2023-2028 STRATEGY FOR CITIZEN-CENTRED ACCOUNTABILITY

Integrity Action, June 2023

WHY WE EXIST

Many promises are made in the name of development. Whether by governments, private companies, or development and humanitarian organisations, all too often these are not kept as they should be.

Across the world, and particularly in the Global South, citizens experience these broken promises as a matter of routine. Roads washed away months after they are built, classrooms that crumble and clinics that never materialise, teachers who fail to turn up for work – these issues and more have become an everyday fact of life.

Such broken promises disproportionately affect people living in poverty, especially women and girls. In places where they are most needed, poor delivery of essential projects and services has a profound effect on vital outcomes such as health, education, and access to social services – and on basic human rights.

These failures, reinforced by a lack of open listening and responding, also create a widespread inability for citizens to trust the institutions they rely on. Many citizens simply do not believe that the institutions that exist to support them will respond to a complaint, a concern, or even a basic need. This in turn makes citizens reluctant to engage with those institutions, fuelling a downward spiral of participation that undermines any attempts to build equitable, thriving societies.

Integrity Action has been addressing these challenges since it was founded in 2003. Our work enables citizens to promote integrity, so that public services and development projects are delivered to the standards that their communities deserve.

Our approach works. With our support and training, citizens have monitored public projects across 20 countries, and have identified and reported over 10,000 problems. They have then followed up with solutions to two-thirds of them. These solutions translate into real benefits in peoples' lives: better schools, cleaner water, safer buildings. Such solutions can be life-changing:

- ✓ In Ghana, construction of a community health clinic had stalled, and the site abandoned for years. Monitors found who was responsible and ensured the project was completed.

- ✓ In Afghanistan, many teachers didn't show up to work, denying students an education. Student monitors solved this by setting up a "reverse register" for teacher attendance.

- ✓ In Kenya, rubbish was not being cleared from Kongowea market and was instead being burned on site. Monitor action has led to a regular schedule of collection and disposal.

Through our focus on citizen-centred accountability, Integrity Action joins with all those worldwide who are working to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions under the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals[1].

Furthermore, we passionately agree that **'no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone'**[2]. Problems of integrity pose a far greater threat to those who are illiterate or unaware of their rights, as well as to those groups who are at higher risk of being socially excluded or silenced if they speak out – often women and girls. At Integrity Action, we aim to amplify the voices of the most marginalised citizens and address barriers to equality through our focus on gender, climate, and social justice.

Our goals will not be achieved working alone, and programmes delivered by Integrity Action and our partners are only a part of the story. By learning and sharing lessons directly from citizens, from local governments and service providers, and from dedicated research projects, we seek to strengthen initiatives that go well beyond the limits that we can achieve by ourselves.

OUR SOLUTION

OUR VISION is for a just and equitable world, where citizens are empowered and integrity is central to vibrant societies.

OUR MISSION is to help build societies in which **all** citizens can - and do - **successfully** demand integrity from the institutions they rely on.

