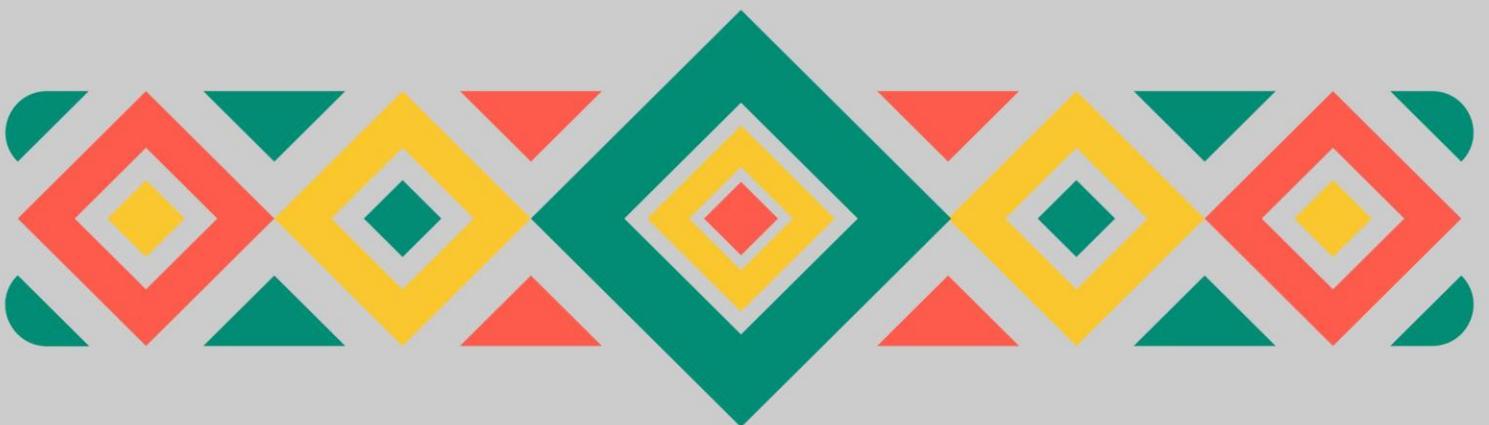




# citizen action

*does evidence have a role to play?*



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## Abstract

Over the years there has been more of a call for evidence to influence policy and action. While there is increased awareness regarding this issue, deeper analysis is still required on how and why evidence spurs action amongst citizens. This paper explores this issue focusing on the case study of a learning assessment in Nigeria. In this particular case, evidence plays a role in citizen action, but it is important to note the exploratory nature of this work which makes it risky to attribute citizen action to evidence alone. This paper therefore calls for more research in this area.

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## Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in how citizen engagement and action<sup>1</sup> happens and how such engagement of action impacts on statehood or statebuilding, policy formulation, poverty reduction and a decline in social inequalities (World Bank 2014; UNDP 2016). There is no doubt that in certain contexts, citizens can activate their own agency to make change happen, but what are the factors that push them to take action, to engage with the situation in their communities, localities, neighbourhoods or environments and look for ways to make a difference? Does evidence on the realities citizens are faced with have a role to play in this? Is such evidence the only contributing factor? This

paper seeks to explore some of the issues relating to these questions, and where possible, answer them with reference to the Nigerian context.

This paper begins with a review of the theories that underpin citizen engagement, drawing mainly on contemporary literature on citizen agency. It contributes to filling the empirical knowledge gap on citizen action in Nigeria by discussing lessons learnt from a case study in the north of Nigeria and provides insights into understanding how citizen action happens, and the role of evidence and context as catalysing factors. The case study also enables reflection on the factors which may 'disable' citizens from taking action. It highlights the complexities that exist when implementing interventions in different regions of the country and provides lessons on how change happens or does not happen in different cultural and socio-economic settings.

The case study is *LEARNigeria*: a Citizen-Led Household Assessment (CLA) of learning in Nigeria. It is modelled after the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) pioneered in India and is designed to generate empirical data on the foundational literacy and numeracy skills that Nigerian children aged between five and fifteen possess, which can inform and inspire policy action and targeted interventions to improve children's learning.

## Concepts that shape citizen action

A review of the expanding literature on citizen action – also referred to in some literature as 'engagement' or 'advocacy' - reveals a number of inter-related concepts (as the literature on this subject is extensive, the material here is not a detailed study, but rather serves only to provide a snapshot of some of the approaches that frame citizen action).

