legal frameworks and champions<br>Adaptations  |

## 2. Limitations

The data and analysis presented in this report is subject to a number of limitations:

- **Broad scope:** The scope encompassing an overall evaluation and in-depth studies made it difficult to cover all the ground necessary in interviews. Some participants were already involved in research projects and were thus simultaneously responding to our requests for validation while completing documentation for the most recent outcome harvesting. This inevitably led to some fatigue.
- **Covid-19:** Initially we had planned to visit three countries for in depth field work: the Philippines, Guatemala and Kenya. We were able to visit the Philippines in January but trips to Kenya and Guatemala had to be cancelled. This meant we were almost entirely reliant on remote interviews that tend to be less revealing than in person meetings. In addition, we had to undertake analysis and reflections via remote team meetings which is not ideal.
- **Moving targets:** The OUC programme manager sent a consolidated list of outcomes for 2019-2020 to us on the 21<sup>st</sup> May and it has been difficult to fully explore some of those important outcomes within the pre-existing timeline.
- **Balance:** The data for the Philippines is more complete than other countries both because we visited and also because of the high quality of their reporting and learning documentation. Data for Kenya and Guatemala is more complete than the other countries because they remained the foci for our cases even without the chance to visit in person.

## IV. Activities and outcomes

The roles journalists and media played and assumptions on how this would bring about change varied across the OUC programme. The specific role of media was not fleshed out in the overall programme theory of change.<sup>21</sup> Media was mentioned as one of the infomediary

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<sup>21</sup> Programme handbook

actors whose capacity Hivos planned to support under the programme's second objective. A key assumption of the original programme designers was that capacity building—both technical and relational—would enable journalists and media actors to contribute to the first objective. This was to lobby and advocate both for the disclosure of more data, **and/or** improved public contracting processes, including by playing oversight roles and making accountability demands. (The latter may involve a range of activities targeting policymakers, accountability seeking institutions and actors including ordinary citizens).

In keeping with the contextually defined approach, which became much more ecosystems focused in 2018, each country programme manager was responsible for deciding on the role that media actors would play in their implicit or explicit theory of change. Interviews with programme managers and partners suggested that a dominant assumption was that by influencing the disclosure of data and capacity to infomediate it, journalists would be able to publish stories that would influence public opinion, debate, engagement and accountability demands. However, the models adopted in many partner projects paint a more nuanced picture of the roles that journalists and media houses played in open contracting policy advocacy and accountability.

### **1. Partner selection**

Programme managers and CEDs were successful in engaging journalists and media organisations as partners across all countries. They directly funded investigative journalist organisations in Kenya, Philippines, Guatemala and Malawi<sup>22</sup>. The programme also supported journalists indirectly to do investigative pieces in Malawi, Tanzania, Indonesia and Bolivia. In addition, Hivos supported a regional collaboration between investigative journalists in Latin and Central America looking at procurement of milk and, currently, Covid-19 supplies.<sup>23</sup>

In Guatemala, Hivos programme staff elected to continue relationships with two experienced public opinion influencing digital media organisations committed to using data to challenge abuses of power in public procurement and other domains. Plaza Pública, an organisation located within the university, and Ojoconmipisto a new and growing civic tech organisation. In Bolivia, MIGA an existing partner, was contracted to support training of journalists in open contracting work.

PCIJ, an existing partner and established investigative journalism agency with an international reputation was an obvious choice to train other journalists and CSO intermediaries in open contracting in the Philippines. PCIJ recognised they had more time to learn and build the capacity of other media actors than journalists fighting demands to feed the 24 hour news cycle and gladly took the role on.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Review of various documents and reports

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Hivos CED

<sup>24</sup> Interview with PCIJ

Following a major shift in Indonesia mid-way through the programme, Hivos decided to indirectly support journalists working at the subnational level.<sup>25</sup> This involved building relationships between Indonesia Corruption Watch, an existing partner who curated government contract data at the national level, and local journalists accompanied by local CSOs who would help them get their stories published and infomediate to make accountability demands.<sup>26</sup> An investigative media group were also involved for purposes of training local journalists and CSOs.

The OUC programme's aims fitted neatly with the aims of the Tanzania Media Foundation, a local organisation that had been formed by local journalists as an outcome of a previous Hivos programme. TMF's mission is to build the capacity of journalists to work on and contribute to public debate on transparency and accountability.<sup>27</sup>

In Malawi, the Centre for Investigative Journalism was chosen to play the capacity development role. Later, when the programme adapted and began to focus more on citizen engagement, it partnered the Youth Net and Counselling YONECO a CSO using radio as a tactic to engage women and youth in demanding data from local authorities and using procurement data to monitor local infrastructure projects.<sup>28</sup>

The current media partners in Kenya were contracted much later. The National Media Group was selected to increase access to data through hosting a multi stakeholder contract and beneficial ownership portal that could be used by its journalists, and CSOS. One of the possible users, Africa Uncovered, a group of independent journalists was also selected for their investigative work.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. Compelling stories and broadcasts

Apart from in Kenya, where the current partners were much newer, journalists in Tanzania, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malawi, Guatemala and Bolivia were largely successful in writing and publishing their stories.<sup>30</sup> Though a couple were forced to abandon investigations in Indonesia because of perceived or very definite harassment, in each country actors supported by the programme undertook investigations and wrote stories that were considered sufficiently compelling to be published by mainstream media. In fact, in the Philippines, Tanzania and Guatemala, partners' articles and stories won prestigious awards.

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Hivos CED

<sup>26</sup> Interviews with ICW and Hivos CED

<sup>27</sup> Interviews with TCF and Hivos CED

<sup>28</sup> Interviews with YONECO and Hivos CED

<sup>29</sup> Interviews with Hivos CED, NMG and AU

<sup>30</sup> Review of Indonesia stories forwarded by Hivos CED, TMF report annexes; Ilagan, K. and Mangahas, M.

