Doing debate differently: media and accountability

Author: Will Taylor
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BBC Media Action is the BBC’s international development charity. We use the power of media and communication to help reduce poverty and support people in understanding their rights. Our aim is to inform, connect and empower people around the world. We work in partnership with broadcasters, governments, non-governmental organisations and donors to share timely, reliable and useful information.

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Author Will Taylor  Editor Rosie Parkyn  External reviewer Brendan Halloran, senior fellow, strategy and learning, International Budget Partnership
Copy editor Sarah Chatwin  Proof reader Lorna Fray
Design Lance Bellers  Production team Anna Egan, Gemma Thomas, Lucy Harley-McKeown, Anna Reilly
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rapid spread of access to radio, TV, mobile and the internet means that people around the globe know more about what is going on in their region and country than ever before. But while more people have both the means and right to access information, the proliferation of information sources and fragmentation of media means that, in many countries, it is increasingly difficult to identify the neutral public space where societies can understand that information, work through the problems they face and hold the powerful accountable for their actions.

Converting access to information into genuine empowerment and accountability is an increasingly important debate in international development. However, the potential positive role of the media in shaping public dialogue – bridging the gap between information provision and political action, and developing more inclusive patterns of interaction between state and society – continues to be relatively neglected.

In 2017 BBC Media Action will complete a six year, multi-country project to support improved accountability through public dialogue. Partnering with over 135 media and civil society organisations, BBC Media Action has supported broadcast programmes that have reached more than 190 million people in 12 countries. In 2016, the governance programmes supported by BBC Media Action reached an average of 37% of the adult population of the countries in which they were broadcast. This paper seeks to explore how the lessons from that support can contribute to the wider empowerment and accountability agenda, and to set out challenges for the future of media, empowerment and accountability work.

How did the projects contribute to increased accountability?

BBC Media Action audiences consistently felt that the programmes had helped to hold government to account. In the final year of the grant:

• 83% of the audience reported that they felt better informed on governance issues
• 32% of BBC Media Action’s audience strongly agreed that the programme they watched/listened to was playing a role in holding government to account (89% agreed or strongly agreed).

The projects supported increases in accountability through:

1 Empowering people – increasing effective political participation: Across all seven countries where we conducted quantitative research BBC Media Action’s audiences participate more in politics than people who do not listen to and/or watch its programmes, even when taking other influencing factors – such as age, income and interest in politics – into account. There is also a strong, positive association between exposure to BBC Media Action governance programmes and political knowledge and discussion.

2 Creating space – developing a more inclusive public space: The programmes supported by BBC Media Action give a voice to groups under-represented in public debate, including women, young people and people from rural areas. This influences attitudes in wider society about who should be able to make their views heard, how and on what topics.

3 Influencing power – improving responsiveness from power-holders: Across different contexts the programmes were regarded by their audiences as having an important role to play in getting answers from decision-makers on key issues, and pushing decision-makers to account for these decisions.

However, the aggregate results of projects across nine very different countries only take you so far: each of the programmes sought to build the most effective discussion for the relevant country at that particular time. It is through these different programming approaches and the local examples that one can really begin to understand the project’s influence on patterns of accountability.
Lessons for the future

The final section of this briefing draws key lessons for future BBC Media Action programming and the design of wider media, empowerment and accountability initiatives. It concludes:

1. BBC Media Action projects have generated large audiences and its research has produced an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the influence of its programming on those audiences. Helping people from all parts of society have the chance to ask the questions that matter to them will always remain central to BBC Media Action’s work. However, the organisation can do more to analyse the barriers that different groups face to getting their voices heard in the world outside the programmes, and the opportunities to influence the long-term shape of civic space. In the future, BBC Media Action needs to consider more systematically how its work influences the online and offline spaces where political discussion takes place in different societies, the long-term behaviour of media and the responses of people in power.

2. Adaptation is crucial to effective governance programming. This is particularly true in media programming that depends on understanding changing politics, audience preferences and media markets. BBC Media Action did many good things, developing and reviewing theories of change and producing high-level research and analysis. However, further work is needed to ensure a locally-owned theory of change is at the centre of all projects, guiding how implementing staff and partners think and act. In particular, the organisation needs to continue to review whether its internal strategy, budget and review processes incentivise locally rooted, flexible and adaptive programming that achieves the maximum impact on accountability in a given context.

3. The global grant has extended the evidence base on the contribution that media and communication initiatives can make to delivering international development empowerment and accountability strategies. Development donors and practitioners need to engage more systematically with media and communication in designing accountability and empowerment initiatives. However, increased attention on the media from donors with varied priorities also carries risks. Donors need to ensure that they approach the sector strategically and that the cumulative effect of their support improves – rather than undermines – media’s contribution to independent, balanced and effective public discussion.

Key characteristics of BBC Media Action programming

- **Scale** – reaching over 190 million people
- **Trust** – creating trusted, inclusive and independent spaces for people from all parts of society to talk to those in power
- **Reaching all parts of society** – women and men, rural and urban, rich and poor, of all ages, ethnicities, religions and political persuasions
- **Facilitating public discussion** – supporting people to make their own minds up on the big issues facing society
- **Resonance** – programming is driven by the issues people most want to talk about or see raised, rather than just highlighting the issues that non-governmental organisations and governments feel are important. This means that programming resonates strongly with audiences
- **Adaptive programming** – responding to changing social, political and media environments
Definitions

**Transparency** is a characteristic of governments, companies, organisations and individuals that are open in the clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions. Transparency requires information to be relevant, accessible, timely and accurate.

**Empowerment** is the process of enhancing an individual’s or a group’s capacity to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. As DFID put it in 2011, empowerment projects support disadvantaged people to gain power and exert greater influence over those who control access to key resources.\(^5\)

**Political participation** is the extent to which individuals and groups within society are actively involved in political processes, debates and decision-making. Measuring impact on political participation is one of the key ways in which BBC Media Action has sought to measure the impact of its projects on empowerment.

**Accountability** is the extent to which people, groups and institutions are able to hold government and other power-holders responsible for their actions, and the extent to which government and other power-holders provide a public account of their decisions and actions.

**Responsiveness** is the extent to which power-holders act on the demands of people, groups and institutions. Responsiveness is a possible and desirable outcome of accountable state–society relations.
International development debates about empowerment and accountability are taking place on shifting sands. The rapid rise in access to media and communication technologies is providing new and varied ways to talk to friends, neighbours and strangers, projecting images of distant lives and reshaping patterns of political information, discussion, attitudes and behaviour across the globe.