One such concept which frames citizen action is that of citizenship or citizenship participation. Jones and Gaventa (2002) allude to the complex nature of this concept in their study on citizenship. They highlight the nuanced nature of the citizen participation and how different individuals and groups play out their citizenship differently. Citizenship DRC (2011), with over two decades of research in this area, integrates citizen agency and action into a definition of citizenship:

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this paper citizen action, engagement and advocacy are sometimes used interchangeable but refer to the same concept

“Someone who belongs to different kinds of collective associations and defines their identity from participation in activities associated with these different kinds of membership. Their sense of citizenship lies in the terms on which they participate in this collective life and the forms of agency they are able to exercise” (Citizenship DRC, 2011, p. 4).

Citizenship DRC (2011) note that taking this approach to citizenship characterises a citizen as a person who is aware of her/his rights, is knowledgeable, has the ability to contribute solutions to problems as a member of the community or be actively involved in solving these problems with the government. This is not always the case because while citizens may have the ability to contribute to solving local and national problems, they are not in all cases knowledgeable of their rights. This understanding of citizenship contrasts with the liberal school of thought which views citizenship as status with rights granted by the state (Jones and Gaventa 2002). These rights include the rights to vote and be involved in governance through the election of leaders. In return, the leadership will provide a relatively stable and secure society in which people can exercise these rights freely (Gaventa 2002; Jones and Gaventa 2002). Another perspective of citizenship - Civic Republican, - emphasises identity, which provides both the motivation and the empowerment for citizens action (Jones and Gaventa 2002). This perspective argues that for individuals to invest in their societies and see themselves as citizens, some basic resources need to be provided. Within this school of thought is the notion that citizenship is formed around a common identity but this identity needs to be stronger than the other identities such as ethnicity, religion, caste, gender etc. that make people members of various other groups (Jones and Gaventa 2002). Active practice of ‘citizenship’ resulting from this common identity leads to the formation of civil society networks and organisations that are aimed at improving society.

Another concept shaping citizen action, and indirectly linked to the concept of citizenship, is that of citizen leadership emphasised by van Zwanenberg (2009) in the book *Leadership in Social Care*. She posits that citizen leadership occurs in situations where people are able to make an input into services they receive,

and where people are able to also engage in actions that benefit other citizens (Zwanenberg 2009). The debatable concept of social accountability evolved with some of Zwanenberg’s idea of citizen leadership. Social accountability refers to a concept where citizens and non-state actors seek to generally improve public accountability (O’Meally 2013). The literature points to two main types of accountability – *horizontal accountability* which refers to government being accountable to citizens via institutions and systems; and *vertical accountability* which happens when citizens participate in governance through voting and other social actions that benefit their fellow citizens. However, both do not occur in parallel (Bukonya, Hickey and King 2012). The later, vertical accountability, which sees citizens involved in social actions that are of benefit to the society and fellow citizens, aligns closely with the notion of citizens taking action. These actions, rather than hold the government accountable for gaps in provision of services, seek to support, assist and even close the gap where there are lapses by the state. According to O’Meally (2013), this element of social accountability involves a collaborative mode of engagement which leads to building better societies, creating cohesive communities and fostering better relations between the state and its citizens.

