

Core Values:

focusing on attitude and
behaviour change

In brief

Governance reform is about government and citizens working together in more responsive, inclusive and accountable ways for the benefit of citizens. More responsive, inclusive and accountable *attitudes and behaviour* on the part of government and non-government stakeholders are the critical factors which lead to meaningful reform processes, and replicate and sustain reforms beyond the lifetime of development programmes.

In supporting this kind of attitude and behaviour change, we have learned the power and importance of 'practising what we preach'. Core values, demonstrated in agreed attitudes and behaviour, form the essential heart of everything SAVI does. These reflect and reinforce the behind the scenes role programme staff play in facilitating locally-driven change.

Learning from experience

In recent years, the development industry has become increasingly concerned with achieving and demonstrating tangible short-term results. Influential critics¹ argue that fulfilling donor requirements for short-term quantitative targets all too easily leads development programmes to produce results that look good to outside audiences, but don't really change anything on the ground. Too much focus on this type of result diverts attention away from the messy and long term complexities of real change. SAVI's experience echoes this concern.

In the early days of SAVI, the core team was small, mostly from a community development background, and passionate about empowerment and accountability work. This team defined a set of SAVI core values in the course of discussions on branding: equity and justice; participation and inclusion; accountability and transparency; sustainability, partnership, empowerment, diversity and democracy. These resulted in the SAVI logo and strapline: *collective responsibility: collective accountability* and were captured to an extent in early versions of the programme's theory of change and logical framework. But from that point on, these core values were mostly taken for granted.

As the programme developed and new staff were recruited to cover more areas of work,

the logical framework changed into a results framework and became increasingly dominant in everyone's lives. There was huge pressure on all staff to deliver, and many got sucked into delivering and reporting tangible short-term results – such as policy changes, or step change improvements in State House of Assembly (SHoA) systems and procedures – regardless of how these results were achieved. By losing sight of the original values-based logic which was about *process*, some staff were neither demonstrating nor supporting the kinds of attitudes and behaviour that would make these short-term results meaningful and sustainable in the longer-term.

With the prospect of further expansion, and tensions lingering, we brought in a change management consultant. He helped the team to face up to the underlying problem. With his facilitation and support, we collectively defined a set of values and associated behaviours expected of staff. These now shape our approach to staff recruitment, development and management. They also support us in practising what we preach: modelling to partners some of the responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviours that are central to sustainable processes of citizen engagement in governance.

The process of defining SAVI values

SAVI core values were discussed and defined through a series of highly participatory workshops involving all of the staff with management and staff development responsibilities. We started by discussing and defining SAVI's mission and vision – aspects of SAVI on which everyone could easily agree.

SAVI Mission and vision

Mission

SAVI is an action-learning programme that promotes dynamic partnerships among key agents of change in the effective and efficient use of public resources in Nigerian states. We do this through:

- Supporting the development of effective partnerships among citizens, civil society, the media, SHoAs and government in selected states
- Strengthening the capacity of civil society, the media and SHoAs to engage citizens in collective action to hold government to account
- Strengthening systems, processes and procedures for public participation in government decision-making
- Capturing, analysing and sharing key learning for replication in other sectors and states

Vision

SAVI will achieve significant improvement in citizen's participation in governance that can be sustained and replicated beyond the life of the programme. We will achieve this through:

- Developing effective partnerships for collective action
- Challenging and changing attitudes and behaviours between citizens and government through these partnerships
- Stimulating innovative approaches to advocacy and citizen engagement
- Harnessing and strengthening existing initiatives and the skill sets within them
- Strategically facilitating engagement between the public and private sectors
- Sharing knowledge through appropriate channels of communication
- Utilising a variety of approaches to engage with different states

Discussion of the mission and vision highlighted the important fact that the SAVI programme is fundamentally about *citizen empowerment* – and that this is driven and sustained by particular values and attitude and behaviour change across the board.

With the benefit of hindsight, we recognised that some staff had come to focus exclusively on the achievement of numbers and task-oriented results (the left hand side of the table below) at the expense of more complex but sustainable changes in attitudes and behaviour (the right hand side of the table). Without attitude and behaviour change at all levels – from staff and partners, to citizens and government – the results on the left hand side lacked real meaning and sustainability.

Task-oriented results	Attitude and behaviour-related results
Long-term goal Improved service delivery (Millennium Development Goals)	Core values More responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviour in society as a whole
Medium-term goal Improved public financial management	Vision More responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviour in government
Outcome Change in policy and implementation	Mission More responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviour in civil society
Outputs Increased capacity for citizen based advocacy	Strategic objectives More responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviour amongst SAVI partners
Activities Transfer of knowledge and skills	Activities More responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviour amongst SAVI staff

Discussion turned to the role of SAVI in promoting citizen empowerment, and what this requires from SAVI staff – how we need to practice what we preach. We discussed, re-defined and agreed on our core values, together with the attitudes and behaviour we expect of ourselves, seek to support in others, and believe are central to citizen empowerment in governance.

