



**Project Completion Report  
For the Governance and Transparency Fund  
Project Period: 16 October 2008–15 October 2013**

**CN–164: Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public  
Expenditure Accountability  
By the Global Development Network**

**15 January, 2014**

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## 1. Programme Identification Details

<b>GTF Number</b>	CN-164
<b>Short Title of Programme</b>	Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public Expenditure Accountability
<b>Name of Lead Institution</b>	Global Development Network
<b>Start date</b>	16 / 10 / 2008
<b>End date</b>	15 / 10 / 2013
<b>Amount of DFID Funding</b>	GBP 4,993,829
<b>Brief Summary of Programme</b>	<p>The <i>Strengthening Institutions to Improve Public Expenditure Accountability</i> programme was designed to build individual and institutional capacities to undertake public expenditure monitoring and analysis with an aim to increase the effectiveness with which governments allocate and use their resources in 14 developing countries. By strengthening the analytical underpinnings of policy debates around public expenditure priorities and their impact, the programme endeavoured to improve the governance of public service delivery in the crucial sectors of education, health and water. Through this approach, it envisioned four key outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded institutional capacities for public expenditure analysis, development of policy alternatives and constructive engagement in a peer-learning environment;</li> <li>• Increased use of evidence-based policy options, especially in the social sectors;</li> <li>• Creation of strong network of institutions to share training materials and templates for analysis; and;</li> <li>• Development of internationally comparable information on public expenditures that will begin to build benchmarks for the quality of public spending.</li> </ul>
<b>Programme countries</b>	Annex 10– List of Programme Countries
<b>Implementing partners</b>	Annex 11– List of Implementing Partners
<b>Target groups-wider beneficiaries</b>	<p>The programme's immediate beneficiaries are the 14 selected research institutions whose analytical, networking and research communication capacities have been built and strengthened to engage with decision-makers on evidence-based policy options for public expenditure management in their countries. Since its inception, more than 100 research team members (40 percent being female grantees) have been trained through this project. Most researchers are 35 years of age or below. Wider beneficiaries include government officials, civil society, think-tanks, academia, media and citizens of the 14 developing countries who would ultimately gain from information on public expenditures, research-based policy alternatives and improved allocation of resources in the education, health and water sectors. For details, please refer to Annex 1-Final Achievement Rating Scale and Annex G1-Activity to Outcome Update.</p>
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## 2. List of Acronyms

AST	Advanced Social Technologies, Armenia
BAPPENAS	Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia
BIA	Benefit Incidence Analysis
BMMN	Budget Media Monitoring Network
CBPS	Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, India
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEA	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
CEDS	Center for Economics and Development Studies, Padjadjaran University, Indonesia
CIPPEC	Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth, Argentina
CIUP	Research Center of the University of the Pacific, Peru
CRC	Center for Research and Communication, Philippines
CSEA	Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa, Nigeria
DFID	(UK Government) Department for International Development
EGAP	Graduate School of Public Administration and Public Policy, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre, Uganda
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation, Tanzania
FUNDESA	Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala, Guatemala
GDN	Global Development Network
GTF	Governance and Transparency Fund
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs, Kenya
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre, Ghana
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MES	Ministry of Education and Science, Armenia
MSR	Most Significant Results
NORC	National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago
PBA	Program Budgeting Analysis
PBBS	Performance Based Budgeting System
PMT	Programme Management Team
PEM	Public Expenditure Management
PRAD	Policy Research and Development, Nepal
PS	Policy Simulations
R4D	Results for Development Institute, USA
TA	Technical Advisor
VfM	Value for Money

### 3. Summary of Activities and Achievements

#### **3.1 Period since last annual report (Since 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2013)**

The period between April and October 2013 was an intense programme implementation phase for the Global Development Network (GDN) and its 14 country partners. The independent project final evaluation was commissioned during this period (Annex 6-Final Evaluation) and the Programme Management Team (PMT) worked closely with the KPMG Learning Advisor to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the Most Significant Results (MSR) achieved in select partner countries (Annex 5-Most Significant Results Analyses).