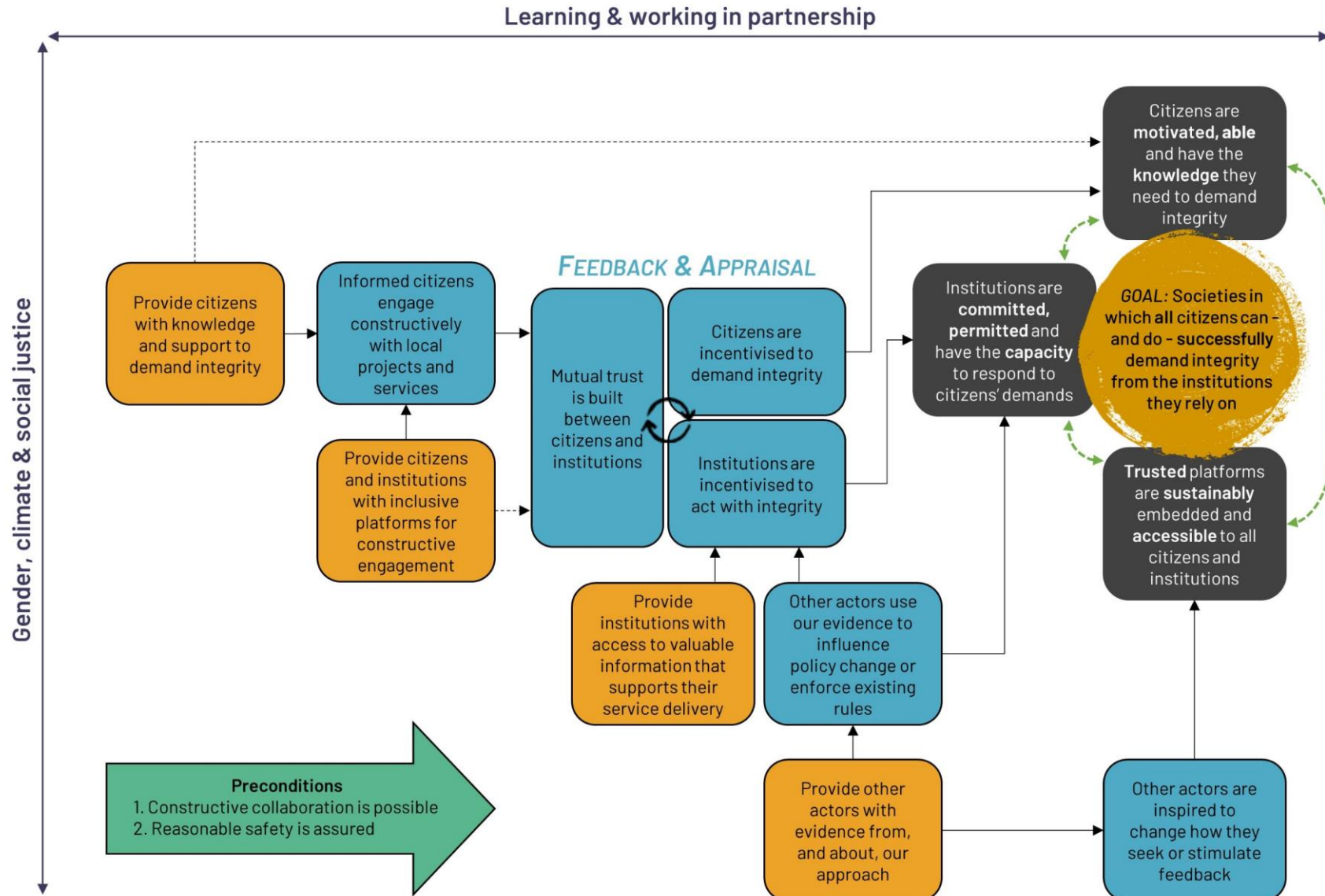Our approach to achieving these is set out in our Theory of Change, which describes the impact we want our programmes to have and the pathways we will use to pursue it. This focuses our work on three dimensions: the actors responsible for delivering on promises, the communities who are expected to benefit from them, and the mechanisms that are needed for these groups to interact.

At Integrity Action, we use the term **'integrity'** in its sense of robust solidity as well as moral consistency.

As defined in our Theory of Change, it is *"the quality or practice of behaving in accordance with the values, principles and standards that one claims to hold, or that are required by one's position."*

Such behaviour requires not only intent but also the ability and resources to fulfil promises, and to admit when promises are inappropriate, unhelpful, or unrealistic.

We equip citizens to monitor infrastructure and services where they live, to report problems publicly, and to work with the relevant authorities to see that these are resolved. We help local officials and service providers to see where problems are arising that they are responsible for, and to understand how working with citizens can lead to more effective use of resources. In the process, we build relationships of trust between citizens and the people who serve them, so that together they can ensure that the right promises are made and kept.

Our Theory of Change is illustrated in the diagram on the following page:

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[1] Especially goal 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16

[2] "Leaving no one behind: How the SDGs can bring real change", ODI cdn.odi.org/media/documents/9534.pdf

INTEGRITY ACTION

Learning & working in partnership

Gender, climate & social justice

Provide citizens with knowledge and support to demand integrity

Informed citizens engage constructively with local projects and services

Provide citizens and institutions with inclusive platforms for constructive engagement

FEEDBACK & APPRAISAL

Mutual trust is built between citizens and institutions

Citizens are incentivised to demand integrity

Institutions are incentivised to act with integrity

Provide institutions with access to valuable information that supports their service delivery

Other actors use our evidence to influence policy change or enforce existing rules

Provide other actors with evidence from, and about, our approach

Citizens are **motivated, able** and have the **knowledge** they need to demand integrity

Institutions are **committed, permitted** and have the **capacity** to respond to citizens' demands

GOAL: Societies in which **all citizens can** – and do – **successfully** demand integrity from the institutions they rely on

Trusted platforms are **sustainably** embedded and **accessible** to all citizens and institutions

Other actors are inspired to change how they seek or stimulate feedback

Preconditions
1. Constructive collaboration is possible
2. Reasonable safety is assured

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At the heart of this approach is our joint focus on what we call 'feedback and appraisal'. At Integrity Action, we use *feedback* to describe the typically subjective feelings of citizens about a service: Does it meet their needs? Are they satisfied? If not, why? By contrast, *appraisal* is a more objective comparison of what has been promised with what has been received: Are the correct materials being used that were budgeted for? How deep are the foundations? How long is the waiting time? Other approaches often focus on only one of these aspects, but to us the combination is essential.