#### **Understanding ‘Evidence to Action’**

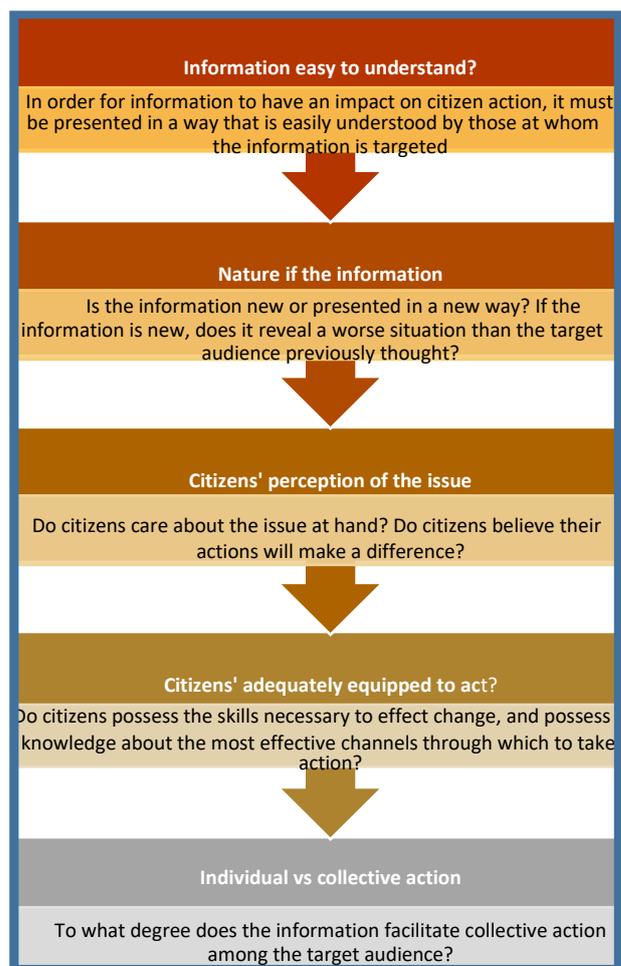
At this junction, it is important to note that while evidence and information are often used interchangeably (which occurs in this paper as well), not all information is evidence but all evidence is information. Information only becomes evidence when it is useful in supporting a fact or theory. While an understanding of the concepts framing citizen action or agency globally is needed to provide a background for the picture that this paper hopes to create, it is useful to focus in more detail on the growing body of literature pertaining to how evidence facilitates or hinders citizen action. Much of what is available in the literature focuses on how evidence or information leads to citizens holding government accountable, and government then taking action. The authors found a limited number of studies showed how citizen action happens or does not happen through citizens directly taking action when provided with evidence.

Regarding how evidence spurs action, a pervasive perspective is that if citizens are provided with information – or even evidence - regarding service and service provision, they will be inspired to mount pressure on the government, and this will in turn lead to desirable results such as improved social services and living standards, and poverty reduction. The less pervasive narrative is, as situations demand, instead of holding government accountable, citizens work with the received information to improve social services in form of contribution and support to the government. This kind of citizenship participation in governance can be viewed as an attempt to absolve the government of its responsibility, but in reality can be a strategic tool to ‘shame’ the government or serve as a wakeup call for it, potentially spurring policymakers to take needed social actions. Unfortunately, very little attention has been given to this approach to citizen action and there is limited accessible literature on how this happens in the global south and in Nigeria specifically.

In the literature, it is observed that provision of evidence to citizens does not guarantee significant behavioural change on the part of citizens. Available literature pertaining to evidence-to-action reveals mixed results. For example, Banerjee et al. (2010) in Lieberman, Posner and Tsai (2014) found that when people in a state in India were given information on the quality of learning in local schools and role of the village education committee, there were no noticeable changes observed in parents involvement in the school system. During a community radio programming exercise in Benin, Keffer and Khemani (2011) in Lieberman, Posner and Tsai (2014) observed that increased access to information on learning and literacy through radio did not influence change in the level of public participation. Rather, parents privately increased their support to their children’s learning by buying books or spending on private lessons. Again, Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja (2009) in Lieberman, Posner and Tsai (2014) found that in Pakistan, when student performance report cards were distributed to parents, test scores in the following years increased.

The examples provided above suggest that where citizen action occurred after the provision of evidence, some conditions might have been present that led to a change of behavior on the part of the citizens. Some of these conditions may not have been articulated in the studies above or may not have been easy to observe. These could include, but are not

limited to, the way and manner in which the information or evidence was provided, the context or condition in which the evidence was received, and the type of information provided. Without a detailed, in-depth analysis, it is difficult to conclusively identify which conditions led to any observed behavioural change. Lieberman, Posner and Tsai (2014) and Eberhardt, Hill and Plaut (2015) provide a conceptual framework that can be used to examine what conditions need to be in place to ensure that evidence inspires action. The framework summarised in the diagram below was developed from the work of Lieberman *et al* (2012) and Bruns *et al* (2011). It focuses on certain factors that make or mar the likelihood of information catalysing action, through answers to series of questions on the relationship between information citizens receive and their attitude to the environment in which the information is being generated.



Source: Eberhardt, Hill and Plaut (2015) p. 26 (adapted)

As the case study for this paper focuses on information on learning assessments and ways in which citizens can work to improve learning outcomes of children, the discussion on the case study will examine what conditions, according to the framework above, were in place to ensure that evidence translated to action. In Nigeria, provision of information on learning outcomes often provides parents with options for deciding which school or education institution their children will attend. Such information also allows for competition between schools as schools with higher learning outcomes tend to enjoy increased patronage. Besides this, knowledge of children's learning levels is also an incentive for stakeholders including parents and students to monitor educational resources assigned to schools and learners; and can serve as the tipping point which catalyses demand for improvements or reform from school level all the way to policy level.