(2019) A billion-peso blunder: 6 in 10 machines to verify voters conked out, not used at all, PCIJ

<https://pcij.org/article/2018/may-2019-elections-systems-flawsbr-wasteful-spending-on-bad-machines-3>;

(Accessed 20 May 2020) Mtika, C., (2019) Tractorgate scandal: "PSS, MPs behaved incompetently" – court, CIJM

<https://www.investigative-malawi.org/660/tractorgate-scandal-pss-mps-behaved-incompetently-court/>

(Accessed 20 May 2020); Malawi OH for YONECO and interview with YONOECO; interview with MIGA Bolivia,

### 3. Engagement

Stories by journalists in Guatemala, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malawi were picked up by other media, several triggering significant interest. In a few cases CSOs intermediaries went on to use stories to hold government to account, in other instances they were used directly by accountability seeking actors for similar purposes. Yet follow-up was not always adequate and not all stories made a mark. Moreover, we were only able to identify one partner who succeeded in engaging marginalised groups.

#### *Awareness and interest*

Several partners found it easy to attract internet audiences. PCIJ's articles concerning contracts awarded to the Family of the Special Assistant to the President were reported by other media and widely read and shared. The series of stories on poor construction composed of reports with infographics and several videos reached at least 160,000 people, receiving over 2000 shares and almost 700 comments.<sup>31</sup> Qualitative research illustrates these Facebook comments comprised a mix of congratulations, requests/tips for further investigations and some rebuttals and challenges from supporters of President Duterte.

A story on the concentration of media power through the state selling off frequencies to a small number of businesses published by one of OUC partners Plaza Pública in Guatemala received reasonable engagement. Analytics recorded 9,338 visits on the web page, 441 interactions on Facebook, and 691 interactions on Twitter.<sup>32</sup> The two most-viewed video animations related to municipal accountability posted by Ojoconmipisto have [8.1K views](#) and [4.1K](#) respectively.<sup>33</sup>

In Indonesia, journalists who managed to avoid or stand resolute in the face of intimidation, completed stories that were picked up by various news agencies. One became the most read piece less than an hour after going live. An article about the poor construction of a water park in Bojonegoro has been shared 2500 times.<sup>34</sup>

A story of a public ombudsman in Malawi seeking to prosecute those responsible the Ministry of Agriculture selling some tractors and other machinery to public officers in total disregard to public procurement, transparency and accountability.<sup>35</sup> This was reported to have stimulated considerable public debate.

#### *Follow up*

Some of the more established partners seemed to be able to rely on their stories being picked once released. This was the case for Plaza Pública with a story on alleged corruption by Ministry of Health officials in procurement of Covid-19 drugs. The story was picked up by

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<sup>31</sup> Outcome harvest substantiation report

<sup>32</sup> Hivos outcome harvesting spreadsheet

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ojoconmipisto/videos/841189926343840/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://suarabanyuurip.com/index.php?/kabar/baca/dugaan-persengkongkolan-di-proyek-wahana-wisata-dander-park>. We first downloaded this article in March 2020 when there were 1.9k shares. By the end of May there were 2.5k

<sup>35</sup> Hivos outcome harvesting spreadsheet

mainstream media and prompted a formal criminal investigation and interest from the national anticorruption agency.<sup>36</sup>

PCIJ's stories on anomalous contracts awarded to the firm of the presidential assistant were picked up by media<sup>37</sup> and triggered interest from a representative of the Philippines legislature. In September 2018, a member of the opposition, Senator Antonio Trillanes IV initiated a Senate inquiry into the matter.<sup>38</sup>

Curiously, PCIJ's award winning investigative piece on millions missing due to electoral fraud received far less attention. PCIJ attributed this to timing and a much more populist story being released at the same time.<sup>39</sup>

Other journalists operating difficult contexts were not able to rely on automatic follow up. The Tanzanian journalist mentioned earlier won an award for her piece on a mining operation that had failed to compensate the local community.<sup>40</sup> Yet it appears follow up advocacy activities that had been planned at the beginning of the project were disrupted by operational challenges, because the Hivos grant was too small and some of the payments delayed.<sup>41</sup> Despite this, one respondent mentioned that these stories had provided an opportunity for more engagement by CSOs with the government partly because they were timely. They were published in late 2017, at a moment when the new administration committed to increase government revenue from mining operations. However, we were not able to triangulate this point.<sup>42</sup>

In Indonesia, the model whereby local CSOs accompanied local journalists appeared to have mixed results in respect to follow up. Local CSOs in Bojonegoro submitted the investigation report on the Dander Park Revitalisation project to the government inspectorate. However, one informant was critical that the follow up was a tick box exercise and not adequate to trigger any significant result because it did not go high enough or involve the Regent,<sup>43</sup> In Blitar the local CSO partner used a story to ask representatives of the local legislature to

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<sup>36</sup>Cuffe, S. (2020) Guatemala health officials fired, investigated for corruption <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/guatemala-health-officials-fired-investigated-corruption-200421215028285.html>, (Accessed: 20 May 2020)

<sup>37</sup> Nery, J. (2018) The PCIJ reports involving Bong Go, The Inquirer, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/115987/pcij-reports-involving-bong-go>; Rappler. (2018). Top government infra contractor owned by Bong go kin -PCIJ, The Rappler <https://www.rappler.com/nation/211653-bong-go-family-members-top-davao-government-infrastructure-contractors-pcij-report> (Accessed: 20 May 2020)

<sup>38</sup> Gregorio, X., (2018). Trillanes wants Senate probe on DPWH projects of Bong Go's father, half-brother. Politiko. <https://politics.com.ph/trillanes-wants-senate-to-probe-conflict-of-interest-in-bong-go-kin-govt-projects/> (Accessed 20 May 2020)