Growth in online and mobile access has been spectacular, dominating the debate on how communication is changing. But TV and radio still matter. Boosted by the spread of satellite and mobile technology, they continue to reach an increasing number of people every year. They remain the dominant source of news for most people in every region of the world, shaping how people see each other and imagine life beyond their communities. But broadcasting too is being fundamentally reshaped before our eyes, by technological advances, changing communication habits, failing finances...
and a rise in politically motivated funding. In many countries, a rapidly rising number of TV and radio channels are targeting narrower ethnic, linguistic, religious and political audiences. This opens up the possibility of more inclusive, creative and democratic patterns of communication, but also the potential for fracture, extremism and new forms of control.

It is in this conflicted and changing public space that those working on transparency, empowerment and accountability are wrestling with how, as Thomas Carothers puts it, to move from “excitement about transparency as a shortcut for achieving accountability… to the recognition that transparency on its own is only a very small part of the needs that allow citizens to put to use [the] information gained”.8

Boosting poor people’s access to information is not sufficient to make government more accountable or responsive to their needs.9 Transparency, empowerment and accountability interventions continue to be accused of failing to translate information into action and of not finding consistent, effective ways to connect state and society at the scale required.10 In recent years there has been a lively debate over what the next generation of empowerment and accountability initiatives should look like. Increasingly, that debate is focusing on understanding the politics – from exploring elite bargains among the powerful few, engaging with new informal citizen mobilisation (such as through online activism) or, as the World Bank and others supporting the open government agenda have it, working toward “healthy political engagement”11 (considering how sustained public deliberation can make those in power more responsive to societal demands, ultimately delivering better and more equitable policy-making).12

**Where does the media fit in?**

Until recently, the media has been relatively neglected in these debates.13 This is clearly reflected in funding allocations.14 When empowerment and accountability initiatives have sought to engage the media, this has generally been to try to transmit a particular set of information to the populace or support investigative journalism to expose failure and corruption among officialdom. While each of these is important (and continues to be part of BBC Media Action’s work) not enough attention is being paid to the potentially vital role media can play in supporting public deliberation, debate and dialogue at scale.

Media’s role in shaping public dialogue can help to bridge the gap between information provision and political action, developing more inclusive and effective patterns of interaction between state and society. Supporting people from across society to understand, discuss and influence the issues that matter to them creates an enabling environment for transparency, accountability and citizen engagement. It can also contribute directly to increasing accountability and responsiveness.
In 2011 BBC Media Action received a five-year, multi-country global grant from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The grant funded activities supporting communication platforms for accountability and public dialogue, with the aim of contributing to more accountable state–society relations in nine countries – most of which were fragile or conflict afflicted. 

Central to this work was helping media organisations in the countries where BBC Media Action works to provide trusted platforms that engage people from all parts of society – young and old, women and men, people from different ethnicities, religions and politics – drawing them together to talk about the issues that matter to them in a fair and balanced way. BBC Media Action worked with media organisations large and small, supporting broadcast programmes that are diverse in their language, format and style. Using TV, radio, online and mobile platforms, the projects delivered a range of factual and entertainment formats including debate programmes, drama, magazine formats and public service announcements, to reach large audiences. Broadcast programmes were complemented with capacity-strengthening support to local media organisations.

**Project design**

Where it worked best, project design was locally driven with central support – by strong, country-based teams with expert understanding of local media markets and accountability ecosystems. Initial country planning processes incorporated media and political economy analyses, developing theories of change and selecting partners. Formative research shaped programme design, consulting with target audiences on the programme format and issues that mattered to them. Where possible (in seven of the nine countries), nationally representative quantitative baseline surveys established the basis for project evaluation. Regular audience feedback was built into project design, alongside qualitative research to help teams to refine programming.

BBC Media Action’s work has been successful, at scale. Over the course of the grant we have, the organisation partnered with over 135 media and civil society organisations. Its projects developed compelling, locally relevant programming that attracted large audiences in very different contexts. The supported programming was watched or listened to by over 190 million people. And those audiences consistently felt that the programmes had played a role in increasing accountability.
In the final year, 32% of BBC Media Action’s audience strongly agreed that the programme they watched or listened to was playing a role in holding government to account (89% agreed or strongly agreed).\(^\text{16}\)

However, to understand the impact of BBC Media Action’s work had on empowerment and accountability, one must dig deeper into the variations in the programmes, the research results, the strategies for developing public dialogue, and the different influences on accountability in different countries. How did what happened in a recording of a public debate programme in the president’s palace in Kabul or out in the open in a village in northern Sierra Leone translate into lasting change to empowerment of people from different sections of society and accountability of those who make the big decisions that affect their lives?

### BBC Media Action’s approach

BBC Media Action’s approach to empowerment, accountability and public dialogue has evolved over the course of the last five years. Initially, its projects focused on generating large broadcast audiences and providing platforms for as many people as possible to ask challenging questions of their governments, holding them to account for their actions.\(^\text{17}\) This remains an important component of BBC Media Action’s approach. However, its new organisational approach (published in 2016) increases the emphasis on considering more explicitly how its work influences civic space and power, delivering the most effective conversation to deliver change, and sustainable impact on media environments.\(^\text{18}\) The approach identifies three areas through which media can influence accountability: empowering people, creating space, and influencing power. This paper is built around that three-part framework.

#### Figure 1 BBC Media Action’s approach to accountability

- **Empowers people**
  - By influencing:
    - Knowledge and understanding
    - Discussion
    - Efficacy and motivation
    - Skills
    - Attitudes, beliefs, norms and behaviour

- **Creates space**
  - That supports:
    - Mediation of state–society relations
    - Re-imagining of social relations
    - Connectedness and bridging of divides
    - Collective problem-solving
    - Sparking and diffusing innovation

- **Influences power**
  - By:
    -Demanding answers
    - Supporting people to ask questions
    - Setting the agenda
    - Facilitating external accountability relationships

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*Figure 1: BBC Media Action’s approach to accountability*
3 WHAT WE ARE LEARNING ABOUT MEDIA AND ACCOUNTABILITY

BBC Media Action projects combine support for media content with strengthening the capacity of local, national and regional media organisations – seeking to increase the amount of trusted, inclusive and independent content available in the media and communication environments in which it works. This section examines insights from this work into how media can contribute to improving accountability.

