



# ACCESS Phase II

## ACCESS Approach

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**ACCESS**

## Creating Spaces, Providing Opportunities

*Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. (Kofi Annan)*

### Introduction

This paper presents the ACCESS Phase II approach to promoting improved democratic governance through its work with civil society organizations (CSO) and their engagement with local governments. The paper explains the conceptual thinking informing the ACCESS Phase II strategies, the impacts that ACCESS intends to see at the level of the ultimate beneficiary partners and the outcomes, i.e. the changes in behaviour (the actions and interactions) of its partner organizations, as well as how ACCESS Phase II will go about doing this and with whom ACCESS Phase II will work to achieve these changes.

### Conceptual Approach

ACCESS Phase II is based on an understanding that governance represents a complex system which is interacting with a dynamic external environment. This system determines how reality is understood and acted upon and ultimately how governance impacts on all members of society.

Governance systems are complex because they involve a wide variety of factors: governments at various levels; legislatures; citizens with varying degrees of power and influence; regulatory systems; cultures of decision making and distribution of benefits (both formal and informal); differing styles of leadership; levels of participation and individual knowledge and skills.

The ACCESS Phase II design recognized the complexity of the governance system and the need for multiple strategies to attempt to influence the system towards a more democratic way of operation. The adoption of the soft-systems approach for ACCESS Phase II reflects the understanding that simple input/output models do not sufficiently describe the realm of governance systems. Rather ACCESS Phase II focuses on a web of interrelated activities designed to trigger change by involving key actors from civil society, government, and to a limited degree the private sector.

Systems are, at their core, about people and their organizations and how they relate to each other and to their environment. ACCESS Phase II therefore is actor-centred and focuses its activities on triggering behaviour change of citizens and their organizations.

### **ACCESS Phase II Actors**

ACCESS Phase II works with a range of stakeholders, or actors, in different roles and levels within the Program. These actors have been classified into the following groups:

#### *Strategic Partner*

Strategic Partners are those organisations with specialist expertise selected for their proven track record to assist with Program implementation. They will work with ACCESS Phase II and its Boundary Partners through providing technical support, training and mentoring to the Boundary Partners to develop capacities, conduct

research and baseline data and produce learning materials in support of the Program's overall objectives. They will also assist the ACCESS Phase II boundary partners in accessing key networks and actors operating at the provincial and national levels.

### *Boundary Partners*

Boundary Partners are local civil society organisations who share the values promoted by the Program and which are primarily focused on shifting power relations to create greater social and gender equity in local development impacts. Based on the results of the District Citizens Engagement Plan, these organizations will be committed to actively addressing the issues facing the district by engaging with individuals, citizens' organizations and their networks, with local government and with other parties interested in local democratic governance. ACCESS Phase II supports these organizations by creating space and providing opportunities to reflect, to learn, to act in order to improve performance. ACCESS Phase II negotiates directly with these organizations to determine the kinds of behaviour they want/need to influence externally and how they want to change internally in order to affect this change. ACCESS Phase II will support directly through organisational and individual capacity building and grants for activities that match Program criteria in line with its guiding principles.

### *Ultimate Beneficiary Partners*

The ultimate beneficiary partners are those with whom our Boundary Partners interact to bring about improved democratic governance, including citizens, particularly women and poor marginalized groups, and local and national governments.

### *ACCESS Phase II Strategic Direction*

Three strategic directions underlie all ACCESS Phase II activities and the way ACCESS Phase II interacts with the various actors in order to influence the system towards more democratic governance. These strategic directions are:

**Empowerment:** In all of its activities, ACCESS Phase II provides opportunities, processes, and methodologies designed to encourage Boundary Partners and ultimate beneficiary partners to deepen their understanding of important and relevant issues, strengthen their critical awareness, organize themselves for effective action and develop the self-confidence to seek, obtain and wisely use scarce resources (material, human, natural and regulatory) in the interests of all citizens but specifically for women, the poor and other marginalized groups.

**Engagement:** ACCESS Phase II promotes the active engagement of empowered citizens (specifically women, the poor and other marginalized groups), their organizations and Boundary Partners among each other and with government at all levels. Through creating spaces for these parties to come together, they have opportunities to learn, build trust-based relations and work together on issues of mutual importance.

**Scaling up:** Through its activities and interactions with Boundary Partners and other stakeholders, ACCESS Phase II promotes the deepening and widening of action and impacts. Boundary Partners are encouraged to think about district-wide activities, the

involvement of diverse groups, replication of good practice, and influencing a broader audience of practitioners through the sharing of learning.

Finally, the ACCESS Phase II approach is values-driven. ACCESS Phase II embraces a number of values consistent with the values of democratic governance. These include: gender and social inclusion; sustainability; cooperation and collaboration; transparency, accountability, participation; and continuous learning. These values lie at the core of ACCESS Phase II and influence the entire Program, its approach, policies, strategies, systems, operating procedures and activities. Boundary and Strategic Partners are constantly made aware of these core values and are encouraged to discuss, adopt and live them both internally and in their interactions with others.