<sup>39</sup> Chua, A. (2020) Struggling to be 'sexy': reporting amid competing news values in the Philippines, Hivos <https://sea.hivos.org/story/struggling-to-be-sexy-reporting-contracting-amid-competing-news-values-in-the-philippines/> (Accessed: 20 May 2020)

<sup>40</sup> Interviews with TMF and journalist

<sup>41</sup> Interview with TMF

<sup>42</sup> Email communication with Hivos CED

<sup>43</sup> Outcome harvest report (unvalidated), longer outcome harvest Indonesia documentation which includes links to many of the articles, interview with journalist

follow up on the anomalies they had discovered in contracting processes for rice purchased in social protection programs for poor people.<sup>44</sup> We were unable to assess whether there was any wider impact. The example which was judged to be most successful - an investigation into the construction of a trade centre in Yogyakarta- is unpacked below, but again one of the journalists felt the follow up was limited and did not adequately engage different groups in discussion about the incident.

### *Marginalised groups*

We only identified one partner, Yoneco who was using a media tactic – community radio – to overcome information asymmetries and engage women and young people in investigative journalism and deliberation on issues raised in programmes through community listening clubs.<sup>45</sup> Partners in Guatemala and Indonesia appear to be moving into this area and may well be doing more than we picked up, but others appear to be struggling. One insight from Yogyakarta was that when the journalists and CSOs had to collaboratively choose a project for investigation during one of the training courses they had identified trade-offs. In this instance they had to decide under time pressure whether to look at expensive infrastructure projects or issues likely to have been of interest to poorer marginalised groups, such as school uniform purchases. In this instance, they chose the infrastructure project.

### *Shifts in policies or practice*

The Hivos OUC programme was too small and short to expect any significant shifts in policy, opinion and practice to have resulted from its work with media alone. That being said, some investigations undertaken or covered by journalists accompanied by other partners contributed to some notable outcomes in terms of shifts in policy and practice, which are outlined below.

### *Data disclosure*

Several partners convinced government agencies to disclose data. Following receiving recommendations based on PCIJ's investigation of national procurement data systems, the national agency of the Philippines responsible for operating and maintaining the government electronic procurement portal, PhilGEPs agreed to publish procurement data in the open contracting data standards format.<sup>46</sup>

YONECO in Malawi used its radio programme to force data disclosure:

#### **Radio as a community platform to hold government to account**

In February 2018, YONECO developed a script for a radio show “*Who calls the shots in construction regulation?*” in which the Corporate Affairs Officer of NCIC took part.<sup>47</sup> While on air, they questioned him about the results of community investigations that revealed a

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Hivos CED, YONECO, project documentation

<sup>46</sup> Outcome harvesting documents

<sup>47</sup> Outcome harvesting documents

substandard bridge had been constructed by a contractor who was not compliant with the NCIC standards. When interrogated by YONECO, the Officer was forced to admit that a number of procurement shortcomings and possible issues of non-compliance were responsible for this. Following the show in which YONECO had successfully intermediated community data to hold the contractor to account, representatives from COST, who are infrastructure experts, investigated the matter. This later resulted in the NCIC publishing a list of registered contractors and re tendering the contract for the bridge. Interest and a visit from the Vice President of Malawi, who is also on COST's board undoubtedly helped, but unfortunately despite considerable effort we were unable to secure an interview with a COST representative to explore this further.

Local CSOs in Yogyakarta, Indonesia undertook very complex demands and negotiations to get documents from local government in an example that illustrated the extent of legal knowledge and persistence required to access key documents.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. Policy and oversight

The “Tractorgate” story covered by CJIM resulted in an unprecedented prosecution.<sup>49</sup> Not satisfied with the action of the Parliament, the Public Ombudswoman sought relief from the High Court. When this was not forthcoming, she took the matter to Malawi Supreme Court of Appeal. On the 11th February 2019, the Supreme Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the Ombudsman and early in 2020 two senior officials were convicted.<sup>50</sup>

Recent outcomes in Indonesia suggest that ICW and its CSO partners' have received several positive responses to demands made following the publishing of the journalists' stories. The Commission for the Supervision of Business Competition committed to follow-up irregularities in a trade centre building project in Yogyakarta following the submission of a report by the local CSO report. In addition, the stories caught the attention of a national government oversight agency and a confidential investigation is still ongoing.<sup>51</sup>

We end this section with 2 examples from Guatemala that demonstrate the potential gains of investigative journalist work. Digital media stories by Laboratorio de medios / Ojoconmipisto in Guatemala contributed to a decision by the municipality of Guatemala City to undertake legal proceedings that resulted in a reduction of millions of Quetzals of an ongoing public contribution that had been corruptly used to finance a race promoted by the city government but organised by a private company.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the recent resignation of Héctor Marroquín, administrative deputy minister of the Ministry of Health and Social

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<sup>48</sup> Interviews with Idea

<sup>49</sup>Office of the Ombudsman. (2016) The present toiling, the future unburdened, <http://www.ombudsmanmalawi.org/files/pdf/The%20Present%20Toiling%20The%20Future%20Overburdened.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Hivos PM

<sup>51</sup> Recent outcome statements and comments from the PM.