### **Case study: LEARNigeria**

#### ***Background***

According to the 2015 Global Education Monitoring Report, Nigeria is home to the highest number of out of school (OOS) children in the world and this figure has been on the increase since the year 2000. Those that make it to school record relatively low completion rates, and there are persistently high levels of pupil dropout at primary level which is higher at secondary level. The Nigerian education system stipulates six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education and three years of senior secondary education.

At 30%, the national mean score from Nigeria's primary school children were ranked lowest in a World Bank commissioned study of learning achievements across 22 African countries. Learning outcomes from Nigeria's education system are poorer than expected, and without intervention, they present a challenge that could seriously impede the development of Africa's most populous country. Learning levels are far from what is required for Nigeria to achieve its productive potential (LEARNigeria 2016).

The philosophy of LEARNigeria was based on the growing consensus within government and non-state

actors on the need for the country to move towards evidence-based policy making, and that there is a role for non-state actors to play in transforming Nigeria's education system. It presupposes that when ordinary citizens are empowered with information that is relevant to them and which they can understand and use, they will begin to take steps – no matter how small – to improve the lives of their children, thus catalysing a change from ground up. To ensure this goal, it was agreed that the best place to gather the information was at the household level (LEARNigeria 2016).

#### ***Methodology***

For the LEARNigeria pilot programme held between January 2015 and December 2016, two local government areas (LGAs) were surveyed; one in Lagos state and one in Kano state. Lagos (in the south) and Kano (in the north) were selected because of the diversity of their populations. The indigenous people of Lagos state belong to the Yoruba ethnic group and the language spoken in Lagos is Yoruba. However, the state is multi-ethnic and multi-religious and English is widely spoken. Kano state has inhabitants that are mainly from the *Hausa* and *Fulani* ethnic groups and the state is predominantly Sunni Muslim. These states are also the most populous states and serve as the commercial hubs for the southern and northern regions of the country. This case report presented here focuses on the Kano state experience.

As with other CLAs, trained LEARNigeria volunteers visited households in rural and urban locations of the state to administer the survey and test children aged between five to fifteen (5-15) years. The household nature of the survey ensured that the learning levels of a broad range of children could be captured - those in school, those who have dropped out of school, those who have never been in school, those in government run free schools, those in private (fee-paying) schools and those in non-formal schools. The LEARNigeria pilot programme assessed children on foundational literacy and numeracy skills that they are required to learn as part of the Nigerian curriculum. The highest level in the assessment corresponded to the learning outcomes benchmarks of primary two (the second year of formal education) according to the Nigerian curriculum.

In addition to assessment, information was collected from the households on household size, socioeconomic status and parental education, which are indicators that are believed to influence children's educational status and learning outcomes. The pilot also included visits to one government school and one private fee-paying school in each enumeration area or LGA sampled to collect information on school infrastructure, enrolment and attendance, and teacher statistics to understand the environment where children receive their formal education. Following the assessment, parents received instant feedback on learning levels, and community and government stakeholders were engaged in interactive feedback and action planning sessions.

The LEARNigeria pilot was implemented with public and private institutions as well as community-based organisations. The test tools were developed by government institutions and practicing curriculum experts and teachers. The survey methodology and processes were designed with the support of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The field survey was implemented by volunteers recruited by community-based organisations working in the local communities surveyed (LEARNigeria 2016). Partner organisations<sup>2</sup> were responsible for recruiting volunteers, and over 70 volunteers were recruited for the survey exercise. The volunteers were literate, had obtained at least five credits<sup>3</sup> (including Mathematics and English Language) at secondary school certificate level and a number of them held the National Certificate of Education (a teacher qualification). It was also necessary that volunteers were literate in the local languages spoken in the communities. They were also responsible for giving feedback to parents once the assessment had been completed for each child or household and were part of the action planning meetings with the community and government stakeholders.