**BBC Media Action’s research**

This paper draws on BBC Media Action’s extensive quantitative and qualitative research programme as well as examples from its project teams. The organisation’s research uses qualitative and mixed qualitative/quantitative methodologies to complement and triangulate the results produced through quantitative data analysis – helping to understand why and how its programmes had, or did not have, impact.

**Quantitative:** Since 2011 BBC Media Action has have gathered nationally representative survey data from over 23,000 respondents in seven countries on individuals’ media habits, their engagement with its programmes and political participation.¹⁹ This data is now publicly available on the BBC Media Action data portal.²⁰ Analysis of this data includes using regression and structural equation modelling techniques.

**Qualitative:** Over the course of the grant from DFID BBC Media Action has conducted over 25 qualitative studies, including: in-depth interviews with audience members and local experts in governance and media, discussions with target audience groups, and other qualitative techniques such as participatory video and observation. In total, this qualitative research has engaged over 500 individuals, giving a deep understanding of the environments in which BBC Media Action’s programmes are broadcast.²¹

BBC Media Action’s research addresses the impact of its work on both the capacity of media organisations and the influence of the broadcast programmes on large audiences. However, it has generated a deeper evidence base on how the broadcast programmes support audiences to participate in politics. The shape of this evidence base inevitably influences the examples the paper draws upon.
Empowering people at scale

“There is somebody like me and you... when you watch, it kind of inspires you... – ‘if this person is participating, why am I not participating?’... people don’t participate because they feel the political process is for the elites.”

MALE, 15–24 YEARS, RESPONDING TO SEMA KENYA (KENYA SPEAKS), NAIROBI URBAN, KENYA

Empowerment is an essential component of accountability, responsive state–society relations and inclusive development. If people do not voice their demands, those in power are much less likely to act accountably or respond to them. BBC Media Action’s governance programmes reach large numbers of people, helping to empower them by supporting them to understand, discuss and take action on the issues they care about.

In 2016 global grant governance programming reached 37% of the adult population of the countries where it was broadcast.

BBC Media Action’s quantitative research across seven African and Asian countries shows that its audiences participate more in politics than people who do not listen to and/or watch its programmes, even when taking other influencing factors – such as age, income and interest in politics – into account. Participating in politics includes activities like writing letters to representatives, attending meetings or getting involved in a political party. BBC Media Action audience members also discuss politics more, and have higher levels of political knowledge than, those who are not exposed to its programming.
Further analysis on the data from Nepal and Kenya using structural equation modelling techniques showed direct and indirect links between exposure to BBC Media Action governance programming and political participation. While neither of these analyses establish a causal link between watching BBC Media Action programmes and participating more in politics, the strong and consistent association across multiple countries, combined with the findings from qualitative studies, gives us confidence that our programmes are having an influence on political participation.

Before, we didn’t talk directly with public officials. Instead, we talked with elders of family and village. But now the Open Jirga [Open Debate] programme gives us courage to ask directly from public officials about their activities.”

FEMALE, BAMYAN PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

Engaging younger, less interested and less educated audiences

The association between watching or listening to BBC Media Action’s programmes and increased political participation was remarkably consistent across all countries. This association was also stronger among some significant groups. Exposure to BBC Media Action governance programmes is more strongly associated with higher levels of political participation among younger, less educated audiences and those who are less interested in politics. These are important groups for BBC Media Action, as they tend to be less able to make their voices heard and normally participate less in politics.

In our village, young people used to lack confidence to speak up in the community meeting and group discussions. But after they’ve listened to the Lin Lait Kyair Sin [Bright Young Stars] radio programme, they gain self-confidence and dare to speak in the meeting.”

LISTENER GROUP PARTICIPANT, NAT KONE VILLAGE, MYANMAR

Figure 2 People exposed to BBC Media Action programmes are more likely to participate in politics, with larger increases seen in groups that traditionally participate less in politics

Note: the results are from regression analysis on data from nationally representative perception surveys from seven countries (Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania).

Source: Scavo and Snow (2016).
Different patterns of political participation

Using a cross-tabs analysis, researchers analysed the different patterns of association between exposure to BBC Media Action programmes and different forms of political participation across the seven countries. The programmes were associated with higher levels of all types of participation surveyed, including: getting involved in a community initiative, attending local council meetings, protesting or joining a political party. In every country, in every category of participation, people who watched or listened to BBC Media Action governance programmes reported higher political participation than those who did not.

Figure 3 Exposure to BBC Media Action programmes and forms of political participation*

*Not reached/Regularly reached* relates to exposure to BBC Media Action governance programming

The country-level data gives some tantalising insights about how different histories, political structures and cultural norms, as well as different (and evolving) programming approaches from BBC Media Action teams, influence patterns of political participation. Further analysis is required, but the data gives indications both of the shape of options available for political participation in different contexts and of how different programming can influence different forms of participation.

For instance, in Myanmar, one of the most striking differences between listeners and non-listeners to *Lin Lait Kyair Sin*, the programme BBC Media Action supported, was the higher likelihood of listeners speaking at an event. Myanmar is undergoing a complex political transition, with a recent history of military dictatorship and very limited opportunities for popular political participation. Given that context, BBC Media Action programmes focused on increasing the confidence of listeners to discuss and engage with leaders.

Across all countries listening to or watching BBC Media Action programmes was associated with a higher likelihood of participating in politics locally. In Nepal and Bangladesh, the likelihood of viewers/listeners contacting a national official, compared with non-viewers/listeners, was much greater than in other countries. Programming in Nepal and Bangladesh tended towards set-piece debates on national political issues, broadcast on single national platforms. This contrasted with places such as Sierra Leone and Tanzania, where programmes drew more on local issues and were broadcast through a network of local stations using a mix of formats.
Getting heard
Contacting a local official or going to a meeting does not guarantee that an individual’s voice is heard or that the issues that matter to them are taken seriously. Change is more likely to happen when people with similar concerns get together – either passively attracting attention from political actors or actively demanding change.

As well as reaching people that tend to participate less in politics, there are indications that BBC Media Action’s programmes can provide a stimulus to collective action. Quantitative research shows a strong association between listening to or watching these programmes and higher levels of participation in organised efforts to solve community problems.

BBC Media Action’s project teams have also identified examples of people joining groups or groups getting together to pursue issues, either directly connected with its programmes – following an individual episode or in response to a series – or indirectly, by programming giving groups the confidence to challenge those in power.