Our model also draws on the COM-B model of behaviour change, in which Behaviour is influenced by Capabilities, Opportunities, and Motivations. We know that for our approach to work, both citizens and duty-bearers need to have the right combinations of these to bring about change. Where our diagram speaks of 'incentives', these can be both positive (e.g. social recognition, improvements in services) and negative (sanctions for underperformance).

Since 2013 we have combined our approach with a real-time technology tool, [DevelopmentCheck](#), which gives citizens a means of openly reporting broken promises and their resolutions. Our 'Fix Rate' methodology, which provides the number of resolved problems as a percentage of all that have been raised, fuels a virtuous circle of incentives as both monitors and authorities are encouraged by a visible indicator of responsiveness.

Our Theory of Change is a living document, and we expect it to keep evolving over the next five years as we continue to generate evidence and learn about how best to achieve our goal. Since developing the latest version in 2020, we have published multiple pieces of research that have tested the theory's causal links and its underlying assumptions[3]. Some of our most important recent lessons include:

❖ We have a better understanding of the types of information that best support citizens to act as effective monitors, or to otherwise demand integrity from responsible parties. This includes information about the project or service being monitored, but also knowledge of how decisions are made and the processes for engaging with decision-makers.

❖ There is a widespread issue of duty-bearers lacking the capacity to fulfil promises. Those we engage with are often keen to hear the voice of their community but don't know how to collect it, or they already receive feedback but don't know how to navigate their own hierarchies in order to respond. Lacking from many social accountability initiatives is the recognition that individual duty-bearers are also themselves rights-holders, and our programmes have often worked best when collective empowerment of citizens and public officials has enabled them to work together to hold contractors to account.

❖ Mutual trust is critical, and stems from constructive engagement as well as enabling it. In an analysis of problems reported by monitors, the two strongest pathways for achieving solutions were found to be: 1) when the two points above – citizens having information, duty-bearers having the right capacities – combined to contribute to greater trust; and 2) when trust was placed in competent duty-bearers, leading to effective collaboration.

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[3] These include: "What information helps citizens demand accountability and improvements to services?", Integrity Action, 2021. [Published by Integrity Action](#)
"What makes frontline duty bearers act with integrity?", blueTAP, 2021. [Published by Integrity Action](#)
"What is the value of citizen-generated data to Kenyan authorities?", iDC, 2022. [Published by Integrity Action](#)
"Solving problems in public service delivery", Ecorys, 2021. [Published by Integrity Action](#)

OUR VALUES & PRINCIPLES

As we deliver on our mission, we will continue to live by our organisational values and principles.

OUR VALUES are integrity, equality, rational creativity, purposeful curiosity, and collaboration.

OUR OPERATING PRINCIPLES are:

- ❖ We are bold, and not afraid to question the status quo - or ourselves

- ❖ We act responsibly and listen to and act on the views of the people we work with

- ❖ We are open about our successes and failures, and open in our engagement with partners and people

- ❖ We are constructive, and believe problems can best be solved when everyone's needs are recognised

- ❖ We care about impact, and about people – we strive to ensure our work is enjoyable, inclusive, and fulfilling for all concerned

As an organisation promoting accountability and transferring of power to citizens, it is essential that Integrity Action upholds these attributes in its own work. We are accountable to those who fund our work, the partners with whom we collaborate, and ultimately the citizens we work for.

Our Theory of Change diagram illustrates two crucial qualities that cut across everything we do: learning and working in partnership, and gender, climate, and social justice.

Gender, Climate and Social Justice

Our mission centres around the voice of citizens. We aim for citizens to be heard by the projects and services that are supposed to benefit them, but which are frequently designed and delivered without their involvement. The opinions and feedback that are most ignored, silenced, or left unsaid are often those which belong to women, girls, and other marginalised groups. As a result, projects and services are not responsive to their needs and priorities.

Power, and in particular the lack of it, is at the basis of this inequality – as it is for injustices around the world. We believe that in re-balancing power between institutions and citizens, it is crucial to design transformative responses that address injustice, inequality, and lack of power wherever we encounter it.

