How transparency & accountability can make development work: Rakesh Rajani
For millions of poor people in East Africa, the best thing that’s happened in recent years may be...
radio

(FM stations everywhere)
TV

(many stations, growing coverage)
newspapers
(15+ dailies)
and most significantly mobile phones (16m subscribers)
Why?
When it doesn’t work,
we do more of the same, harder
So what can be done?

5 stories from Tanzania
1. education quality
many schools, but money does not reach them and there is little learning
evidence and advice provided over 6 months to ministers, policy-makers, etc but nothing happened
until we supported five journalist to investigate,

Made headlines & letters to editors & radio call ins
Result:

The Minister of Education personally visited 4 of 5 districts covered in the news.

Instructed districts to release funds.

School committees followed-up on use of these funds.
2. teacher’s wellbeing
teachers are at the heart of education, but live in terrible conditions and get paid very late
forcing many to have second and third jobs
morale low, absenteeism high
policy makers informed
some teachers and NGOs protested
but nothing changed
until research on conditions was publicized

and advert was broadcast on national TV

& discussed on dozens of talk shows
Result:

Teachers’ welfare rose to the top of the public agenda

Overdraft deal worked out with leading banks, so that teachers are paid on time

Increased resources allocated to teacher housing in subsequent budgets
3. reproductive health
thousands of women continue to die in childbirth and get injuries such as fistula. This is known but little happens.
WD set up a referral system using maps focusing on prevention and treatment and let everyone know
made wall posters for every clinic & other public places & distributed them through government & newspapers
and through radio
enabling people to speak out about realities on the ground locally
and nationwide through radio and TV
Result:

More women demand to deliver at hospitals and being treated right

Thousands of women with fistula treated, some after 30+ years of suffering from the condition

National referral network under Ministry of Health established
4. public money
lots of money unaccounted & improperly used

Government auditor reports problems, year after year

but nothing happens
until audit findings were simplified, color coded, ranked & publicized all over media & distributed countrywide
Result:

For the first time people across the nation knew findings and could discuss them.

The President convened an unprecedented two-day meeting of all Government CEOs.

Parliament now takes reports more seriously; energized its oversight role.
5. energy
Country had a power crisis
Led to a corrupt generator procurement deal
In the past they got away with it
but this time people knew what's going on through newspapers
and radio and mobile phone
causing enormous public pressure compelling Parliament to instigate a probe
Result:

Prime Minister and 2 ministers resigned, established principle that even top leaders can be held accountable.

The Richmond generator deal was cancelled.

Restored public faith in parliament.
what can we learn from these experiences?
Core problem often not lack of resources, but how resources are used

Evidence and policy advice alone don’t lead to change

Good policies are often in place, but they are not implemented

What is needed is openness and sustained public engagement
Because it allows people to:

• know what's going on
• appreciate rules of the game
• be inspired by what others are doing
• connect with others
• engage with local government and services
• exert pressure on leaders to respond
The challenge is to sustain change, to make this part of everyday life, institutionalized in daily practice, simple, regular, reliable a matter of course at scale
An example of how we are doing it at Twaweza
Daraja: Raising the Water Press
For millions of people in Tanzania getting water is a daily struggle.
Dissatisfied Citizens

• An underperforming sector with unmet demand
• An opportunity? Citizens’ motivated for action
A Sustainability Challenge

• Only 54% of rural water-points functioning in 33 surveyed districts

- > 4 WPs per 1,000 people
- 2-4 WPs per 1,000 people
- 1-2 WPs per 1,000 people
- < 1 WP per 1,000 people
- No data available
An Equity Challenge

- Distribution of WPs highly unequal
- Targeting of new funds?

Less than half (40%) of new funding going to wards with below average coverage
Citizens

Media partnerships for accountability

Local Government

SMS-based feedback mechanism

Popularising information

Database
Conclusion

transparency and accountability can **energize** development

by creating **opportunities** for people to **know, connect and act**

and by providing **incentives** for those in charge to be more responsive and deliver
Development doesn’t work when it places faith and funds in unaccountable governments, or runs short-lived boutique projects that reach very few.

Transparency and accountability work can take the best of the latter to fix the former, and enable citizens to reclaim government and make services work for them.