“Through this programme, we learnt that the step we took that day [violently blocking the road to protest] was wrong, and we worked together and wrote to INEC [the Independent National Electoral Commission] telling them our plight. When he [the senator] saw that we obeyed the law, he came to us to apologise that he messed up before. He did two boreholes for us. We were all happy.”
MALE, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

In Kenya, some BBC Media Action audience members reported attending meetings of local forums like Bunge la Mwananchi (People’s Parliament) after having listened to Sema Kenya.35

“I now attend Bunge la Mwananchi meetings, which is a forum I use to voice concerns and share my opinion. This is following what I heard at Sema Kenya.”
LOCAL INFLUENCER AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT, KENYA

Right
Young men browse Facebook on their smartphones in a Yangon street.
In other places, such as Bo in Sierra Leone, listeners reported being part of a texting group called Blessed Texters. They described meeting regularly to discuss the issues that had come up on Inside the Region (a local debate supported by BBC Media Action), to agree a joint opinion and decide whether to text media outlets. The quantitative data also suggested that exposure to programmes supported by BBC Media Action had a bigger influence on people who were already members of groups, galvanising them into further action. People who watched or listened to programmes and were already active members of groups had higher levels of political participation than people in groups who did not watch or listen to them.

### Elections

Elections provide a key opportunity for citizens to extract promises and sanction underperforming leaders. There is strong evidence that independent media can influence voting behaviour. Research undertaken around election time in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal and Tanzania highlighted the important role that BBC Media Action’s programmes played in improving viewer and listener understanding of key election information: voting processes and practicalities, why it was important to vote, and the positions of various political parties. This was true not only of the factual programmes but also of dramas such as New Home New Life in Afghanistan.

“**BBC Haba na Haba [Little by Little] was among the first to educate [us] about voting because other media started educating a bit late. So I got very good information. They instructed how to elect somebody… I learnt that you are supposed to elect someone by listening to the political party manifesto he/she is saying they will implement.**”

**MALE, HABA NA HABA LISTENER, TANZANIA**

“**Sajha Sawal has contributed to making people aware of the electoral process and the voter registration process, which contributed to record voter turnout in the national election of November 2013.**”

**NILKANTHA UPRETY, CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER, NEPAL**

### Key learning

Across regions and cultures, there is a remarkably consistent association between watching or listening to BBC Media Action programming and increased political participation. The challenge now is to understand more about the nuances of how media and communication influence different types of participation with different groups of people in different circumstances.
Creating space for public debate

“Everyone can put forth their concern regardless of class, cast and ethnicity.”
FEMALE, 18–25 YEARS, DESCRIBING SAJHA SAWAL, NEPAL

The shape of public debate is different in different places – forged by a myriad of historical, social and political factors. It moves with events, the invisible line of acceptability constantly shifting, influenced by the acts of individuals and organisations and by gradual cultural change.

BBC Media Action’s work expands the space for inclusive public debate, supporting people from all parts of society to have an equal and effective voice on the issues that matter to them. The examples in this section are drawn primarily from qualitative studies. They indicate that media can support the creation of a more inclusive public space – giving a public voice to people who struggle to be heard, bridging divides between groups, creating safe and productive discussion with those in power.

Building trust

Trust is the foundation of the BBC. Developing trusted space is at the core of the projects that BBC Media Action supports. Debate programmes do this through:

- Careful selection of **broadcast partners** – BBC Media Action vets the hundreds of broadcast partners that transmit the programmes that it supports
- Recruiting **diverse and balanced live audiences** – BBC Media Action’s audience recruitment process is fair and transparent, ensuring representation of a cross-section of society. This includes a mix of women, men, young people, and people from different socio-economic groups and political views
- Training **skilled staff** – Presenters of debates and discussion shows are trained to ensure that audience members have the opportunity to voice their questions and get answers from the panel. Producers are trained in editorial values and have the final decision on which panellists are selected and where they sit
- Developing **independent, inclusive and trusted audience-led debates** – the audience decides what questions to ask. Panel members are not told in advance what the questions will be

A more inclusive public space

BBC Media Action projects create space for people from all sections of society to participate in public debate. The organisation’s qualitative research studies consistently show that the programmes it supports give a voice to groups that are under-represented in public debate, including women, young people and people from rural areas.

And this matters. It influences attitudes in wider society about who should be able to make their views heard, how and on what topics. Many people from under-represented groups said it was inspiring to see “people like them” asking questions, face-to-face with those in power. For some, this meant they wanted and felt able to do the same. It also influenced audience views of who should legitimately participate in public discussion. A BBC Media Action practice briefing details examples of how having women alongside men, such as female presenters moderating, female panellists answering questions and female audience members asking questions, contributed to empowering women.38
There was a time the ACT [Alliance for Change and Transparency] party leader was invited on the programme and this made me see that a woman has a role to play in society.”

MALE, HABA NA HABA, TANZANIA

After listening to [New Home New Life] my mind got changed because before I was thinking that the women can’t take part to make decisions in the family or community but, after listening to the programme, I have learned that women can participate in social activities as the women did in the story.”

FEMALE, 25–34 YEARS, AFGHANISTAN

The programmes bring the issues that matter to those populations into public debate, and handle them with a depth, understanding, balance and focus that they don’t usually receive in the rest of the media. In Nepal, Sajha Sawa, a debate programme broadcasting to more than 6.6 million Nepalis, has repeatedly addressed issues of violence against women, child marriage and discrimination against Dalits, as well as other ethnic minority groups and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

**Trusted and constructive space**

Trusted spaces for contestation, debate and discussion are an essential building block for transparency, accountability and responsiveness. This is particularly true in fragile societies where often, as David Booth says, “governance challenges are not fundamentally about one set of people getting another set of people to behave better. They are about… collective problem-solving.”

BBC Media Action’s work helps to develop legitimate, trusted spaces for constructive exchange between people and power-holders, in places where abrasive and divisive public communication is often the norm. The organisation’s qualitative research shows that, in general, people felt that the programmes it supported provided “safe” spaces for people from diverse groups to ask questions of leaders, without fear of recrimination.
Project teams in several countries also reported that, as the programmes established a reputation for being independent and non-partisan, they appeared to gain legitimacy with those in power. Panellists from governments or other powerful groups became easier to source and, once on the programme, they behaved as if they understood and accepted the “rules of the game”. There is anecdotal evidence from BBC Media Action teams that debate took place on the programmes that would not have been tolerated elsewhere. In Bangladesh in 2014, the prestige of BBC Media Action’s Sanglap debate programme meant that senior-level opposition and government leaders appeared on the same panels to discuss issues long after most opposition faces had disappeared from other current affairs shows.