SAVI values and behaviours

Being a values-based organisation is central to our approach, to our mission and to the achievement of our vision. As such we expect that everybody within our organisation lives these values on a daily basis, and that all those who engage with us experience our commitment and belief in these values through our behaviour.

Accountability

Being open and transparent in all our work, actions and behaviours – ‘we practice what we preach’.

Behaviour:

- We share information and resources within agreed rules and procedures
- We take both individual and collective responsibility for our actions
- We comply with organisation rules and procedures
- We are honest and transparent in all our engagements and reporting
- We value organisational resources as if they are our personal resources

Sustainability

Making advocacy and voice a process that has a life of its own – ‘continuity is key’.

Behaviour:

- We believe passionately in demonstrating resourceful processes and models that are self-starting, self-nurturing and self-maintaining
- We encourage creativity, innovation and self-discovery in ourselves and in others
- We take ownership for our actions, behaviours and resulting successes and failures
- We encourage professionalism with boldness, confidence and determination to achieve results
- We celebrate passion and commitment in individuals, teams and organisations as a key driver of change

Respect and inclusion

Being sensitive to people, context and environment – ‘everybody counts’.

Behaviour:

- We demonstrate sensitivity and acceptance in all that we do and are particularly sensitive to gender and other factors of exclusion
- We are tolerant and welcoming of others’ opinions, views and beliefs
- We appreciate and support each others’ assigned roles and responsibilities
- We encourage and help all to contribute ideas and suggestions
- We believe in and demonstrate participatory decision-making and consensus building

Learning and sharing

Being a knowledge-based organisation – ‘everyone knows something and shares something’.

Behaviour:

- We are all committed to learning new things and approaches
- We take time for reflection, learning and mentoring others
- We recognise success and take learning from failure
- We are driven by our willingness to share our learning, knowledge and skills in ways that can be easily adopted and used by others
- We ensure that we share our learning and make all that we know accessible to others

Teamwork

Recognising everyone’s value and encouraging effective work in teams – ‘SAVI being SAVI’.

Behaviour:

- We believe in the value of supportive teamwork and positive interpersonal relationships
- We value, celebrate and use the power of our diversity
- We respect, listen to and appreciate each other at all times
- We are flexible in our work and are willing to adapt according to need
- We take responsibility to give, receive and use feedback on our performance and behaviours

Bringing values into the heart of the programme

By defining agreed values in terms of expected behaviours that apply equally to staff and partners, we now apply these to all aspects of the programme.

Values and agreed behaviours are central to staff recruitment, staff induction and orientation, staff development and staff appraisal processes.

➤ See SAVI Approach Paper 11: Managing the Programme

Values are central to SAVI’s approach to staff and partner capacity-building, empowerment and facilitation.

They form the basis of the programme’s design, which in turn shapes our theory of change and approach to thinking and working politically.

- SAVI Approach Paper 2: Programme Design
- SAVI Approach Paper 3: Theory of Change
- SAVI Approach Paper 4: Thinking and Working Politically

Changes in citizen, civil society, media, SHoA and state government values, attitudes and behaviour are promoted and measured at every level in the SAVI results framework through a variety of indicators in which they are either expressed or implied.

- SAVI Approach Paper 5: Defining and Monitoring Results

Practical tips and conclusions

Effective and sustainable governance reform is principally about change towards more responsive, inclusive and accountable attitudes and behaviour on the part of all involved. Tangible one-off results – such as policy change, or changes in systems and procedures – are not a demonstration of more responsive governance unless they derive from and demonstrate attitudes and behaviour that are more responsive, inclusive and accountable.

- Central to SAVI's effectiveness in facilitating attitude and behaviour change amongst citizens, civil society groups, the media, SHoAs and state governments is 'practising what we preach', 'walking the talk' and striving to 'be the change we want to see.'
- Defining values in terms of behaviour moves beyond lip service into practical application. Behaviour can be demonstrated and witnessed, changed, supported, monitored and rewarded.
- For an empowerment and accountability programme like SAVI, having a staff team with the right attitudes and behaviour is critical. This should inform HR recruitment and management from the outset. Values and behaviours should also be institutionalised, so that they are never taken for granted.