In the months leading to the conclusion of the project, the explicit focus was on the strengthening and finalisation of research outputs, along with rigorous engagement activities to share research results with key stakeholders. During the final Global Technical Training and Peer-Learning workshop (held in Jakarta, Indonesia in April 2013) efforts were made to impart comprehensive training on research communications to partner teams, create a platform for peer-learning to deepen outreach strategies, and a forum for further discussions with sector Technical Advisors (TAs) to strengthen and finalise research outputs.

In conjunction to the global workshop, the PMT also organised a policy dialogue in active partnership with the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS), Indonesia titled *“Promoting Effective Public Expenditure and Service Delivery in Health, Education and Water”*. The day-long event was attended by development practitioners, representatives from think tanks, the academia, media, students, members of the civil society and key policymakers from Indonesia, India and Nepal. The Keynote Address was delivered by the Minister of State for National Development Planning, Indonesia. In her speech, the Minister referred to effective public expenditure and its relevance in improving public service delivery in crucial social sectors for human development within the region. Following the success of the policy dialogue, similar events were held in the other regions of project operations. In Latin America, the policy dialogue was held in Mexico City, Mexico (September 2013) in partnership with GDN’s local project partner - Graduate School of Public Administration and Public Policy, Tecnológico de Monterrey (EGAP). The event focused on *“Viabilidad de las finanzas publicas en America Latina”* and provided a forum for deliberation and exchange on the challenges and opportunities facing fiscal policies in Latin America. A similar regional policy event was held in Abuja, Nigeria (November 2013) on *“Making Smarter Policies - Improving Health and Education Outcomes in Africa”*, in partnership with the local project partner - Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA). The event facilitated discussion on the solutions available for effective and efficient use of public resources in the education and health sectors in East and West Africa. Key policymakers, researchers, civil society and media representatives participated in the discussions.

Building the legacy of the programme, during the final implementation phase of the project, the PMT worked closely with the sector TAs and partner teams to develop knowledge sharing and management outputs. These include a) an integrated course module on public expenditure analysis for capacity building exercises in universities, think tanks, government functionaries and development practitioners, b) a methodological paper on the pros and cons of Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) versus Cost-Benefit Analysis in the water sector, c) a tool-kit on research to policy influence consisting of seven case stories or opinion pieces highlighting the outreach strategies and success stories from the project and d) a data portal for the public expenditure data produced under the project.

At the partner level, teams employed the communication tools learnt as part of the programme to engage with key stakeholders and raise public opinion in their countries. These include policy briefs, social and print media, town hall meetings, roundtables, issue-based seminars, among others. In Argentina, for instance, the Center for the Implementation

of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) produced several policy documents and memos in education and health sectors for key government officials. In June 2013, the team presented its results in health sector to Congressman José Guccione. Similarly, in Armenia, Advanced Social Technologies (AST) uploaded the data produced under the programme in a reader-friendly manner on its website and Facebook page. As a result, a project responsible for assisting the State Water Sector Committee in developing the water tariff subsidization policy (funded by the World Bank) indicated its interest in using AST's findings in its study. In Ghana, the team at the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) was invited by the Budget Office of the Clerk to the Parliament to present its research findings on resource allocation gaps in the 2013-14 health sector budget to the Members of the Parliament. The team also presented its research outcome in the education sector to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Information. Through various seminars and meetings, Center for Economics and Development Studies, Padjadjaran University (CEDS) has maintained its strong partnership with government agencies in Indonesia. Members of the CEDS team are working closely with BAPPENAS and the Regional Planning Office of West Java. These are just few examples of the policy inroads made by partner teams in their countries. For details, please refer to Annex G1-Activity to Outcome Update and Annex G2-Policy Outcomes and Funding Opportunities Update.