Only through BBC Bangladesh Sanglap were we able to uphold our comments and opinions to the public to some extent.”

HAFIZ UDDIN AHMED, VICE CHAIRMAN, BANGLADESH NATIONAL PARTY (OPPOSITION PARTY), DISCUSSING APPEARANCES ON SANGLAP, BANGLADESH

You can talk your mind. Nobody can come and tell you that [the president] will come and kill you later. Just, you’re free to speak your mind.”

MALE LISTENER, DISCUSSING TALK YOUR OWN (NATIONAL DISCUSSION PROGRAMME), NIGERIA

People felt that BBC Media Action’s programmes developed effective spaces. Constructive dialogue, incorporating diverse views and opinions and avoiding the “blame game” were consistently raised by audience members as things that set the organisation’s programmes apart. As Rebecca Stringer concluded in her assessment of global grant-funded BBC Media Action accountability programming in Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Angola, “Almost all the positive lessons from the project, of which there are many,… were based on instances where a range of responsible actors were brought together either on or off air to work collectively through problems and propose solutions.”

While many BBC Media Action teams have found these approaches very effective, the ultimate goal for its programmes should not be, and is not limited to, generating comfortable conversations. Developing constructive space is a means to an end. The organisation’s country teams make decisions about what form of conversation, with what individuals, will deliver most effectively for the audience on a specific issue at a particular time – balancing the constructive with the confrontational, often within a single programme. Section 3 of this paper explores in more detail strategies that BBC Media Action has adopted to maximise the influence of its work on governance and accountability.

Continuing the discussion online

Social media is an increasingly important forum for political discussion. Discussions started on broadcast programmes continue online, deepening engagement and reaching new audiences. This is particularly important in countries such as Nepal with large and influential diaspora populations, where BBC Media Action’s online presence allows them to ask questions, watch the programmes and discuss key issues. Sajha Sawal’s Facebook page now has a reach of 3 million and monthly engagement of over 400,000. In Sierra Leone, BBC Media Action runs the most popular Facebook page in the country. A recent story on a Paralympic athlete, filmed entirely on mobile devices, was viewed over 10,000 times.
Lasting change to the public space

BBC Media Action’s programmes influence people and power-holders at scale, generating inclusive spaces that contribute to accountability. However, the question of how far programming has sustainably influenced the space for debate and discussion beyond these programmes is a complex one that we don’t have a complete answer to. However, there are some indications of long-lasting influence from this work.

The introduction of new formats and editorial values into media markets by BBC Media Action has influenced how other stations and programme-makers make media content. Following the launch of Sanglap (BBC Media Action’s live audience debate programme) in Bangladesh in 2007, a rash of debate-style programmes appeared. This pattern of apparent copying has also been noted by teams in Nepal, Afghanistan, Kenya and the Palestinian Territories. To date, BBC Media Action has not comprehensively analysed the role of its programmes in inspiring other programming, including whether copycat programmes primarily take up the more superficial aspects of the format or whether BBC Media Action’s programming has had deeper influence on their editorial values, accommodation of opposing political viewpoints, commitment to inclusivity and audience influence.

“I think it was a model that has created a kind of competition and helped those working in the same field, which itself improved the performance.”

MALE, ACADEMIC, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

It is not just content that influences the behaviour of other media organisations. Since 2011 BBC Media Action has provided capacity-strengthening support to over 135 media organisations, training and mentoring staff and co-producing programmes, to help them to play a stronger role in increasing accountability in their countries. This influenced both the media organisations that BBC Media Action was working with and, in turn, the wider media environment.
In some places, this involved supporting particular programmes within a large media organisation. In Myanmar, at the end of BBC Media Action’s support for MRTV (Myanmar Radio and Television), audiences were nearly twice as likely to say that the main MRTV news gave only the government’s point of view, than they were to say that about the MRTV programmes that BBC Media Action was mentoring.42

In other places, BBC Media Action provided broader organisational support for media. In the Palestinian Territories, it partnered with the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), co-producing the Palestinian debates, and developing a flexible set of capacity-strengthening support across PBC. Interviews with media experts concluded that BBC Media Action not only influenced PBC output, but that the "programmes influenced other debate shows in Palestine and acted as a model for other accountability programmes, because of the quality of both its format and the discussions moderated on the show".43 This positive role modelling effect was endorsed by an independent evaluation in 2016.44

It is inevitable that BBC Media Action’s support had more long-lasting impact in some countries and within some organisations than in others. A 2016 research report analysed the impact of its support on the capacity of media organisations in five countries, concluding that the mentoring model adopted “works as a model for capacity strengthening”.45 Further details of capacity-strengthening impact in each of the countries under the grant are included in the Strengthening accountability through media: Final Evaluation reports for each of the nine countries. See footnote 4.
Influencing power

*It definitely influenced a positive result on different issues that were discussed.*

CHAKMA RAJA DAVISISH ROY, SANGLAP PANELLIST AND FORMER SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF ADVISOR OF BANGLADESH (THE HEAD OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT), BANGLADESH

Power comes in different shapes and sizes. It can come with a formal position or from prestige and informal influence. It can be visible, publicly influencing decision-making, or it can work behind the scenes, setting the terms of what is discussed and by whom.46

BBC Media Action’s work helps people from all parts of society discuss the issues they care about, and helps them directly influence the people who have the power to deliver change on those issues. This might as simple as influencing a single individual, but it is usually more complicated: developing the debate, building common understanding of the issues and solutions – and revealing the blockages to change.

Supporting people to ask questions and get answers

BBC Media Action’s debate programmes place power-holders in front of the public and give them an opportunity to explain what they have done and what they intend to do (often described as “answerability”).47 In much of the world, engagement between leaders and people is stage-managed, limited or both.48 There are very few countries where that engagement is completely absent. For BBC Media Action’s programmes to make a difference to answerability, they need to tackle issues in a discernibly different way to that of other programmes and forums.

Sanglap can hold government or policy-makers accountable through the direct conversation with panellists, as they have to give answers about their work to the audience. On the episode on the Rana Plaza collapse, panellists from the government side had to give answers about their actions.”49

FEMALE, 31–45 YEARS, VIEWER, BANGLADESH

Those in government account to us during such programmes… This programme is generally meant for authorities to be accountable to the people.”