<sup>52</sup> Hivos Guatemala outcome harvesting, interview partner

Assistance derived from Plaza Pública's work tracking and exposing corrupt practice in Covid-19 related government contracts.<sup>53</sup>

## 5. Capacity to influence the ecosystem

In view of their different baseline capabilities, the programme's contributions to the partner and journalists' achievements listed above varied. For example, partners in Guatemala were perfectly capable of using legal frameworks to access data, clean it, analyse and present it in enticing visual formats before the programme began.<sup>54</sup> However, in the Philippines, Indonesia, Tanzania and Malawi, the programme enabled journalists to develop new understandings of open contracting data and how it could be used together with knowledge of local laws to write compelling stories, some of which resulted in accountability seeking actions and several responses.<sup>55</sup>

Partners and journalists in Bolivia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malawi were all trained in data analysis and visualisation skills. Yet the extent to which they were able or needed to use these skills to attract interest in stories varied as demonstrated by the account of YONECO's radio show earlier. The YONECO respondent reported that journalists had no occasion to use data analysis and visualisation skills acquired in training and thus they had probably been lost.<sup>56</sup>

While supporting journalists and partners with the time, skills and money to generate stories was an immediate objective of the OUC programme, Hivos's long term goals included enabling journalists and partners to develop the kind of relationships established by Yoneco and CoST. In other words, they sought to support journalists in building the kind of vertical and horizontal relationships and skills that they required to access data and ensure their stories were published and used in the wider OC ecosystem.<sup>57</sup>

### *Relationships and ability to influence ecosystems*

In five of the seven countries covered we found reasonable evidence of progress enabling journalists or media houses to access data, share it, and connect with others who could follow up to influence public engagement, oversight and/or policy reform. However, there were some questions regarding sustainability in Malawi.

Partners involved in the Red Palta network in Latin America have appreciated Hivos funding for them to come together and plan joint procurement monitoring actions across the region.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cuffe, S. (2020)

<sup>54</sup> Interviews with partners in Guatemala and review of previous work

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with PCIJ, Yoneco, TMF, Tanzanian journalist and ICW

<sup>56</sup> Interviews with Yoneco, an alumna in the Philippines also said though she had learned to appreciate the importance of open contracting at a training by PCIJ, she would not be able to do any complicated data analysis.

<sup>57</sup> Inception workshop discussions with Hivos in the Hague

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with partners

Reliable support from the CEM in Bolivia helped MIGA seed actors across multiple spaces who can keep growing the network and its opportunities to influence the ecosystem. She encouraged MIGA's principal trainer to plan for the most efficient ways to deliver training for journalists under the pressure of the 24-hour news cycle, who rarely have time for capacity building. This involved 1) proposing a lab to support hands-on in-house capacity building tailored for each media house and 2) To engage directors of media houses first and then develop capacity building programmes. To reach other actors, the CEM in partnership with [CESU](#), a post-graduate institute, carried forward a diploma on Open Data. The unexpected closure of the digital media outlet posed some short-term challenges. However, MIGA subsequently found a new, smaller but tech-savvy independent digital cultural/feminist media actor who has been trained on open contracting as a new partner.<sup>59</sup>

In Guatemala, Hivos has enabled its media partners to flex and extend their networks, while trying new approaches and sustainable organisational models. Mentoring from a former fellow of the School of Data and funding allowed Ojoconmipisto, a dynamic media actor, to establish systems and human resources required to keep up their work, including its efforts to ramp up engagement with ordinary citizens at the subnational level.<sup>60</sup> Over the last year, Hivos provided funds for Dialogos, a spin-off from academics and journalists of Plaza Pública that will enable its director, who endured harassment following the exposure of government corruption in 2018, to apply his experience to new challenges.<sup>61</sup> Dialogos, a social innovation lab, offers him the potential of a more collaborative approach to influencing policy reform.

Partners in Indonesia progressed well in building horizontal and vertical relationships and growing their networks' capacity to influence the OC ecosystem.<sup>62</sup>

### **ICW builds vertical and horizontal relationships**

In early 2019, ICW committed to collaborate on a series of investigative and citizen journalism training for journalists and CSOs working at the local level. As is to be expected from the evidence presented earlier, this did not result in successful relationships and stories in all the subnational areas targeted. Some journalists dropped out after training courses,<sup>63</sup> others found it difficult or dangerous to complete stories.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, 'matchmaking' by Hivos enabled ICW to extend its subnational relationships in areas they had not worked previously.<sup>65</sup>

Relationships brokered by Hivos in Yogyakarta were particularly successful.<sup>66</sup> Even though it was too short and did not go deep enough on legal issues, the training provided by ICW was highly regarded by two journalists interviewed, one of whom had previous experience

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with MIGA

<sup>60</sup> Interviews with Engine Room and Ojoconmipisto

<sup>61</sup> Interview with CED

<sup>62</sup> Interviews with ICW and Hivos CED

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with 3 journalists from Bojonegoro and Yogyakarta

<sup>64</sup> Hivos outcome harvesting documents and interviews with journalists

<sup>65</sup> Interview with ICW

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Hivos CED

writing on contract issues. Being quite technically savvy he appreciated access to ICW data that was cleaned and provided information on relative risk of projects to explore. Several of the journalists who attended the training took different approaches to writing about a trading centre construction project. The advantage of working in collaboration with a local NGO was that staff who had existing relationships with local government were able to access information that would have been impossible for the journalists to access had they worked alone.<sup>67</sup>

Local CSO and journalists both reported the results of a deep and legally complicated investigation into a trade centre development project to different audiences. The reporters wrote stories that were published in their media outlets, while the CSOs compiled reports and sent them to the Commission for the Supervision of Business Competition. Once these reports became public they received attention from the national anti-corruption agency who visited the local area to follow up on the story. As a result of this, a small number of the journalists trained decided to form a coalition to continue monitoring and reporting on open contracting issues in collaboration with a small group of local NGOs who are interested in procurement issues.<sup>68</sup> They have subsequently collaborated on other issues including Covid 19. If this leads to wider citizen interest and local government response it will be a remarkable achievement in the local context. Discussion of government corruption was taboo and contrary to feudal cultural and social norms in this region at the beginning of the programme.<sup>69</sup>

As a result of the programme's success in capacity and relationships building, journalists and CSOs in other parts of Indonesia have asked ICW for similar support adding to prospects for sustainability. As it stands, ICW is committed to continuing support for these subnational actors with the data and analysis from opentender.net, a system that is core to ICW's work.