## Outcome Mapping Framework

ACCESS Phase II uses Outcome Mapping (OM) as a framework to its Approach. An OM framework has been adopted because it supports a soft-systems approach by helping describe the relationships between the key actors, the changes in behaviour (i.e. the actions and interactions) of these actors, and is learning oriented. Outcome Mapping acknowledges that the desired changes at the impact level (the level of the ultimate beneficiaries) are not caused by a single intervention or a series of interventions by the Program *per se*, but rather by a range of possible accounts from a number of different perspectives.

The relationship between the actors is described using spheres – sphere of control, sphere

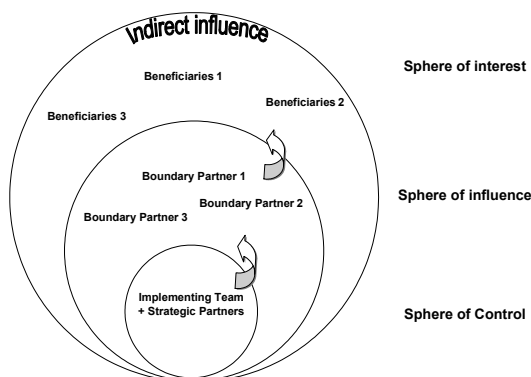


Figure 1: Circles of influence (Source: Montague, 2001) and the sphere of interest, influence and control of the implementing team (source:ODI,2007)

of influence and sphere of interest (refer to Figure 1). In the sphere of control ACCESS Phase II works together with Strategic Partners to directly influence the Program's Boundary Partners. In other words, the ACCESS Phase II implementation team controls the inputs and activities of the Strategic Partners. In turn by providing direct support to its Boundary Partners, ACCESS Phase II attempts to have a direct influence on Boundary Partners by creating space and providing opportunities for these partners to

work with the ultimate beneficiaries. Therefore, ACCESS Phase II can only indirectly influence change at the level of the ultimate beneficiary partners.

## Areas of Change

The ACCESS Phase II Program, through its staff and Strategic Partners works directly with selected civil society organizations (CSOs) – the ACCESS Phase II Boundary Partners – in each of the target districts to support the promotion of local democratic governance by working in a number of key areas with a focus on women, the poor and other marginalized groups. These areas include: promoting public participation in decision making; promoting transparency, accountability and access to information; supporting the provision of quality public services; and the promotion of social justice and rule of law.

### **Public Participation in Decision Making**

With its Strategic Partners ACCESS Phase II will support its Boundary Partners to promote the institutionalization of participatory decision-making processes to ensure that there is space for women, the poor, youth and other marginalized/unrepresented groups to participate directly in and influence decision making in their own organizations, in their communities and villages, and in their districts to improve access to and control over resources and public services. ACCESS Phase II aims to influence these groups to ensure they have a voice in processes and on decisions that impact their lives.

### **Quality Public Services**

With its Strategic Partners ACCESS Phase II will support its Boundary Partners to promote the provision of quality public services that fulfill and respond to the basic rights of the poor, women and marginalized groups. These services will be affordable, user-friendly, and easy to access. Boundary Partners need to intentionally improve the services they offer and make them accessible to the most marginalized groups.

### **Transparency/Accountability and Access to Information**

With its Strategic Partners ACCESS Phase II will support its Boundary Partners to promote transparent and accountable budgeting and use of public funds, ensuring that programs and funds are more useful for the poor, women and marginalized groups. Better use of public resources (both within government and within CSOs) makes services more affordable and effective. Transparency in decision making processes increases access and control over resources by society as a whole and particularly for women, the poor and other marginalized groups who, as a rule, have even less access to information about programs and services that affect them than do more mainstreamed groups. ACCESS Phase II Boundary Partners can effectively model democratic behaviour by practicing transparency and accountability to their members, staff and the public-at-large.

### **Social Justice /Rule of Law**

With its Strategic Partners ACCESS Phase II will support its Boundary Partners to promote equitable development and the recognition of, respect for and protection of the rights of marginalized groups to ensure that these groups feel safe and secure in expressing their hopes and aspirations and demanding their rights as ensured under the law. ACCESS Phase II Boundary Partners, through the articulation of a clear vision and mission and through organizational practices, can ensure that they are practicing behaviour that promotes the rights of members, staff and the citizens' groups they engage with.