FEMALE, 31–45 YEARS, VIEWER, BANGLADESH

Key learning

Programmes supported by BBC Media Action developed trusted, inclusive and constructive conversations in difficult environments, and these influenced how people discussed issues that mattered to them. However, a more comprehensive research base is required to understand where, and how, this type of work most effectively delivers long-term change to the public space (both online and offline), including a better understanding of where the programmes fit within the wider ecosystem of public discourse and accountability.
BBC Media Action’s qualitative research showed that, across different contexts, its debate programmes were regarded as having an important role to play in getting answers from decision-makers on key issues. People felt that the dialogue within the programmes pushed decision-makers to provide an account.

One example was in the tense and partisan environment around the 2013 Kenyan elections. The Kenyan media was extremely cautious, to the extent that many accused it of abdicating its responsibility to interrogate issues and challenge leaders. Sema Kenya, the national debate programme supported by BBC Media Action, provided a platform for people to discuss the issues that affected them with people in power. A number of research participants said that this helped them to understand how to sanction leaders by not re-electing them. Some also described how Sema Kenya can hold leaders to account by putting their promises on record and highlighting when they are not met. This is one of many examples of where it is not about deciding confrontational or constructive conversation is the right approach. What BBC Media Action projects need to do is support the conversations that society needs, and which are not being provided by the rest of the media.

**Informing panellists**

There are indications that BBC Media Action’s governance programmes influenced power-holders, giving them new information, a better understanding of the issues affecting people in their communities and also, sometimes, changing their perspective on whom they should engage with and how. Qualitative research showed that panellists involved in these programmes reported feeling better informed about the needs and priorities of citizens. They described the discussion within the programmes as a chance to clear up misunderstandings.

> The issues raised by the farmers/participants were not new for us, they are already incorporated in [the] Nepal Government Plan. When the same issues were raised in the programme, it made us realise the urgent actions to be taken. Hence, commitments were made.”
> AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND SAJHA SAWAL PANELLIST, NEPAL

> I am an executive in my ward. I was privileged to be in the position of authority and I used that [lesson learned from Story Story, BBC Media Action’s national governance drama in Nigeria] … and I try to deliver to the best of my ability by not taking anything that does not belong to me. Things that belong to the people, I give them.”
> MALE OFFICIAL AND TALK YOUR OWN LISTENER, 25–35 YEARS, URBAN ADAMAWA, NIGERIA

**Responsiveness**

The programmes that BBC Media Action supports have documented cases of commitments being made by panellists during the broadcast, and, in many cases, delivery on those promises.

> People living in rural areas had a difficult time regarding the lack of electricity … the programme frequently questioned the ministers as to why [there was] the lack of electrical services. The government has been obligated to provide the service.”
> MALE, 35+ YEARS, DODOMA, TANZANIA
Most of the examples of responsiveness documented so far are actions by a local official to address a local problem. These are either as a result of a local debate, as in the Nepal case (see box above), or where a national programme visited a local area, such as when *Haba na Haba* visited Mbeya in Tanzania. However, there are also numerous examples of national officials taking action after appearing on BBC Media Action programmes. In Afghanistan, for example, the *Open Jirga* audience raised the treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Two weeks later a government minister travelled to Pakistan for talks about the alleged arrest and expulsion of Afghan refugees. In Sierra Leone, the minister of transport and aviation appeared on a show discussing the country’s transportation crisis and made a commitment to procure 100 buses. Several months later the minister came back on the show and was keen to remind audiences of his commitment and the delivery of the buses.
One of the questions that BBC Media Action asks itself is whether its influence on responsiveness is greater at the local, regional or national level. The organisation has more examples of local-level action by power-holders as a result of its programmes than of regional or national actions. Many members of the project teams say that locally focused programmes are more rewarding, giving them a more concrete sense of stimulating change and delivering for the audience. Local-level examples are easier to record and local actions are simpler and more often within the influence of a single individual. In contrast, national policy action can be slower and harder to pin down, but it generally has an impact on a greater number of people. While reflexive commitments by local officials can be unmade as easily as they are made, national policy change is more likely to be part of a larger debate and more difficult for politicians to row back on.

So where should BBC Media Action focus – on the national or local? The answer is probably that it depends – on the barriers and opportunities for inclusive politics in each country, region or locality. In some circumstances, decentralised local conversations lead to greatest action. In others, issues can only be resolved with movement on policy.

BBC Media Action also needs to be cautious, improving understanding of the patterns of responsiveness associated with its work. As Mansuri and Rao warn, in fragile and conflict-affected settings the people who benefit from citizen mobilisation or engaging in formal accountability mechanisms are often “the most literate, the least geographically isolated, and the most connected to the wealthy and powerful”. 52 BBC Media Action’s programmes make every effort to ensure that diverse groups have the opportunity to participate equally in programmes. However, where its work has had an influence on power-holders, it does not have the data to know whether responsiveness is equal across different groups or whether questions from some groups in society are more likely to lead to action.

Increasing influence on power

Despite the efforts of teams and debate moderators, audiences were not always satisfied with the quality of the answers provided by officials during BBC Media Action’s programmes. Audiences expressed concern that the pledges and promises made by decision-makers during the programmes were unlikely to be kept. It is also difficult to ascertain which commitments made on programmes were “pre-cooked”, with panellists making policy announcements they already intended to make.

However, the organisation should be cautious in how it seeks to increase the impact of its work on the actions of the powerful. It would not be desirable to have a forum that consistently resulted in influential panellists making ill-considered policy decisions on the hoof, in response to individual questions.

“The answers provided were satisfactory in certain places and unsatisfactory in other places. They discuss the topic, but eventually they don’t provide an adequate solution to the problem.”

FEMALE, 18–24 YEARS, AUDIENCE MEMBER, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

BBC Media Action’s teams have sought to increase the influence of audiences on power and policy in different ways, as outlined below.
1 Refining the audience-led debate

- **Planning:** Planning programme topics across a series, coming back to issues to take a new angle or move the discussion to the next stage to ensure the issue remains on the agenda.

- **Pre-recorded packages:** Interviews with people affected by an issue or an expert overview of the evidence to help ensure a debate is focused on, and grounded in, reality.