Upon conclusion of the data collection and feedback sessions with the community in Kano state, the volunteer enumerators (who also include teachers) came together to form a group which they called *Kano State Educational Volunteers, (KSEV)*. The aim of

this group was to contribute to improving the quality of education in government-run primary and secondary schools. According to one of the elders of the group "this is the first time that the community is getting to know what learning outcomes their children are achieving". The group which started off with 30 members grew to 120 members in less than a year. It embarked on a campaign to increase enrolment, retention and completion in both primary and secondary schools. Volunteer members act as 'supply' teachers in schools that are experiencing serious teacher shortages. The volunteers also provide free remedial lessons for students who appear to be struggling academically, as well as free vocational classes to interested students. They also counsel students who have dropped out to return to school and mediate with the school authorities to re-admit students who left school to get married but are now divorced. All these actions are freely carried out and have the support of community leaders and the local government authority (LEARNigeria 2016).

### **Exploring the Emerging Lesson and Themes**

The Kano experience presents a number of emerging lessons and themes. First, there seems to have been value in sharing evidence collectively with a community of diverse stakeholders with shared interest in the data, rather than restricting sharing to the level of the individual or smaller-group such as the family. Although the volunteers gave feedback to parents following each assessment, dissemination at that level did not result in any significant move to actions for improving teaching and learning in the community until the LEARNigeria team shared preliminary results with the community and initiated a call to action. This meeting, which also served as a way to acknowledge and appreciate the work of volunteers who are key to the CLA process, was held with an array of stakeholders including volunteer survey enumerators, community leaders, religious leaders, LGA representatives, School Based Management Committees, head teachers and teachers. The experience of the pilot and the challenging realities around what the children surveyed were able to do against what they were supposed to be able to do was shared with all stakeholders. The data revealed poor learning outcomes, and a frank discussion of the implication of this for the locality appeared to be the tipping point

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<sup>2</sup> Partner organisations are organisations working with the school based management committees (SBMC) in the local communities and are well known by the state and local government authorities. They were highly recommended by these SBMCs. Partner organisations are registered, run by local citizens and have experience in implementing projects in the education sector <sup>3</sup> Minimum standard of senior secondary school certificate (WAEC or NECO)

for action by the volunteers who participated in the assessment. While feedback to each individual household that participated in the study made little noticeable impact, presentation of the evidence to the community evoked spontaneous but collective action.

The concept of citizenship assumes that people generally care about their communities and want to make a change, but more often than not, they are not clear on what to do or how to get involved. They also like to know that their actions matter to at least some members of their community. In order to fully understand what happened in the Kano context, it is important to compare the actions taken with the set of assumptions that influence the ability of evidence to inspire action – See Figure 1 (Eberhardt, Hill and Plaut, 2015). To further explore this, semi-structured interviews were held with the founding members of the KSEV. The questions were open-ended and the framework (Eberhardt, Hill and Plaut, 2015) provided a guide for the interview. Excerpts from the interview have been included in the following section:

- a. **Assumption one: Information easy to understand?** In the LEARNigeria case study, local volunteers were involved in the data collection and information gathering process. They had received training on several occasions on not only how to collect the data but also on how to give feedback to parents and community members. According to the spokesperson for the group, *“the information the LEARNigeria CLA provided was evidence for us to see what our children were learning and what we could do about it”*.
- b. **Assumption two: Nature of information.** *“This is the first time that the community is getting to understand what learning outcomes their children are achieving”* (KSEV member). Although the preliminary results which were shared after administering the assessments were not necessarily new, the way the information was being presented was new and enlightening. This was no longer a case of a newspaper report or a journal article, this information was being collected by them firsthand and revealed a worse reality than originally assumed.
- c. **Assumption three: Citizens’ perception of the issue.** The volunteers believed and still believe that education is key to alleviating the numerous challenges faced by Nigerians. *“Without education, the children of our community will not go far. There is nothing much for them here. Our lands are not good for farming but with a good education we can get work in the city”* (KSEV member). When ranked with other issues calling for attention in the nation such as health and insecurity, the volunteers noted that a good educational foundation would help people seek the right solution to tackle health issues and help reduce insecurity in the community. The volunteers also felt it was their duty to give back to the society as good citizens and as the next generation of leaders.
- d. **Assumption four: Citizens adequately equipped to act?** Not only did the volunteers have the skills and qualifications to act as supply teachers and give extra lessons to the school children, many of them either have a National Certificate of Education or a diploma from a tertiary institution; they knew what actions to take. The initial set of volunteers who supported the LEARNigeria pilot had been part of action planning meetings with communities, community heads, teachers, and representatives of the local government. In these meetings they had gained ideas on what would be acceptable and would affect the community for good. According a member of KSEV that was interviewed *“many of the volunteers did not have jobs; with a lot of free time on their hands, there was nothing holding us back from doing this for our community. The community elders were also happy because the saw we were busy. It was an opportunity to show what we had learnt in school to our people and will also encourage them to keep their children in school and support the work we are doing”*.
- e. **Assumption five: Individual versus collective action.** The action of the volunteers to form a group and give it a formal name underscores their belief that their action will make a difference in the community. The growth of the group from 30 initial members to 120 members – and growing - also attests to the efficacy of collective action. *“We came together as a way for the community/government to see that we*