### **3.2 For the entire duration of the programme (Since 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2008)**

During the five year period, the main activities include *inter alia*: a) Program Budgeting Analysis (PBA), b) Benefit Incidence Analysis (BIA), c) Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA), d) Policy Simulations (PS) exercises, e) capacity building in research and communications, f) strategic outreach activities and g) organisation of policy and research capacity building workshops and seminars to sensitize key stakeholders on pertinent issues in public expenditure accountability. Through sustained capacity building and dissemination efforts over the length of the programme, the project accomplished substantial success in strengthening institutional capabilities with public expenditure analysis and concerted engagement activities to support evidence-based policymaking in developing countries. A few results are as below (For details, refer to Annex 1-Final Achievement Rating Scale):

- Strengthened Capacities: 148 professional staff from the 14 partner institutions are working on budgets and public expenditure. Of these, 40 percent are female grantees. Most researchers are 35 years of age or below;
- Research Reports: 167 analytical reports have been produced on different aspects of public expenditure analysis in key social sectors of human development;
- Trainings: Partner teams have trained 614 legislators (parliamentarian), ombudsmen and journalists on Public Expenditure Management (PEM) and accountability during the course of the project. In total, 148 seminars and trainings have been held. Eight partners have hosted training workshops for elected representatives or media persons; and;
- Knowledge Sharing: Partners have shared templates for analysis and research results with 390 think tanks, research institutions and civil society organisations working on public expenditure accountability issues in 14 developing countries.

Over the years, the project achieved a varied range of impact on the policy arena. In Uganda, for instance, the Ministry of Health recently pronounced the allocation of UGX 188 Billion (approximately US\$ 75 Million) for a new nationwide programme to spray households for the control of malaria. The Ministry's decision is in-line with the analysis undertaken by Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) as part of the GDN-GTF programme which highlights that indoor residual spraying is more cost-effective than insecticide treated nets, especially for the control of malaria among children aged 5 years or less. For more information and examples, please refer to section 4.3-Programme results and impact, Annex 5-Most Significant Results Analyses and Annex G2-Policy Outcomes and Funding Opportunities Update.

## 4. Key Findings

### 4.1 Management's response to the final evaluation

In compliance with the programme's requirements, following the guidelines provided by DFID, an independent Final Evaluation was undertaken by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago (NORC) from March 2013 to January 2014. The Evaluation provided an independent assessment of the project's performance, achievements and impact, including a comprehensive assessment of the Value for Money (VfM). GDN is pleased with the final evaluation and commends NORC for an extensive and useful report. While the management of the project agrees with many of the conclusions and recommendations, there are some areas in which our interpretation and take-away is different, as indicated below:

Final Evaluation Conclusions	Management Response
<p><b>1. Relevance:</b> Project is relevant to increasing voice, accountability, and responsiveness. The countries targeted are ones in which voice and accountability were limited yet there was enough space for civil society to operate and constructively engage with the government to increase voice, accountability, and responsiveness. The project was also aligned with national or local government priorities. All partner organisations, except for two, considered government priorities in the selection of specific sector topics.</p>	<p>The project considered the social, economic and political contexts in each participating country at the start of the programme. Countries with extremely limited space for voice and accountability were not selected. Contexts were revisited at the time of the mid-term. The PMT also made attempts to deepen understanding of specific country priorities within the three project sectors and guide the analysis undertaken by the local partner organisations.</p>
<p><b>2. Impact:</b></p> <p><i>Quality of research:</i> On average the quality of reports produced by partner organisations increased by seven percentage points over the project period. Notably, the first reports produced by the project were on average of lower quality than non-project reports but by project end the project-produced reports were on average of higher quality than non-project reports, suggesting that partner organisations at first struggled with the analysis and writing of project-proscribed reports but by project end had greatly improved.</p> <p><i>Communications effectiveness:</i> There was an increase in the policy community's contact with and awareness of partner organisations. In addition, the policy community's perception of partner organisation publications improved over the course of the project, particularly regarding how interesting and informative they were and their timeliness. For those that attended the partner organisations' events, the content and organisation of events were perceived to improve greatly over the course of the project by the majority of respondents. Despite these positive outcomes, there is room for improvement. A few partner organisations</p>	<p>In the spirit of capacity building, considerable emphasis was placed on helping organizations produce quality research which is useful for policy makers. The reports produced by the partners were subject to a quality review that assessed the rigour of evidence proposed. Building capacities in new methodologies does pose challenges to the timely translation of analysis for policymaking, but has long term sustainability advantages. Technical mentoring, peer reviews and support from PMT have been useful in ensuring adherence by partners to the quality standards set for research outputs.</p> <p>The project developed a comprehensive and dedicated communications strategy, which was employed by the partner teams to effectively disseminate research findings to targeted audiences and decision-makers in a timely manner. This is evident from the final evaluation where the policy community has reported an improvement in the extent to which findings were found useful and informative. Nevertheless, the project</p>