- **Problem-solving formats:** A frequent complaint about debate formats is that they rarely reach solutions. In some places, programmes have adopted problem-solving formats, structuring discussions so audience and panel members try and explore problems and develop solutions together.53

- **Follow-up:** Panellists make commitments but may not deliver on them once they are away from the media eye. Some programmes have sought to monitor promises made by panellists on the programme and follow them up through short packages or inviting the panellist to appear again. Online platforms attached to BBC Media Action’s programmes host further discussion, supporting monitoring and follow-up of promises.

- **Combining with other formats:** Different formats can help to reach various audiences and deliver different impacts. Drama can help to introduce topics and raise people’s confidence to participate in debates, while magazine shows and phone-ins can follow up issues raised in dramas or debates for more forensic analysis, discussing local implications.

2 Complementing other initiatives

- **Improving co-ordination with other actors and organisations:** BBC Media Action programmes have continuously expanded the pool of people appearing on panels, representing different views. Teams have also developed informal advisory groups to discuss the focus and impact of the projects.

- **Capitalising on transparency, civic education and accountability initiatives:** BBC Media Action programmes have benefited from transparency initiatives, bringing increased information on budgets, revenues from extractive industries, aid allocation and many other areas into the public domain. Our work often takes place alongside other initiatives, for instance supporting broadcasting on voter education while civil society organisations conduct projects with similar goals on the ground. BBC Media Action and partner organisations benefit from exchange of material and can follow up on each other’s work.

3 Different roles at different times

- **An electoral cycle approach:** Timing is vital in media and communication – influencing what can be addressed, how a story resonates and its impact. Accountability dynamics change in the run-up to elections, so BBC Media Action’s projects have adopted an electoral cycle approach, adapting programming to the different roles of media in accountability and participation at different points in the electoral cycle.

- **Reacting to shocks:** Big events such as Ebola in Sierra Leone, or the earthquake in Nepal, can shift accountability relationships and provide new opportunities to discuss issues, engage different people and increase accountability.
Key learning

In every country where it works, BBC Media Action’s work involves strategic choices – balancing supporting diverse people asking questions with more forensic questioning of power-holders. Each choice of partner, format and target audience has advantages and disadvantages, and is likely to lead to greater influence on some issues and less on others. This needs to start at the local level – researching, adapting and refining to ensure that BBC Media Action establishes the most appropriate strategy, filling the key gaps in the accountability ecosystem.
4 CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES

Across the world, sources of information and political discussion are fracturing and multiplying. Excitement about the possibilities for inclusive, democratic communication are giving way to fears that public debate in these new environments is increasingly captured, divisive and opaque. Too often, responses from the development community have failed to grapple with the significance of these trends, leading to interventions that are too piecemeal, that fail to understand the populations they engage, or that return to the comfort zone of state-focused bureaucratic initiatives.

However, despite this backdrop, BBC Media Action’s work has shown that the media can play an important role in enhancing accountability across a wide variety of contexts – developing public dialogue, bridging the gap between providing information and holding leaders to account, supporting public engagement for people from all parts of society, and making those in power more responsive to societal demands. It has provided a model for doing so at a scale few other initiatives even contemplate, opening up new possibilities for supporting societies to discuss and determine their own futures.

BBC Media Action has established an extensive research base, exploring quantitatively and qualitatively how media programmes can influence understanding, attitudes and behaviour. The organisation now has stronger, broader and more flexible framework to understand how media interacts with accountability in different ways in different places. The organisation also has extensive experience of practical experimentation in a wide variety of contexts, establishing effective teams that understand and respond to the context, developing imaginative new ways to reach people and build discussion.
But this greater level of understanding makes the challenges become both clearer and more complex, revealing more about knowledge gaps, but also inspiring new ideas to address those challenges. Learning the lessons from these projects has helped to crystallise a number of challenges relating to both how BBC Media Action develops work and for its support to media, empowerment and accountability more widely. These are summarised below.

1 Increasing the impact of BBC Media Action’s work on power and the public space

BBC Media Action has been highly effective at engaging mass audiences, supporting people from all parts of society to ask the questions that matter to them. However, it can further strengthen its analysis of the barriers that different groups face in getting their voices heard outside the programmes, and the opportunities to expand the space for inclusive public dialogue. Future work needs to ensure that audiences remain at the heart of BBC Media Action’s work, driving the discussion. To ensure that the organisation develops the conversation that is most effective each country context at a specific time, its work must complement that central philosophy with a strategic analysis of how it can make the most significant, sustainable impact on the civic space and the behaviour of those in power.

This includes continuing to refine conversations on the programmes that it supports, blending confrontational questioning of leaders with more constructive conversations that seek solutions to the issues that matter to audiences, and using a variety of techniques to ensure that discussions put sustained pressure on those in power.

It also means developing theories of change that more explicitly address how best to influence the offline and online places where public dialogue on the issues in which we are interested take place. Offline, this will mean developing more diverse co-operation and partnerships with media and non-media organisations, ensuring that BBC Media Action projects take advantage of, co-operate with and better complement other initiatives. The organisation needs to integrate online more fully into its analysis of how and where people discuss politics, both in the communication it uses and in its approach to research – taking advantage of the increasingly large online audiences it is generating. Connected to this, BBC Media Action’s projects also need to refine further how the combination of content production and capacity-strengthening approaches can most effectively deliver sustainable impact on the public space, and on patterns of accountability and responsiveness in different contexts.

In parallel, the organisation’s research and evaluation approach also needs to adapt. The grant from DFID helped it to establish a strong evidence base for how media programmes influence audiences at scale. BBC Media Action will need to develop better insights into what media programming has the most sustained influence on civic space and power, and when and how it can most effectively support local media to deliver and maintain that influence.

2 Ensuring that internal processes support programmes that are flexible, adaptive, locally led and focused on increasing accountability in a given context

BBC Media Action works on complex issues in challenging places. Local knowledge and in-depth research have underpinned its ability to produce programming that attracts large audiences. The work of nearly 100 researchers (supported by grants from many different donors) spread across 10 countries, delivering more than 15 large-scale quantitative surveys and over 25 qualitative studies, has helped the organisation to build an increasingly sophisticated picture of how different populations engage with media and the influence of trusted, inclusive and independent media on behaviour and attitudes.