Integrity Action has tackled inequality in our programmes since 2018, when we published our first Gender Equality and Social Inclusion strategy. Since then, we have learned and done a lot. Our monitors are diverse and represent the voice and needs of all segments of their communities; women monitors, young monitors, and monitors with disabilities have increased their standing and taken leadership roles to mediate between communities and duty-bearers; monitored projects and services are assessed based on their accessibility and inclusivity. But we know it's still not enough, and new challenges and complexities keep pushing us to learn and do more.

We have extensively considered what the SDG principle of "leaving no one behind" means for us, and have concluded that we need to be speaking about justice. We believe this term conveys a more powerful message than equality alone: inequalities are driven by a solid infrastructure made of institutions, laws, policies, norms, attitudes and values. To tackle them, we cannot just focus on promoting opportunities for individual self-improvement, but rather on dismantling harmful structures that have allowed inequalities to thrive. We must work towards a redistribution of power, opportunities, and access among the people who have been systematically excluded.

In this strategic period, we will focus on understanding and tackling three distinct but overlapping aspects of injustice: gender inequality, social disparity, and the unequal impacts of climate change. Our rationale and promises in this area are set out in our "Power With" approach: Integrity Action's journey to gender, climate and social justice[4]. We will be accountable for these promises through annual public reports on our achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and adaptations needed.

Learning and working in partnership

One area where our commitment to rebalancing power is most important is in our partnership approach. Our partners include local and national CSOs, INGOs, government actors, system funders, and researchers, and we strive to work with them all as equals and to learn from their insights and experiences. At all levels, we work in solidarity with our partners and create pathways for them to hold us to account on our own commitments, seeking to ensure that our partnerships are genuinely collaborative and mutually beneficial.

We are conscious that we must take extra care in our partnerships with those who are located closest to our programmes. Nothing that we do would be possible without these partners' ability to provide direct and in-person support to the citizens involved in demanding integrity, their understanding of their communities, and the local credibility that they provide. In these partnerships, we are aware of the power imbalances that accompany our origins as a Northern-based organisation, and we actively seek to redress them so that we can live out our values and achieve maximum impact in the countries where we work.

OUR PLACE IN A CHANGING WORLD

As we begin our new five-year strategy, we find ourselves strongly positioned to address an array of threats being faced by the world today. Defining and adapting our role is ever more critical in this changing context, without losing sight of our goals or our organisational DNA.

We have identified three key external trends that will challenge our work over the coming years, but where we can also add new value. These are the deepening climate emergency, increasing global insecurity, and a widespread weakening of citizens' faith in their public institutions. There are then new opportunities for increasing our impact by securing our most valuable role within locally-led development, and by successfully integrating with the not-for-profit international development organisation Crown Agents.

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[4] **Power with** is shared power that grows out of collaboration and is built on respect, solidarity, and collaborative decision making. Rather than domination and control, **power with** leads to collective action.

The climate emergency

Climate change is the most pressing problem facing humanity. The global annual mean temperature is projected to rise above 1.5^{o}C higher than pre-industrial levels in at least one of the years covered by this strategy - the target level set by the Paris Agreement[5]. Rising sea levels threaten to displace millions of people worldwide, while increases in flooding, fires, and droughts have become the norm. The crisis is exacerbating existing inequalities, disproportionately endangering the life, health, wellbeing, and opportunities of women and girls[6].

The Paris Agreement has united global governments in setting, and regularly increasing, nationally determined contributions towards cutting emissions and fostering climate resilience. Global climate finance flows reached an annual average of US $803 billion in 2019-20, a 12% increase on the previous biennium[7]. There is a need to ensure that citizens have a say in how such funds are spent, and to establish mechanisms that reduce the risks of corruption and elite capture. The opportunity is there for a just transition[8], and citizen-centred approaches can prevent actors from greenwashing.

The concept of green accountability is already on the rise, with participatory and transparent architecture emerging in the varying fields of climate finance, but actors with knowledge of CCA must be involved to keep these focused on community-level action. As global efforts are made to cut emissions and decarbonise the way we live, it is essential that citizens around the world can co-create solutions and hold their leaders to account for converting promises into effective and equitable action.

At Integrity Action, we know that citizens can add transformational value to decisions on where and how climate financing is spent. Our approach will be citizen-centred green accountability, placing individuals and civil society at the heart of climate finance flows. We must enable citizens to play a vital part in the climate decisions that affect their lives: directing funding, implementing solutions, capturing the real impact that is being felt by communities, and holding politicians accountable.

We are developing pathways in this space to maximise our added value to citizens, governments, and our partners. There is a wealth of climate mitigation and adaptation projects that can be monitored – from solar panels to tree planting and carbon capture. Citizens in our existing programmes are already being affected by the changing environment, and we must plan for this and design models that can adapt to the context. Our experience and learning give us the capability to innovate and experiment to find models that work.