In the Philippines, PCIJ went on to apply its understanding of procurement data systems and the stories that it published to developing training materials for CSO actors and journalists working at national and subnational levels. Those interviewed appreciated the training and ongoing mentoring support offered.<sup>70</sup> One alumnus had done an investigation and published a story on a blacklisted contractor still being awarded contracts.<sup>71</sup> He had also organised a training for colleagues. Even though these developments were encouraging, PCIJ and the partners were concerned about sustainability. The media ecosystem's demand for content 24 hours a day presents ongoing challenges to journalists seeking the time needed for investigations, as well as for getting them broadcast or published. But PCIJ staff have come up with several ideas on how these might be overcome. These include considering how to mediate and frame stories so they go with the populist grain, for

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with journalists

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with ICW and Hivos Indonesia, 2 journalists and IDEA

<sup>69</sup> Interview with ICW

<sup>70</sup> Nery, J. (2018)

<sup>71</sup> Interview with journalist working at subnational level

example by making them shorter; broadcasting them on news beats; and linking stories to popular individuals or themes.<sup>72</sup>

Prospects for sustainability are also uncertain in East Africa. In Malawi, YONECO has benefited from relationships brokered by Hivos with CoST and MEJN, which link up its community level work with women and youth to national level players.<sup>73</sup> YONECO will continue to work with these actors and is particularly keen to stay involved in joint actions with programme partners with the potential to influence political parties' manifestos and other policy.<sup>74</sup> However, it may be more difficult for community level capacities and actions to be sustained if CSO intermediaries do not have sufficient resources to continue their role as partners.<sup>75</sup> We were told that community members and local intermediaries still rely on YONECO staff to facilitate their engagement with local government.

It is hard to gauge what effects the programme has had on the capacity of media actors to influence the ecosystem in Tanzania. TMF is in principle keen to continue networking journalists with other partners, such as HakiRasilimali - a partner that has demonstrated ability to engage with government in related areas of policy reform.<sup>76</sup>

In Kenya, the portal the New Media Group is in the process of building, and their embeddedness in the local media ecosystem, should lead to effectiveness as an infomediary with the potential to play an important role influencing the open contracting ecosystem. The Hivos media scoping report in 2018 was significant in building awareness and interest among journalists regarding contracting and beneficial ownership.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, building on lessons from previous Hivos programmes, NMG have formed an Editors Group as a tactic to gain buy-in and to ensure the stories see the light of day.

## **6. Working politically and adaptively**

The OUC programme both helped and hindered journalists and partners in taking a politically informed and adaptive approach to investigative work that was dangerous and risky across the seven programme countries.

### *Dialogue and dissent*

The original programme design noted that those working in the open contracting space may need to think politically and adopt both dialoguing and dissenting approaches at different times though that may cause dilemmas. Experience from the Philippines illustrates how a programme manager was able to accomplish this.

#### **Dialogue and dissent in the Philippines**

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<sup>72</sup> Validation workshop discussions

<sup>73</sup> Interview with YONECO

<sup>74</sup> Interview with YONECO

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Hivos CED

<sup>76</sup> Interview with TMF

<sup>77</sup> Interview with NMG

The Philippines Centre for Investigative Journalism, like many mature CSOs is able to pivot from dissenting to collaborative approaches. Their tactics depend on issues, audiences/targets and their own values.<sup>78</sup> During the Hivos OUC programme, PCIJ collaborated with government champions who were grateful for advice on how to implement laws and disclose data. At the same time, PCIJ felt it was entirely appropriate to publish stories on alleged corruption, including the awards of suspect contracts to a presidential aid discussed earlier.<sup>79</sup>

Soon after PCIJ published these stories, Layertech, another Hivos partner that was taking a more collaborative approach to working with a Local Government Unit began to experience challenges accessing contract data. Up until then, Layertech had always talked about other Hivos partners, such as PCIJ in meetings with the LGU. But now PCIJ's name triggered a nervous response. Members of the city government feared that if they disclosed contracting data they might too end up being subjects of a critical investigative piece. They wanted to mitigate any action that might cause tensions in their relationships with national government.<sup>80</sup>

Understanding the delicate political dynamics, the Hivos Programme Manager recognised she had to intervene. But she did not ask PCIJ to look elsewhere, or to lower their 'dissenting' voice, which was playing such an important role in raising awareness of contracting.<sup>81</sup> Instead she capitalised on her networks and knowledge of the law to accommodate both partners.

She coached the young civic tech organisation Layertech through conversations with the Legazpi government and organised for the local government to be able to engage in dialogue on data privacy, freedom of information and open contracting together with relevant national agencies. This did the trick. The Bids and Awards Committee trusted the process and opened up about the issues they thought might surface if they started sharing the contracts. The national agencies were able to reassure them that they were protected by the law and subsequently they began to share information with Layertech again.<sup>82</sup>

Providing space for both Layertech and PCIJ to continue their work required a pause in Layertech's work, rather than adaptation. However, in other countries Hivos had to support adaptation by partners who faced risks and were forced to abandon projects.

### *Adapting and mitigating risk*

Hivos and its partners performed reasonably well in adapting ways of working in efforts to mitigate the risks posed to journalists with whom they engaged in the programme. In

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with PCIJ

<sup>79</sup> Interview with PCIJ and workshop discussions

<sup>80</sup> Interviews with Hivos CED and Layertech

<sup>81</sup> Interviews with Hivos CED, Hivos communication story (unpublished)

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Hivos CED

Guatemala and Bolivia, CEMs and data mentors helped partners navigate and adapt to changes in their own circumstances as well as to threats from the external context.<sup>83</sup> For example the establishment of Dialogos allowed the Director of Plaza Pública, who was being harassed on account of his dissenting approach to turn to more collaborative advocacy.