### **Outcomes**

ACCESS Phase II works and interacts with a limited number of Boundary Partners (refer to Figure 2) in each of the target districts who have a shared vision of local democratic governance and shared values. By working with these Boundary Partners ACCESS Phase II expects to demonstrate that Boundary Partners are using value-driven participatory and

inclusive approaches to strengthen capacity and confidence of citizens for local democratic governance. ACCESS Phase II expects to demonstrate that its Boundary Partners are regularly collaborating with each other on improving democratic governance at the district, sub-district and village levels. ACCESS Phase II expects to demonstrate the Boundary Partners are regularly engaging with district, sub-district and village governments to improve participation, transparency, accountability, social justice and pro-poor service delivery. In addition, ACCESS Phase II would expect to that that Governments programs and donors programs are taking into account lessons learned and good practice examples from ACCESS Phase II.

## Impacts

ACCESS Phase II has as its core statement “*Citizens and their organisations are empowered to engage with local governments on improving local development impacts in 16 districts in Eastern Indonesia*”. In practice, this core statement means that ACCESS Phase II contributes to the improved quality of life of the poor, women and the marginalized through the promotion of empowered citizenry and their organizations. To do this requires a change in actions, interactions, relations, processes and norms which can be summarized as an increase/improvement in local democratic governance behaviour and in particular changes that relate to the four areas of change, namely: public participation in decision making; quality public services; transparency, accountability and access to information; and social justice and the rule of law. Through the Boundary Partners (refer to Figure 2) ACCESS Phase II strives to help citizens and their organisations to develop new and more effective ways of behaving, acting and relating to others.

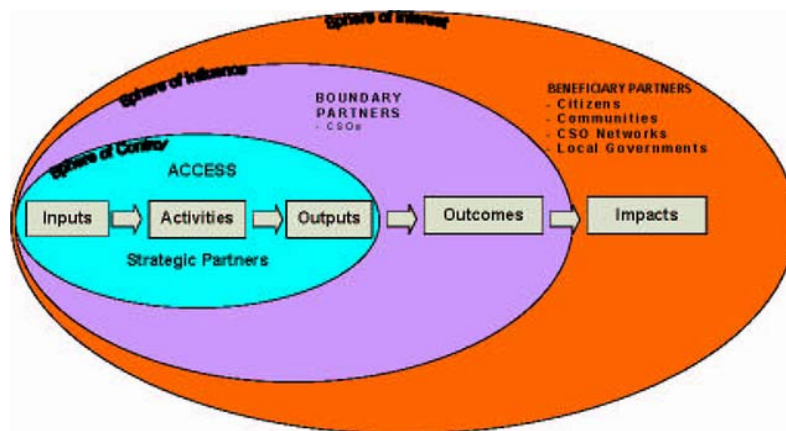


Figure 2: Actor Centred Program Logic using OM Framework

At the level of ultimate beneficiary partner, ACCESS Phase II sees four main groupings: Citizens, Citizens Organizations (CSOs), CSO Networks and Government (on various levels - village, kecamatan and district). ACCESS Phase II intends that these groups will be affected in the following ways:

### Citizen Level

Citizens (particularly poor, women, youth and the marginalized and the under-represented) know their situation, rights and assets and have a critical consciousness about the situation they face and a desire to act.

They have internalized democratic values and principles including: the ability to express their point of view and a tolerance for the point of view of others; a sensitivity towards gender and social inclusion; cooperation; transparency; accountability; and participation.

They have the capacity to articulate their interests, act together in order to obtain or mobilize the resources they need, and strive to build solidarity with others.

### ***Citizens' Organizations:***

Citizens' organizations are oriented towards serving their members and constituents, have a clear vision of the future (not just project implementers but change agents) and are committed to social justice. They are democratically oriented internally (participatory, transparent and accountable and sensitive to the rights of all, believe in and uphold the basic rights of all citizens without prejudice to gender, race, religion or social status) and demonstrate this in their policies, procedures and programs. They become a place where citizens, who know and are conscious of their rights, can act. These organizations want to and are able to demand the rights of their members or constituents, negotiate and advocate with government and other stakeholders and can mobilize and secure resources for the organization and their members. These organizations have sufficient capacities and abilities to serve their members and constituents and build their capacity as mandated.

### ***CSO Networks:***

The networks of CSOs have become more visionary towards the changes they want to see. The members are committed and share assets in their work to improve peoples' lives and are a legitimate force for change. They have a clear division of roles and responsibilities (front line, ground work and support system) and have the capacity to carry out these roles effectively. The network is oriented towards serving the interests of its member organizations.

### ***Government at various levels:***

Government at all levels tends to be more responsive and accountable to organized, articulate, and skilled associations of citizens exercising their civic rights in a peaceful and democratic manner. Government has changed its outlook from 'being served' to 'being of service' to citizens. It is more visionary in its approach and has sufficient capacity to carry out its duties faithfully and honestly where transparency and accountability have become the norms of behaviour. Government (at various levels) acts to ensure the participation of poor, women and the marginalized in decision making processes and ensures a high level of public services are reaching the these groups.

Village governments have changed their relationship with the district government and see themselves as having power to affect change, while district government sees itself as playing a supportive role in promoting change for the benefit of all citizens, especially the poor, women and marginalized.