*can contribute. This action has produced many good results. Not only are children and their parents benefiting from the support we give, the government has access to our services for free, and now many of the volunteers without jobs are being interviewed by the local education authority to be recruited as teachers in our schools” (KSEV member).*

On the basis of this case study and in its satisfying the conditions of the framework used, it might be justifiable to conclude that evidence leads to citizen action where relevant conditions are in place. However, it is not always realistic to assume that all the conditions will be met as in this case study. Some contexts are more enabling than others. The same pilot activities were carried out in Lagos and the evidence generated did not catalyse action to the degree that it occurred in Kano. The evidence in Lagos showed that as in Kano, the children tested also performed below expected levels. The only obvious difference was the context in which the study was carried out. While the scope of this paper does not enable a full unpacking of these contextual realities, some attempts have been made to highlight some of those found.

The characteristics of the society in Kano differs in many ways from the society in Lagos. The community in Kano had one burning issue which was improving education and learning outcomes. Based on this, it was easy for the volunteers to exert influence and implement their plan. They also had the capacity to do this as many had teaching backgrounds, and furthermore, the volunteers were able to build on existing loose alliances which led to citizen action. In addition, the homogeneity in the Kano community reduced the need for social categories and strengthened the shared goal of the volunteers and community members, and the social contract between the community and local authorities to solve service delivery issues in the education sector. The context aligns strongly with the concept of citizenship that calls for it to be viewed both as a status and active practice.

#### **Coalitions for Development Through Information and Citizen Action**

The Open Alliance, a coalition of organisations that is focused on encouraging openness and transparency in government with the goal of inclusive development

and efficient service delivery, has also been a driving force in the admission of Nigeria into the Open Government Initiative. The Open Alliance has seen some success in initiatives implemented by its members. For instance, BudgIT, a member of the Alliance, focuses on making data on the Nigerian budget and spending accessible and available to the citizenry. Regular reports and engaging infographics are a key aspect of their approach and making this information widely available has resulted in increasing awareness of the Nigerian budgetary allocations and drawing attention to areas of inefficiency.

BudgIT's publication on the 2016 budget highlighted where funds had been allocated for items recognised as "frivolous spending". Due to the level of attention that the publication received as a result of citizen's voices against the spending, a debate was held at the National Assembly and over 500 items were officially recognised as being frivolous. As the budget had already been passed, no changes could be made to the 2016 budget, but BudgIT will follow up with the National Assembly to ensure that these items are not included in the next budget. However, just like in the LEARNigeria case study, it is important to note the availability of the Internet and increased use of social media by a growing number of Nigeria youths provided the context that enabled the debate.

Another organisation within the Alliance that is engaging citizens to generate evidence is Connected Development (CODE). CODE's "Follow the Money" campaign engages a nationwide network of thousands of volunteer reporters who report on the spending of funds earmarked for specific projects and share their findings online and on social media. In 2014, *Follow the Money* advocated and tracked the release of 120 million naira for the relocation of 3,000 citizens of Gutsura, Zamfara to a new site with access to water and toilets, and in 2015, they revealed the ongoing scam project while tracking the release of NGN 9.2 billion that was meant to purchase of 750,000 clean cook stoves and 18,000 wonder bags for rural women nationwide. By engaging journalists, youth, and other on-the-ground volunteers and taking advantage of the Freedom of Information Act to collect relevant information, CODE is able to report on the progress of projects funded by government and encourage accountability and transparency.