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[5] "Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022", UN. un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change

[6] "Climate Action fast facts on gender equality", UN. un.org/en/climatechange/science/key-findings

[7] "UN climate change news, November 2022", UNFCCC unfccc.int/news/four-new-reports-set-scene-for-discussions-on-climate-finance-at-cop27 Although even this figure is still far from what is needed, with the New Climate Economy calculating that tens of trillions will be needed for infrastructure alone by 2030

[8] "Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind", ILO. climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-just-transition-and-why-it-important

Conflict, insecurity, and peacebuilding

There is a growing recognition of the need for peacebuilding and anti-corruption efforts to learn from each other[9]. One quarter of people on Earth now live in conflict-affected areas, and as of May 2022 the figure of those who had been forcibly displaced stood at a record 100 million – a number that has more than doubled in ten years[10].

Russia's war in Ukraine has rightly seized the world's attention, although it is not the only armed conflict facing the global community, and we are a member of the RISE Ukraine coalition working for the nation's Reconstruction, Integrity, Sustainability, and Efficiency. We must support citizens and civil society to monitor the vast sums that have been pledged for post-war recovery, to demand integrity throughout the reconstruction effort, and to ensure that the new infrastructure best serves the Ukrainian people.

At Integrity Action, we use the term **'citizen'** whilst recognising that not everybody holds legal citizenship of the place in which they live.

In this document, our use of the term refers to the role that everybody is equally entitled to play as rights-holding members of the human family (as set out in international human rights law), which may sometimes be in contrast to other roles they hold in their social, political, civic, or economic lives and employment.

We must learn from actors with relevant expertise, in order to make wise decisions about where monitors can act safely and what support we can or should provide to participants who are living with emotional or other forms of trauma. We must ensure inclusion of displaced people in our programmes, wherever present, and not allow our use of the term "citizen" to be misinterpreted.

The global energy crisis, catalysed by the war in Ukraine, is another example of the insecurity facing the international community that risks reversing the progress made towards the SDGs, hitting the most vulnerable communities hardest. As the world seeks to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic, economic and political turbulence continues to affect the ability of funders, governments, and families to plan for the future. We must learn to operate within the context of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, while recognising the critical role that rapid feedback loops can play in identifying and addressing threats as they emerge.

A crisis in public trust

In interviews with c29,000 Africans across 20 countries in 2022, around two-thirds of participants thought their country's level of corruption had increased over the past year[11]. In Asia, a survey of 20,000 people across 17 countries found that 74% believed that government corruption was a big problem in their country[12].

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[9] For example, corruptionjusticeandlegitimacy.org/blog/categories/peacebuilding-and-corruption

[10] UN, 2023. sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#progress_and_info

[11] Afrobarometer, Round 9. 52% said it had "increased a lot", 11.9% answered "increased somewhat". Only 15.8% thought it had decreased. afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/

[12] Global Corruption Barometer, Asia 2020. transparency.org/en/gcb/asia/asia-2020

Of course, not all broken promises result from direct corruption. Gaps between citizens' needs and authorities' actions are a feature of an ongoing hollowing-out of democratic principles in countries around the world. Moisés Naím speaks of "three Ps" that threaten modern democracies: populism, polarisation, and post-truth[13]. The combination of these factors is contributing to a narrowing of civic space and a diminishing ability of citizens to trust their governments and institutions[14].

This makes Integrity Action's work more difficult, and more essential. Within communities and project locations, the spread of misinformation (often shared on social media) increases the value of real evidence, such as photos taken by monitors of tangible problems and fixes. Because we promote an approach of constructive engagement, we can work in contexts where more provocative demanders of integrity are unwelcome. However, we must ask ourselves how much legitimacy we want to lend to authorities whose motivations are suspect.

At the same time, the development sector is increasingly recognising the importance of citizen feedback. Indeed, key development actors – including citizens in the South and North, as well as donors – have rightly raised their expectations for INGOs to listen and respond to the people they serve. Even where civil society has been suppressed, the demand-side appetite for integrity remains strong and citizens are seeking ways to take control of their own development. This opens the door for Integrity Action to fulfil its role as the "antidote to the democratic backlash"[15].

Changes in Integrity Action's positioning

The three trends above are serious and complex challenges. Governments remain the primary vehicle by which these crises can and must be addressed, but their abilities to do so alone have been found wanting[16]. These challenges therefore pose an opportunity - even a responsibility - for us to increase or demonstrate the value of citizen-centred accountability in new settings. To help us, there are two additional movements towards positive change, but which each carry risks if not embraced correctly.