Endnote

¹ For example. Andrews, M. (2013) *Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Booth, D. and Unsworth, S. (2014) *Politically Smart, Locally Led Development*, ODI Discussion Paper, London: Overseas Development Institute

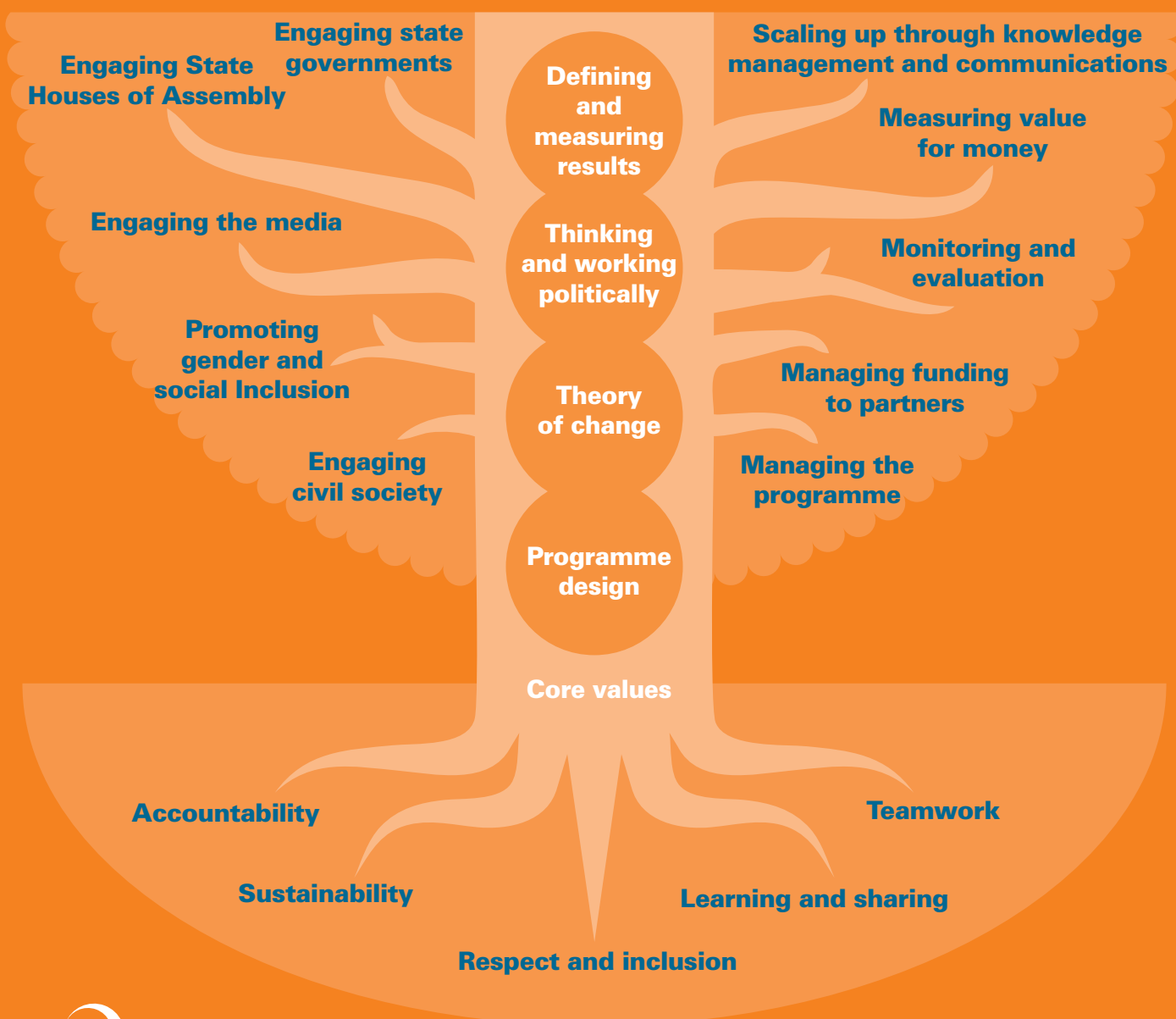
SAVI's 'knowledge tree'

The State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) is a DFID-funded programme working in ten Nigerian states promoting a culture of constructive citizen engagement in responsive state level governance. Decision-making in SAVI is largely decentralised to state level, and state staff are supported and trained to be facilitators and mentors of locally driven change. Through providing behind the scenes support, SAVI is equipping groups of citizens, the media and state legislatures with the confidence and credibility to play their part in governance in politically smart and effective ways.

SAVI's Knowledge Tree depicts how the programme works. The roots are the core values that inform everything that SAVI does. The trunk is made up of four inter-related processes that give structure to all aspects of the programme. Left hand branches describe SAVI's working relationships with partners. Right hand branches concern internal functioning and relations with DFID.

This paper is one of a series explaining these different processes and relationships.

For more information, visit our website: www.savi-nigeria.org/approach



SAVI supports groups of citizens, their elected state-level representatives and the media to be informed, credible and effective agents of citizen voice and accountability, able to play their part in promoting responsive, accountable and inclusive governance.

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