Hivos provided partners training in data security. Yet a partner in Kenya whose organisation had just suffered a computer hacking incident recommended that Hivos go further in its data security advice for any partner that might be involved in handling data.<sup>84</sup> Covering sexual harassment and violence in security training was suggested as a useful addition by an award-winning journalist in the Philippines.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, in Indonesia, Philippines, Guatemala and Malawi journalists operating at the subnational level were advised to reduce personal risks by leveraging their relationships with national partners and publishing sensitive content anonymously.<sup>86</sup> But some journalists were keen to publish under their own names, despite harassment and Hivos has had to intervene when an Indonesian journalist working on another programme was arrested.<sup>87</sup>

In the Philippines Hivos' commitment to protecting its partners extended to efforts to keep journalists who were accused of trying to oust Duterte physically and digitally safe, despite the accusations having nothing to do with the programme.<sup>88</sup> ICW greatly appreciated that Hivos had allowed them to stop the project in Semarang when it became too risky to work there and to move elsewhere instead. Not having to foreground the logo of Hivos, an international organisation, also gave them more scope and flexibility in the nationalist political environment.<sup>89</sup> However, another journalist in Indonesia felt that Hivos and or its partners' follow up was not adequate to ensure her safety.

### *Delays in funding*

Delays in funding were cited as a reason why partners in Malawi had not been able to adapt and collaborate strategically and use evidence to influence campaigns at the national and subnational level prior to the 2019 election.<sup>90</sup> Small grants and late payments were also noted as reasons the Tanzania project could not implement some activities following the publication of investigations, as had been initially planned.<sup>91</sup> Contract delays, grant sizes and funding disbursement delays in Kenya limited the progress media partners were able to make within the already short programme timescales (proposals were developed in 2019 with the project end dates in June) which has meant that a portal hasn't been launched and stories not published.

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Hivos CED

<sup>84</sup> Interview with AU

<sup>85</sup> Comment on draft from PCIJ

<sup>86</sup> Interviews with ICW, OjoconmiPisto and PCIJ

<sup>87</sup> Interviews with ICW and Hivos staff in the Hague

<sup>88</sup> Comments from the PM

<sup>89</sup> Interview with ICW

<sup>90</sup> Interviews with Hivos CED and Engine Room

<sup>91</sup> Interview with TMF

## V. Discussion

**Theory of change:** Overall, the programme was successful in engaging journalists who were able to write compelling stories or scripts, however the programme's assumptions about how they were expected to achieve change, particularly relating to engaging marginalised groups and persuading them of the value proposition for open contracting were not as explicit as the literature suggests they might be.

**Good bang for buck:** Not all of the inquiries resulted in stories, and not all stories that did get published made a huge impact. However, the few that did, such as the examples from Guatemala that stopped a leakage of public funds and the resignation of corrupt officials prove the relative value for money established in the literature.

**Legal complexity:** Several journalists talked about the legal complexity associated with procurement projects that cannot be covered in great detail during short term training courses. The journalist who was interviewed in Tanzania had relied on support from one of the lawyers she had been introduced to during a training while undertaking her investigation. Likewise, Indonesian journalists commented that they felt they needed greater legal knowledge which has possible implications for the design of similar programmes.

**Long term vision:** Journalist and CSO reflections highlight that short-term trainings are only partly effective and that longer-term support is often required to develop the full range of skills and relationships to undertake this kind of work. Once trained stories can take considerable time to investigate fully and follow up with different actors, including citizens. This implies programmes that aim to support journalists in open contracting require a long-term vision.

**Choice of issue and framing matters:** One journalist's reflections on the pros and cons of choosing an infrastructure project suggest that the choice of issue should be influenced by the relevant impact pathway. For example, projects focusing on issues that matter to ordinary people, for example around schools or health services, may find it easier to influence citizen action than stories focusing on large projects involving big sums of money. The latter are likely to be of greater interest to CSOs and other official oversight authorities.

**More than data:** Consistent with evidence from the field, we found that although data skills, relationships and resources mattered, they were not always the most important factors for compelling stories to get traction. Politics of newsrooms, 24-hour news cycles, and competition from sexier stories all seem to influence whether they made any significant impression. YONECO's case implies that complicated visualisations may not be as important as the nature of platforms and high-level political interest in particular stories. However, more research would be required to confirm this.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Interviews with NMG and AU

**Intermediation/ecosystems approach:** An ecosystems approach assumes' data and stories are communicated vertically and horizontally among connected stakeholders with appropriate levels of follow up. Such approaches were successful in Malawi and Indonesia. The Indonesia model of CSOs accompanying journalists appeared to be a particularly effective approach to intermediation, though we note that only a small number of journalists or CSOs participating in training courses are likely to go on and engage in such long-term commitments. The sustainability of this model would need to be validated through a more detailed study.

**Challenging cultural norms:** The investigation, publication and uptake of stories in Yogyakarta is a fascinating instance of a challenge to norms that is not often anticipated according to the literature.

**Risks are real:** Instances of harassment in Indonesia and the hacking of a partner's hardware in Kenya confirm the risks associated with this kind of work and the need to change ways of working. It is hard to appear efficient when great care has to be taken about what can be said and where it can be published. Moreover, effective security training is essential.

**Politically savvy adaptive management:** Effective management of investigative journalism requires flexibility to navigate the complex and shifting politics of accountability claiming. These include, taking advantage of opportunities that suddenly arise – scandals or elections; for example, in Malawi, willingness to accept failure when stories have to be abandoned because of danger or lack of data as in Indonesia; pausing while switching from dissent to dialogue in the Philippines and possibly Guatemala.