Locally-led development is one of the most important trends facing the sector. We have been supporting this agenda in a number of ways, both across international development forums and in our own work with partner organisations based in the Global South.

We strongly believe that programmes such as ours are more effective, more sustainable, and more equitable when decisions are made as close to the affected communities as possible. This means supporting, and encouraging, donors to increase their direct funding to southern-based civil society organisations rather than channelling it all through northern-based INGOs – such as Integrity Action.

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[13] "The Revenge of Power: How autocrats are reinventing politics for the 21st century", Moisés Naím, 2022. us.macmillan.com/books/9781250279200/therevengeofpower

[14] "Trust in public institutions: Trends and implications for economic security", UN, 2021. https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2021/07/trust-public-institutions/

[15] "Mid-term Evaluation of IA's Sida 2020-2024 Grant", Southern Hemisphere, 2023. integrityaction.org/what-we-are-learning/learning/mid-term-evaluation-of-integrity-action-s-sida-2020-2024-grant/

[16] "From social contract to social compact", co-authored by BudgIT, Integrity Action, Integrity Watch Afghanistan & Twaweza, 2021.

Of course, this challenges us to find new ways of adding value. We will therefore be considering:

i. What part can we play in providing a 'connective tissue' between actors working at local, national, and international levels, and donors?

ii. How can we build on the lessons we've learned around promoting community ownership of projects and services and handing over the power to our in-country partners? What can we encourage others to do?

iii. Are donor commitments to local funding just new development promises to be broken?

We will be responding to many or all of these issues in collaboration with Crown Agents, with whom Integrity Action merged in March 2023 whilst remaining an independent registered charity. This alliance opens up many opportunities for both organisations to achieve even greater impact for communities across the world. Questions we will be asking ourselves – and each other – over this strategic period include:

i. How can we best embrace opportunities to work at a new scale and in new sectors, while remaining true to our citizen-centred approach and without making promises we can't deliver?

ii. How can we maintain the best qualities of a small team, such as our agility and creativity, while drawing on the capacity and expertise available across the Crown Agents group?

iii. How can we develop effective 'end-to-end' approaches that connect Integrity Action's community-level approach to Crown Agents' government engagement, while being aware that there is still a crucial "missing middle" (e.g. lack of communication between local and central governments)?

OUR AMBITION FOR 2028

In our previous strategic period of 2018-23 we set out three overarching objectives:

1. Through our programmes we would ACHIEVE results for citizens that maximised quality, durability, and inclusivity

2. Through increased collaboration we would AMPLIFY our programme results, fuel further innovation, and embed citizen-centred accountability practices

3. Through building our evidence and influence we would CONVINCE other actors to mainstream citizen-centred accountability across the sector and within public services

These remain our three areas of focus for 2023-28. However, echoing the sectoral trend towards locally-led development (and parallel movements such as decolonisation), there is now less of a need to *convince* development actors of the value of listening to citizens' voices. Instead, the focus for the coming years is to provide them with insight on *how* to do it; in other words we are seeking to ACCELERATE their effective mainstreaming of citizen-centred accountability.

We have made good progress in all three focus areas, and have a strong platform to build on for the future. The following is an outline of our ambition for 2028, for which a more detailed set of indicators will be tracked quarterly by Integrity Action's board of trustees. We will also maintain our agile process of annual strategy adaptation, and will conduct a deeper mid-point review in 2025/26 to ensure our objectives remain relevant to the rapidly changing global context.

In delivering on these objectives we will join with all who are contributing to SDG targets, including:

16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

16.6 Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels

1. ACHIEVE

Our objective: Achieve results for citizens that maximise quality, durability, and inclusivity

To do this, we will:

- ✓ Form impactful partnerships to develop and deliver evidence-driven, contextualised pathways for effective and inclusive citizen-centred accountability

- ✓ Enable even the most marginalised citizens to act as monitors and to benefit from monitoring

- ✓ Support collaborative approaches that will fix at least two-thirds of problems reported by citizens

This first objective presses us to keep focus on delivering effective and equitable citizen-centred accountability in the programmes we are directly involved in. We must continue to ensure that our core approach achieves meaningful results for the communities we work with.

In the past five years we have demonstrated that our model of citizen-centred accountability (CCA) works, with multiple third-party evaluations finding evidence of positive behaviour change, empowerment, and mutual trust. We have also developed our "five pillars" framework for designing CCA initiatives, streamlining our process for co-creating new mechanisms with new partners and in diverse contexts. This framework, described below in §How we put it into practice, helps us maintain focus on our organisational values of collaboration and rational creativity, systematically drawing the insights from our southern-based partners that are crucial as we seek to achieve results across different environments.