<p>mentioned limits in communication and dissemination skills and constructive engagement with the policy community that affected their ability to fully achieve their objectives regarding changing policy.</p> <p><i>Policy communities' use of evidence to inform policymaking:</i> There is no significant change in the use of research, data, and analysis to inform policymaking and not much change in sources of information consulted to inform policy discussions.</p> <p><i>Policy impact outcomes of individual partner organisations:</i> Policy community that had interacted with the project-produced research generally believed it contributed to policy changes, although to somewhat limited degree.</p>	<p>would have benefitted more from a communications strategy built-in from the start, working along with the strengths and weaknesses of each partner in research communications.</p> <p>It is difficult to directly attribute the use of evidence by decision-makers to a particular project or research, especially when assessed while the project is still running and the outreach efforts across the board are in their most intense phase. A slightly longer term horizon is useful for evaluating research uptake.</p>
<p><b>3. Economy:</b> An analysis of the allocation of funds across major areas of spending and unit costs found that expenditures were appropriate to the context.</p>	<p>GDN followed prudent financial practices which supported the VfM approach in expenditures related to the project.</p>
<p><b>4. Efficiency:</b></p> <p><i>Management and Coordination:</i> Overall, the project was well-managed and did not serve to hinder the attainment of objectives. Rather, partner organisations spoke of GDN's flexibility in adapting to their particular circumstances, their responsiveness to feedback obtained from partner organisations on project implementation, citing some changes the project made based on their recommendations. However, there were some management and communication challenges, particularly in negotiating responsibilities between GDN and R4D at the beginning of the project but these were handled by the project team, and by project end all viewed the project management quite favourably.</p> <p><i>Dissemination of skills and knowledge among partner organisation staff:</i> The project was focused on improving the capability of the partner organisation institution, rather than individual researchers, which required dissemination of the knowledge gained from those involved with the project to the rest of the institution. Substantial sharing of knowledge gained on research techniques is evident at nearly all partner organisations. Attrition of project staff at partner organisations did create significant challenges to attaining project efficiency.</p>	<p>The length of the project and the types of analysis have called for flexibility in the approach adopted and with working through issues on data availability, staff turnover, changes in policy priorities and providing technical feedback to partners, when necessary and upon request as well.</p> <p>The annual project communication plans developed by the partners have been useful in implementing effective dissemination techniques for different and varied audiences. Sessions on research communications, outreach products, etc. have provided much support to partners with sharing of research results.</p> <p>It is well-noted that inviting more than one additional member from each partner helped. In some cases, partners willingly covered costs for more team members to travel to workshops. These have helped keep costs in check, while the efficiency gains have been huge.</p>