However, nothing is fixed. Political circumstances, the importance of different issues, demographics and patterns of media consumption, ownership and influence all change. What is most effective varies, both across time – with big events like an election or the outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone – and across different places.
transforming state–society relationships and the position of local media – and from issue to issue (for example, addressing gender-based violence and corruption require different forms of conversation). Brands need to be built but audiences can also become bored with unchanging formats. Further work is needed to ensure that BBC Media Action’s theory of change, research, review, budgeting and strategy processes are co-ordinated to incentivise locally rooted, flexible and adaptive programming that achieves the maximum impact on accountability in a given context.

3 Finding the right place for media in governance funding

Media continues to be neglected and underfunded in governance and accountability work, and poorly integrated into wider strategies.14 Too many development projects lack the understanding to integrate communication effectively, restricting engagement to project publicity or the transmission of simplistic messages in a way that has little impact on public debate. Media and communication initiatives have also been guilty of failing to integrate and co-operate effectively, not taking advantage of the large investments in information and transparency (see point 1 above).

The solution is not an increase in the instrumental use of media by development projects, paying for airtime to gain coverage of a particular issue or co-opting journalists to join coalitions of change. Media independence and trust can be as compromised by money to support a development campaign as they can be by a local political campaign. The cumulative effect of a kaleidoscope of sectoral initiatives buying their way into media can be highly damaging.

But now more than ever, development organisations need to grasp the central role that media and communication play in patterns of empowerment and accountability, and respond with understanding, sophistication and at scale. They must improve their analysis of the roles that media and communication are currently playing and develop clear and effective strategies to support the media to play a more positive role in shaping public debate.
ENDNOTES


2 The global grant is a six year multi-country project funded by DFID to produce media and communication outputs that contribute to better governance, healthier populations and an increased ability to cope with humanitarian crises.

3 This paper is not an evaluation. It uses some of the conclusions from BBC Media Action’s multi-country research but leaves out many of the twists and turns the projects followed, as well as the failures, adaptations and successes. These are covered in more detail in the Strengthening accountability through media: Final evaluation reports which will be produced for the nine countries covered by this report and available on the BBC Media Action website in spring 2017.

4 BBC Media Action research, drawn from quantitative survey data and reported in Strengthening accountability through media: Final evaluation reports.


14 “The support to media and free flow of information represents only 1.9% of this amount, which could be considered limited support for an issue that is frequently described as a fundamental building block of open and democratic governance” (González Cahuapé-Cazaux, E. and Kalathil, S. (2015) Official Development Assistance for Media: Figures and Findings [online]. A Report by CIMA and the OECD. Available from: https://www.oecd.org/dac/governance-peace/publications/documentuploads/CIMA.pdf [Accessed 3 January 2017].
In total, programming took place in 12 countries. However, grant work in Angola, Pakistan and Zambia was discontinued early on and this paper focuses on the remaining nine countries.

BBC Media Action research, drawn from quantitative survey data and reported in Strengthening accountability through media: Final evaluation reports.


Quantitative data was collected in Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

The data portal will be launched in early 2017, accessible through the BBC Media Action website dataportal.bbcmediaaction.org.

Where this paper refers to conclusions from BBC Media Action’s qualitative research it refers to the qualitative insights identified in a synthesis of those studies produced by the BBC Media Action research team. The quotes in this paper are all drawn from those qualitative research studies. However, quotes have been selected to illustrate a point rather than to represent a balance across all responses in those studies.


In 2016 there were programmes on air in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestinian Territories, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

Quantitative surveys were conducted in Bangladesh, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.


Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a statistical technique that allows a model of inter-related characteristics leading to an outcome to be tested to ensure that it explains the data and therefore the population from which it was drawn. In this application the approach showed how different characteristics (such as private political discussion, efficacy and knowledge) lead from programme viewing to political participation. See p31 Snow and Taylor (2015) Media, discussion and attitudes in fragile contexts.

To establish whether political participation increases as a result of watching/listening to BBC Media Action’s programmes, experimental designs that examine direct causal links will form part of the organisation’s future research agenda.

See regression analyses in: Scavo and Snow, Media and political participation: fostering inclusive governance.

However, this interaction effect is reversed for gender: BBC Media Action’s female audience members participate in politics more than women who are not exposed to its programmes, but the increase in political participation demonstrated by BBC Media Action’s male audience is greater. See: Casserly, J. (2016) Turn up the volume: empowering women through media [online]. BBC Media Action Practice Briefing 02. Available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/policy/practice-briefings/gender-and-governance-empowering-women [Accessed 4 January 2017].

Scavo and Snow Media and political participation: fostering inclusive governance.

A cross-tabs analysis is a simpler analysis that does not control for confounders.

BBC Media Action measured political participation by asking whether people had done any of the following in the past year: 1. Participated in an organised effort to solve a neighbourhood or community problem; 2. Attended a meeting of the local town council or with other government officials; 3. Contacted a local official, like a local councillor or an official who works for a government agency; 4. Contacted a national elected official; 5. Contacted a local chief or traditional leader about an issue; 6. Taken part in a protest.
march or demonstration on a national or local issue. Researchers also asked: How likely are you to vote in the next local and general elections? (Very unlikely, somewhat unlikely, somewhat likely, very likely). For further details, see: Scavo and Snow (2016) Political participation and the media: fostering inclusive governance.

34 For further details of BBC Media Action’s country-level analysis, see the Strengthening accountability through media: Final evaluation reports.

35 A Kenyan social movement founded in the 1990s.

36 While these are positive examples, some caution is required in celebrating them as representations of inclusive democratic engagement. Texting groups have also been known to be paid to text radio stations on the basis of partisan interests.


38 Casserly, J. (2016) Turn up the volume: empowering women through media.


40 Maintaining that space was a constant challenge: balancing responsibility for programme participants with the desire to expand the boundaries of discussion. In some places (Tanzania and Sierra Leone), some research respondents felt that panellists and members of the live audience on BBC Media Action programmes might be putting themselves at risk by voicing concerns and challenging leaders in such a public forum.


42 See Strengthening accountability through media: Final evaluation reports.

43 BBC Media Action media expert interviews 2015.


46 Presentation by Jo Rowlands, senior governance adviser, Oxfam, at BBC Media Action Governance and Rights Workshop, 12 January 2016.


49 Over 1,000 people died when a garment factory, Rana Plaza, collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2013.


51 Haba na Haba aired a programme on the environmental impact of mining around the Itumbi mines in Mbeya, Tanzania. Local water supplies had been contaminated by the mine. After the programme, government officials visited the area, mobilised villagers to dig up terraces and supplied pipelines for clean water.


54 See footnote 11.