## VI. Conclusions

Overall, the Hivos OUC programme's support for media and journalists worked reasonably well. Partners and journalists have had some remarkable achievements in seven countries that present challenging contexts for such work. New and established partners appreciated the opportunity to develop capacity and relationships that Hivos sometimes brokered within the open- contracting media space.

Programme achievements demonstrate that journalists can play multiple roles in transparency and accountability reforms as well as oversight. Many compelling stories and reports were written and published. Though not all successful, a considerable number engaged connected citizens with access to the internet and some important accountability seeking actors too. Some of the outcomes and responses such as ministerial resignations were impressive, illustrating the potential value for money associated with investigative journalism.

That said, only a couple of partners tried to engage marginalised groups using stories in any meaningful way. On one hand this is not surprising given the programme's focus on policy reform. On the other hand, it seems an omission given Hivos's reputation for influencing the OC community's discourse re marginalised people and the programme's title 'citizen agency'.

Probably the most important and impressive outcomes relate growing media capacities to influence the ecosystem. We found some surprising examples where the programme had helped to build horizontal and vertical relationships among media and civil society actors in very difficult political and cultural contexts.

Despite achievements, journalism in the open contracting spaces is a risky occupation. The findings draw attention to the significant challenges facing PM and CEDs, and partners who are responsible for managing and supporting initiatives with highly unpredictable outcomes that create dialogue and dissent dilemmas as well as security risks.

Possibly the most important conclusion is that effective support for the work of media and journalists requires a long-term vision and a thinking and working politically, adaptive management approach. Any organisation like Hivos undertaking partnerships in this area must ensure its system allows managers and partners the flexibility and support they need to succeed. Incorporating adequate personal and data security training, including on sexual violence as well as follow up with journalists are essential.

## VII. Questions for reflection

These questions are designed to prompt reflection on the Open Up Contracting programme's work with media actors:

- **Does Hivos have the kind of management and protection approaches required for programmes that seek to support dissenting voices in high risk contexts where media is in crisis and journalists are vulnerable to threats and or co-optation? Do staff need special training to be able to manage and broker programmes that incorporate partners using dialogue and dissent?**
- **How can future media work ensure that published stories receive adequate follow up either to encourage citizen engagement and action at the grassroots or more formal advocacy work? Would more explicit reflections on the theory of change and possible causal pathways underpinning media help? For example, programmes seeking to influence public opinion may require different follow up tactics (radio and deliberation) to those seeking to influence national level policy?**
- **Are there possibilities to mitigate some of the risks of sensitive investigations or dialogue and dissent dilemmas by pilot testing PCIJ's 'naming and faming' idea? This would showcase positive stories of government agencies or companies who are enjoying benefits of more open and efficient procurement as discussed in the private sector and subnational case studies?**
- **Under what conditions does sophisticated data analysis and visualisation add value to journalists' work and when does it not?**

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## IX. Annexes

### 1. People interviewed

| Location | Name             | Organisation                         |
|----------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Global   | Daniel Dietrich  | Hivos                                |
| Global   | Gilbert Sendugwa | Africa Freedom of Information Center |
| Global   | Tonu Basu        | Open Government Partnership          |

|              |                        |                                 |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Regional EA  | Hope Muli              | Hivos East Africa               |
| Regional LAC | Juan Pablo Marin       | Data Sketch                     |
| Regional LAC | Anca Matic             | The Engine Room                 |
| Regional LAC | Eduard Martín-Borregón | Red Palta / PODER               |
| Regional LAC | Juan Manuel Casanueva  | Social TIC                      |
| Global       | Tonu Basu              | Open Government Partnership     |
| Philippines  | Vivien Suerte-Cortez   | Hivos                           |
| Philippines  | Benhur Pintor          | School of Data                  |
| Philippines  | Karol Ilagan           | PCIJ                            |
| Philippines  | Michael Canares        | Step Up Consulting              |
| Philippines  | Mark Louie Ladesma     | Journalist                      |
| Philippines  | Ivy Ong                | Open Government Partnership     |
| Philippines  | Rosa Maria Clemente    | PhilGeps                        |
| Indonesia    | Gita Medeita           | Hivos MEL                       |
| Philippines  | Rosemarie Quinto-Rey   | Albay Chamber of Commerce       |
| Philippines  | Ron Van Anoché         | Agro Distributor South Cotabato |
| Tanzania     | Tony Kirita            | Hivos                           |
| Tanzania     | Fausta Mosakwa         | Tanzania Media Foundation       |
| Tanzania     | Salome Kitomary        | Guardian Journalist             |

|           |                                    |   |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---|
| Malawi    | June J Kambalometore               | Hivos OM  |
| Malawi    | Donald Kamthunzi                   | Yoneko  |
| Bolivia   | Eliana Quiroz                      | Hivos   |
| Bolivia   | Leslie Salazar                     | MIGA  |
| Bolivia   | Estefania Rada                     | MIGA  |
| Guatemala | Julio Herrera                      | Hivos   |
| Guatemala | Ana Carolina                       | OjoconmiPisto   |
| Guatemala | H Marizza                          | Plaza Pública   |
| Guatemala | Alma de Leon                       | ITPC - LATCA  |
| Guatemala | Walter Corzo                       | Dialogos  |
| Guatemala | Sofia Montenegro                   | Dialogos  |
| Guatemala | Iliana Parra                       | Dialogos  |
| Guatemala | Evelyn                             | Dialogos  |
| Guatemala | Lola Vazquez                       | OTRANS  |
| Guatemala | Walter Flores                      | CEGGS   |
| Guatemala | Marvin Flores                      | Accion Ciudadana  |
| Indonesia | Siti Juliantari, Kes & Mata Bening | ICW   |
| Indonesia | Octrina Nanda Sihombing & Ilham    | Hivos   |
| Indonesia | Mohamad Mova Al'Afghani            | OGP IRM Researcher for Indonesia/ also had a research grant with Hivos OC |

|           |                  |                        |
|-----------|------------------|------------------------|
| Indonesia | Haeder           | Idea                   |
| Indonesia | Galih Pramilu    | Idea                   |
| Indonesia | Haris            | Journalist- Yogyakarta |
| Indonesia | Behkti           | Journalist- Yogyakarta |
| Indonesia | Ririn            | Journalist-Bojonegoro  |
| Kenya     | Stephanie Muchai | Hivos Kenya            |
| Kenya     | Churchill Otieno | Nation Media Group     |
| Kenya     | Catherine Muema  | Africa Uncensored      |