<p><i>Were the risks properly identified and well managed:</i> GDN has paid close attention to possible risks that could be faced by the project; defining risks annually and taking risk mitigation measures. Starting with the project concept note that identified four potential risks, each annual report revisited possible risks and rated the likelihood and impact of the risk and provided a mitigation plan. One of the main risks was staff attrition at the partner organisations; GDN managed this by increasing the number of researchers they funded to attend each of the training workshops from one to three. To mitigate the risk of delays in deliverables, GDN added a full-time project associate dedicated to frequent communication with partners and keeping track of deliverables.</p>	
<p><b>5. Effectiveness:</b>  <i>Achievement of objectives:</i> There was significant progress towards building the capacity of partner organisations. The development of benchmarks for the quality of public spending was only partially attained and activities are not yet complete for the development of a Knowledge Portal containing comparable data from the participating countries. The project was also not as successful in creating a strong network of institutions; communication and sharing of experiences and analysis results among partner organisations outside of the global conferences could have been much more extensive.</p> <p><i>Programme Approach:</i> Majority of partners felt the project was mostly suited to their needs and the training workshops, mentoring programme, and peer-to-peer reviews were good mechanisms for building capacity although the execution of the mentoring programme faces some mixed reviews.</p>	<p>Although, the idea of knowledge products were shared and discussed with partners extensively, these could be produced only with sufficient inputs from the teams in terms of knowledge, information, data and documenting their experience. Therefore, such activities could only be undertaken after partners completed their research and outreach activities. Four Knowledge Products, including a data portal are in their final stages of production. GDN supported and encouraged the partners to network and communicate with organisations within their countries as per the objectives of the project as well as with each other, during and outside of the regional and global workshops. Cross-country pairing was done in a few cases, but not often. Many of the researchers in the project also had the chance to participate in the GDN Annual Conference and network with hundreds of peers from around the world. The online platform and other virtual mechanisms for maintain the momentum and interaction among them as well as sharing of experiences.</p> <p>Regular and frequent feedback from partners helped tailor the technical assistance and support to address their individual and group needs in a timely manner. There was some turnover in the mentors that attended the workshops, though overall the teams had the same mentors assigned for the three sectors.</p>

<p><b>6. Equity:</b> One of the objectives of their research was to conduct a BIA and determine whether vulnerable groups were benefitting equally from government programmes. In addition, some of the specific topics chosen by partner organisations for their CEA and PS target improving services for vulnerable populations. While it is difficult, not to mention too early, to conclude whether these analyses had a direct impact on disadvantaged groups, some initial impact on policies were reported.</p>	<p>This emerging impact is evident from the MSRs (Annex 5). A potential follow-up of the project, one-to-two years after completion, may help capture more results based on effective dissemination of evidence on PEM in the 14 countries.</p>
<p><b>7. Value for Money:</b> The project represents value for money, especially with respect to economy and efficiency, and to a limited extent, effectiveness. In the evaluator’s opinion, the benefits have outweighed the costs. With respect to effectiveness, shortcomings of the project were a lack of focus and support to partner organisations on communication and dissemination of their results from the beginning of the project and sustained engagement with the policy community from project inception to ensure the uptake and direct use of research results in policy.</p>	<p>The PMT recognises that the project should have had a communications strategy from the start of the programme to ensure a long-term dissemination plan aligned with policy priorities and timely inputs into the budget processes.</p>
<p><b>8. Sustainability:</b> There is evidence that partner organisations have acquired sufficient skill levels in public expenditure analysis and dissemination of results to continue this type of research without the project technical support. Retention of the staff with these skills by partner organisations is a key issue for sustainability. Attrition during the project was high, yet partner organisations have managed to improve their capabilities.</p>	<p>The selection of partners paid attention to organisations’ mandate in engaging in governance and accountability studies in their countries. The evaluation reports have indicate the focus of the organisations have not moved far and it is the PMT’s expectation that the partners will continue the work beyond the project, eventually becoming the ‘go-to’ organisations in their countries.</p>
<p><b>9. Replicability:</b> The programme can and should be replicated if all the innovative aspects of the project are maintained, continuous support and feedback is provided to participants for the analytic work, the five-year project duration is maintained since it takes significant time to master the analysis techniques and disseminate results.</p>	<p>Some partners conducted extensions of their analysis while others extended the analysis to different sectors. Funding for scaling-up the project will be the determining factor.</p>
<p><b>10. Innovation:</b> What is innovative about the project is that it employs the following five elements together effectively: a solid conceptual framework supported by rigorous empirical evidence, recruitment of organisations with a clear interest in the approach, a highly structured “learning by doing” approach wherein the techniques learned are immediately applied, using a “constructive engagement” approach to effectively communicate results to policymakers, and a</p>	<p>The key ingredient of the project has been in the mix of the five elements. The length of the project duration has certainly helped in the learning-by-doing approach, and in providing the hand-holding required through technical assistance.</p>