In 2019 we also launched a radically-updated version of DevelopmentCheck, with accompanying improvements to the methodology. This has coincided with a sharp uptick in both the reporting of problems and the Fix Rate, with more than 7500 problems reported using the new version – of which 77% have been later marked by monitors as fixed. We have therefore raised our target Fix Rate from

the 50% we previously aimed for, while being conscious that we will be facing new contextual challenges – such as the conflict in Ukraine, or working in unfamiliar thematic sectors – that may make it difficult to consistently replicate the Fix Rate of the past few years.

At the same time, we recognise that use of a proprietary technology tool poses a barrier to the durability of our approach, and we will continue to explore alternative solutions that can be sustained beyond grant lifetimes. In the past five years we have seen and supported successful monitoring uses of fully-offline approaches, such as paper noticeboards in Nepal, and for partners in Kenya we have trialled a free DevelopmentCheck substitute using KoboToolbox. In order to create context-appropriate mechanisms we must continue to allow ourselves to be led by partner organisations, groups or individuals who understand that context intimately.

Technology can also be a barrier to inclusion, and we have been tackling this in multiple ways – providing access to smart technology within our programmes, for example, or pairing monitors with lower literacy or visual impairments with other monitors who can use the tool on their behalf. We must continue to do more to ensure that our approach is inclusive and that we are engaging with all groups of people who are at risk of exclusion from local decision-making or development programmes, to ensure that we are achieving results that make real improvements to **all** citizens.

2. AMPLIFY

Our objective: Collaborate to amplify results, fuel further innovation, and embed citizen-centred accountability

To do this, we will:

- ✓ Work with partners to develop and deliver pathways for sustaining and scaling up CCA, testing these pathways as we go, and evidencing results

- ✓ Take learning and insights from collaborations, feed these into future innovation, and share widely to stimulate improved CCA practice at all levels

- ✓ Be agile and responsive with our use of technology, encouraging local adoption of tools through focusing on efficiency and accessibility

Our *Amplify* objective challenges us to build on the results of *Achieve*, growing our partnerships to make CCA scalable, sustainable, and responsive to context. As a small team, we cannot focus only on what we ourselves can deliver through timebound grant implementations but must continue to look beyond these horizons to maximise our impact.

In the past five years we have explored different models of partnership, and thought hard about what happens when our involvement comes to an end. Some of our thinking was published in our 2021 learning paper on making CCA last, including the importance of distinguishing between the sustainability of specific tools or feedback platforms versus the internalisation of principles and embedding of an approach. The majority of our existing monitors are positive they will continue their

work beyond the funding lifetime, and school-based Integrity Clubs in countries such as Nepal are continuing to meet despite the SHINE programme that established them having ended in 2021.

Scaling our approach has been more challenging than envisioned in 2018, due largely to the funding cuts that have hit the sector. Our primary vehicle for scale, a coalition with multiple large INGOs implementing our monitoring model across a number of countries, was cancelled by the UK government despite promising results. In the next five years, we will leverage our relationship with Crown Agents to grow our thematic and geographic footprint, while also pursuing opportunities for embedding our methodology within the work of other larger actors whose aims overlap with our own.

We will also keep exploring new ways of deepening engagement with a wider range of in-country actors, on both sides of demanding integrity. We know that we must engage earlier and more intentionally with authorities at national and regional levels, using the "win-win" nature of CCA as an entry point and helping them understand its economic, social, and electoral benefits. We must also continue to identify and build relationships with, and between, potential allies at all levels; including official oversight bodies, local and national CSOs, citizen groups, and frontline duty-bearers who need support to navigate governmental hierarchies and hold higher authorities to account.

Another key collaboration is with the tech sector. We must stay abreast of the latest developments in relevant areas such as mobile technology and assistive design, in order for tools such as DevelopmentCheck to be effective, accessible, and usable in a range of environments. In 2022 we published a learning paper on the role of technology in social accountability initiatives, and will keep building on this learning to ensure that our use of technology continues to reinforce and amplify our processes rather than replace them.

3. ACCELERATE

Our objective: Build and share a robust case for CCA to catalyse its effective mainstreaming

To do this, we will:

- ✓ Lead on evidencing the case for citizen-centred accountability; including demonstrating the economic, social, and environmental benefits

- ✓ Build or strengthen coalitions calling for the mainstreaming of citizen-centred accountability at all levels, from global to local

- ✓ Leverage our expertise to provide allies with practical insight and support that accelerates the design, implementation, and fundraising capacity of their own CCA processes

We believe our *Amplify* partnerships will increase the use of CCA in development, expanding the kinds of results our own programmes will *Achieve*. Our third objective drives us to take this even further by rallying other actors to adopt effective CCA mechanisms, promote them, or even require them. This will only be possible if we have compelling evidence for the benefits of citizen-centred accountability and how to achieve them.