Just as there are examples of success, there are also examples of where information and / or evidence did not translate into action amongst in Nigeria. The Community Accountability and Transparency Initiative (CATI), one of the reforms of the Federal Ministry of Education under the 2006 administration, was designed to ensure that funds earmarked for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme were properly used. Working with the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), CATI aimed to provide information/evidence that would allow all interested community members monitor the disbursement and use of funds to state-run primary schools. It was assumed that this would result in “improved service delivery, enhanced public participation and local ownership of reform agendas, greater transparency of decision-making and wider public access to information” (Ezekwesili 2012). Unfortunately, this laudable initiative was unable to gain much traction as it was reversed immediately the minister in charge left office (Adediran 2015; Ezekwesili 2012).

It has been suggested that one of the reasons why CATI failed was the insufficient commitment of successive administrations to ensure that information trickled down to grassroots levels. Another reason put forward is the lack of continuity in policy focus by the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Education where the reform was initiated. This is a challenge found in many ministries, departments and agencies across the country. Although the idea of CATI was popular with international donors and the foreign community, assuming that it had been left to run, it is uncertain if public access to information would have eventually led to action in this context. For action to have taken place, the Nigerian citizenry would have had to prioritise the issue of the mismanagement of public funds against the many other challenges competing for attention in their daily lives. This would of necessity involve a change of attitude and imbibing a culture of responsibility where the average citizen does not only see citizenship as a status but also as an active practice like in the case of the Kano volunteers.

## Conclusion

Information and data which is converted to evidence is key to informing strategies that can tackle large number of gaps in governance and service delivery in Nigeria. A large number of interventions, including

the LEARNigeria programme, were built on the assumption or theory of change that evidence will translate to citizen action. The pilot and planning phase of LEARNigeria – which after refinement is now being scaled up across the country - tested the concept that citizens have the capacity to collect robust, large-scale data on learning outcomes, and that through effective partnerships and communications, this data can be transformed into evidence which can then be used to improve children’s learning at community level.

This paper provides an example of an intervention that worked out and catalysed action. Despite the limited evidence, it is obvious that even when an intervention has been well designed and implemented, there is no guarantee that the evidence it generates will translate to action - even when all conditions have been met, unless certain peculiarities of disparate communities are adequately taken into consideration. Change happens when the environment is right and the context is enabling.

## Next Step

With this lesson learnt, the LEARNigeria scale up phase will focus on strengthening citizen agency and government accountability not only through the provision of reliable data, but with more of an emphasis on effective and intentional communication of evidence. The dissemination of targeted information is expected to empower parents as well as communities to take action both publicly and privately to improve learning outcomes for their children.

The goal of LEARNigeria is therefore two-pronged: *strengthening policy advocacy and enabling citizen agency*. This goal stems from lessons from the Kano experience and other CLA movements in the global south, other local efforts where evidence has translated to action, and an understanding the concepts shaping citizen action. There needs to be a bottom-up and top-down approach to bring about change in the education sector. The bottom-up approach or citizen agency will involve empowering citizens with the evidence they need to be confident to take action. Information alone is not enough. They must also be empowered with how to use the information either as a tool for advocacy to the government and leaders, or a way to come up with interventions that will mobilise them (citizens) to take

action. The civic republican view of citizenship discusses creating a strong common identity around an issue allowing it to take priority (advocacy), and citizenship as active practice leads to interventions such as that set up by the Kano volunteers.

The top-down approach can be leveraged to the concept of social accountability which suggests that governments need to be accountable to its citizens. Policy advocacy will involve LEARNigeria using the evidence it generates through the CLA to make a case to the federal governments and state leadership on the design of policies that will improve learning outcomes across the country. The advocacy will also include revising existing policies or doing away with policies that do not benefit children's learning. Evidence-based policy making will see the information available to both sides of the 'divide' translating into action. It is hoped that the action inspired by evidence will not only occur in the education sector but will be the foundation for change in other sectors.

In line with this, the LEARNigeria initiative will also contribute to platforms for strengthening accountability. Such platforms include the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative which Nigeria joined in July 2016. The OGP is a multilateral initiative that brings together civil society organisations (CSOs) and government representatives with the aim of securing concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. One of the OGP thematic areas identified in Nigeria is *Citizen Engagement and Empowerment*; LEARNigeria aims to ensure that the platforms for citizen engagement developed allow citizens to use relevant data, such as those generated by LEARNigeria, to engage their government representatives in a meaningful and impactful manner. To that end, LEARNigeria has been involved in the development of the OGP National Action Plan for Nigeria and will endeavor to partner with other CSOs participating in the initiative to ensure that effective channels for citizen engagement are developed and maintained.

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