## 2. Programme documents

| Global programme documentation |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
|                                | Handbook on Open Contracting   |
|                                | Cumulative list of outcomes harvested and validated by MEL at October 2019 |
|                                | Adaptive Learning - Open Contracting                                       |
|                                | OUC Theory of Change & Learning Questions                                  |
|                                | Emerging outcomes at 21st May 2020   |
|                                | 191202 Substantiation report Hivos final 2 correct                         |
|                                | 20191206 Database substantiation Hivos-KC.xlsx                             |
|                                | Outcome Harvesting - Cumulative list OC                                    |
|                                | Open Contracting Outcomes 2017.docx  |
|                                | Open Contracting Outcomes 2018.docx  |
|                                | OC planning Stories, Resources, Events, 2020                               |
|                                | Proposed topics for the evaluation OC.pdf                                  |
|                                | SP & OC ToC overview   |
|                                | SP MTR 2019 - Reaching beyond CSOs   |
|                                | Research Agenda  |
|                                | 20191016 Outcome Harvesting - Cumulative list OC_EN                        |
|                                | Adaptive learning process - Open Contracting                               |
|                                | Bridging the gap between anti-corruption advocacy and technology           |
|                                | Capacity development in SP-OC  |
|                                | OC planning Stories, Resources, Events, 2020                               |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
|                    | Proposed topics for the evaluation OC.pdf  |
| <b>Bolivia</b>     |  |
|                    | 2019 Summary of OC programme in Bolivia  |
|                    | Annual Plan 2018   |
|                    | Annual report MIGA 2018-2019   |
|                    | Mid-term report MIGA April 2020  |
|                    | Annual report Construir Foundation 2018-2019   |
|                    | Mid-term report Construir Foundation April 2020  |
|                    | Annual Plan 2018 - Bolivia   |
| <b>Guatemala</b>   |  |
|                    | OC Annual Plan 2017 Guatemala  |
|                    | Narrative report ITPC  |
|                    | Final report 2018-19 OjoconmiPisto   |
|                    | Narrative report 2019 Plaza Publica  |
|                    | Legal Opinion number 5371  |
|                    | Outcome statements 309 & others Plaza Publica 2019   |
|                    | Building bridges in response to the HIV epidemic in Guatemala (2020).<br><a href="https://openupcontracting.org/assets/2020/04/Guatemala-Building-Bridges-1.pdf">https://openupcontracting.org/assets/2020/04/Guatemala-Building-Bridges-1.pdf</a> |
|                    | 309 & others PlazaPublica -2019 .docx  |
|                    | Annual Plan 2018 - Guatemala   |
|                    | Annual Plan 2020 -Guatemala  |
| <b>Indonesia</b>   |  |
|                    | Outcome harvest report (unvalidated), longer outcome harvest Indonesia documentation which includes links to many of the articles  |
|                    | 265 & 264 - ICW -2019.docx   |
|                    | OC Annual Plan 2017 Indonesia  |
|                    | Annual Plan 2018 - Indonesia   |
|                    | Compilation of articles produced by journalists and compiled by ICW  |
| <b>Kenya</b>       |  |
|                    | Annual plan 2018 Kenya and Tanzania  |
|                    | Africa Uncensored.docx   |
|                    | Progress report - ATPS.docx  |
|                    | Africa Uncensored.docx   |
|                    | Africa Uncensored Q2 Progress Report.docx  |
| <b>Malawi</b>      |  |
|                    | COST Malawi annual reports   |
|                    | YONECO reports   |
| <b>Philippines</b> |  |
|                    | Struggling to be 'sexy': Reporting contracting values amidst competing news values   |
|                    | Not a contradiction: Privacy and freedom of information  |
|                    | Dialogue and Dissent in the Philippines  |

|                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
|                 | 307 & others- PCIJ -2019.docx         |
|                 | OC Annual Plan 2017 Philippines       |
|                 | Annual Plan 2018 - Philippines        |
|                 | Annual Plan 2020 - Philippines        |
|                 | Capture learnings - ECCP.docx         |
|                 | Layertech - Learning log              |
|                 | Layertech - 2018 annual report        |
|                 | Layertech - 1sq Q 2019                |
|                 | PCIJ - Implementation plan            |
|                 | PCIJ - Learning log                   |
|                 | PCIJ - Activity log                   |
|                 | PCIJ - Annual report 2018             |
|                 | PCIJ - Annual report 2019             |
|                 | PCIJ - Outcome Statements             |
|                 | PCIJ - Substantiators comments        |
| <b>Tanzania</b> |                                       |
|                 | TMF Narrative Report Q1.pdf           |
|                 | Progress report - Hakirasilimali.docx |
|                 | Progress report - TCIB.docx           |
|                 | Progress report - TMF.docx            |
|                 | Progress report - TYVA.docx           |
|                 | Capacity Assessment - TMF 2017.docx   |
|                 | Capacity Assessment - TMF 2019.docx   |
|                 | TMF Q2 Assessed Narrative Report.docx |
|                 | Partner Logbook - TMF                 |