In the past five years we have been establishing our position as experts in the field of citizen-centred accountability, how best to and how it drives real improvements in people's lives. Because we are ourselves practitioners, the evidence we publish is practical and carries the voices of the citizens we work with.

Our publications have directly responded to the key questions set out in our 2018-23 strategy: "*Under what conditions are citizens able and motivated to demand integrity? Under what conditions are these demands successful? How can mechanisms be sustained while remaining trusted by citizens?*" Lessons from these studies have fuelled innovation within Integrity Action's programmes, but have also been packaged and shared with other development organisations, researchers, donors, government actors, and influencers in the Global South and North.

We learn from – and with – our partners and monitors, and the increasing scale of our partnerships will enable us to gather ever stronger evidence on the role of CCA in challenging entrenched power dynamics, building trust, incentivising integrity, and improving the projects and services that citizens can access. We will also capitalise on the large quantities of data that continue to be collected through our tools, and share evidence of what works and what doesn't.

As we continue to develop the evidence base, we must also keep investing in relationships with actors who are positioned to deliver change. We will position ourselves as a thought leader, actively participating in forums where our insight can accelerate adoption of our learning. We must continue constructively pushing boundaries, to inform wider development policies and practices that will ensure the benefits of CCA are felt by all who most need them.

HOW WE PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Most of our work, especially towards our *Achieve* objective, will remain organised into timebound programmes. These interventions, each in collaboration with one or more partners and based in one or more specific geographies, will support discrete groups of citizens to monitor the delivery of third-party actors' projects and services in their communities.

We have identified three thematic areas in which we will be concentrating our programmes in the coming years: Green Accountability, School-Centred Accountability, and Civil Society Strengthening. Each thematic area has an accompanying list of priority countries, and we will use this focused approach to seek funding for our work.

Evidence gathered through this community monitoring will not only improve the quality of public goods in these areas, but will contribute to the global evidence base through our efforts to *Amplify* and *Accelerate*. Further evidence will be generated from within or beyond our programmes, through our investment in research and learning.

Our "five pillars" framework will enable us to develop context-sensitive programmes that address the core elements of CCA mechanisms, as follows:

1. **People:** Who is expected to demand, or to act with, integrity?

2. **Promise:** What has been committed to, for which integrity is required?

3. **Performance Monitoring:** How will delivery of the commitment be assessed?

4. **Problem Solving:** What happens when promises aren't kept?

5. **Public Updates:** How will progress be shared with the wider community?

This framework cuts across all our thematic areas, as does our Theory of Change, but we do not expect every programme to look the same. Our methodology does not tell citizens what to do – rather, it aims to provide them with tools and advice that they can combine with their local 'know how' to incentivise duty-bearers to respond.

We will co-create inclusive monitoring approaches with our partners, and together we will plan what will be monitored and by whom, what training is needed, which tools best fit the context, and which forums will be used for solving problems and sharing progress. Together, we will combine Integrity Action's methods, tools and knowledge with our partners' capacity, relationships, and expertise to achieve impact that neither of us could achieve alone. Throughout these discussions we will consider how processes can be sustained long-term, including through supporting our partners to access funding sources without Integrity Action.

Our "Power With" approach contains commitments on how we will act in our programmes, as well as internally and in our wider work. In our partnerships, we follow a standard of reciprocity in areas such as transparency; this means, for example, that we share with our partners the same organisational materials that we ask for when conducting due diligence. We will also ensure there are ongoing channels for feedback, and we will keep publishing the results of our partner surveys openly in our annual report. Throughout this strategic period, we will strengthen the way we collaborate with the wider Crown Agents group, while also continuing to prioritise and decolonise our partnerships with those in our programme locations[17].

Finally, we will continue responding to the experiences of our citizen monitors through periodic reviews of our tools, our behaviours, our Theory of Change, and this strategy. We will work to increase the diversity of our team, including staff and trustees, and to eliminate any injustices we identify in our systems and practices. Together, we will help the sector to re-imagine global development, shifting the power and resources that we collectively hold towards the communities we work for.

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[17] "Transforming Partnerships in International Cooperation", Peace Direct, 2023. Peace-Direct-Transforming-Partnerships-Report-English.pdf (peacedirect.org)