peer review and learning element.	
<b>Final Evaluation Recommendations</b>	<b>Management Response</b>
<p><b>1. Have a less complex project:</b> The project in its current design is very ambitious in its scale and scope - 14 partner organisations across the world, 3 sectors, and 4 technical policy analysis tools. While the tools are important and have a natural progression in developing skills, culminating in examining policy alternatives via simulations it may be easier and more effective to focus on just 1 or 2 sectors. In addition, the project hoped to use several mechanisms such as the Steering Committee and Regional Hubs, and establish/institutionalize new structures such as a strong network of institutions and knowledge management material. Of the four key outcomes listed for the project, the first building capacity has definitely been achieved and change in policy to some extent. However, benchmarking was difficult due to different country contexts and focus of research; and there was insufficient time and focus on establishing a strong network of institutions.</p>	<p>Disagree. The analytical tools employed and shared under the CN-164 programme built on each other and increased gradually in the level of complexity. Partner organisations were imparted extensive training on the analytical tools and the PMT rigorously monitored progress. Additionally, most of the selected partner organisations had previous experience in either public expenditures or similar analysis. It is important to note here that turnover in staff at the partner organisation level posed significant problems. However, the PMT overcame this through repeated technical workshops, bringing three members from the partner teams to events and trainings, tailored support and hand-holding by technical experts and peers etc. This recommendation embeds comments on the research design and analytical tools used with observations on implementation and management. It would be more effective to separate these.</p>
<p><b>2. More flexible programme design:</b> The project was prescriptive in the sectors and methodology that each partner organisation needed to work on and build skills in. While this made training and peer learning easier to manage, it constrained the partner organisations from doing research in areas that were valuable for their own research agenda or country priorities.</p>	<p>This runs counter to the recommendation above – a more flexible programme design would have naturally also resulted in an even more complex project, with less opportunity for cross-learning and more need for tailoring support. Country priorities were introduced in the second year of implementation (under the CEA exercise) and in the latter part of the programme (when research teams selected their own topics for the PS based on the respective countries' priorities). The three sectors were selected for their high significance in development and share in public expenditures.</p>
<p><b>3. Engage the policy community since the beginning of the project:</b> Finding a champion in the policy community who is vested in the research or a key client for the research will increase its use and culminate in policy changes. In many countries frequent transfers of senior government officials creates challenges, but working with department officials from the beginning – both technical and</p>	<p>Agree, even though it is difficult to keep policy actors engaged for long due to electoral cycles, turnover in office etc. Some of the partners, especially the more advocacy oriented ones and the ones linked to policy debates, involved the policy community from the start or very early on, such as AST in Armenia, Center for Research and Communication</p>

<p>management may help to maintain interest in and use of the research.</p>	<p>(CRC) in Philippines and CEDS in Indonesia. It has been noted that it could be done more systematically.</p>
<p><b>4. Engage technical advisors from the beginning and maintain continuity:</b> It is important to have continuity in technical advisors and have them be on the same page with respect to the rigor of research, sensitivity to the cultural context, and availability of data. Given the scale and scope of the project, having 3 main TAs was insufficient, and getting shorter-term TAs up to speed on program objectives and status of the various partners was difficult.</p>	<p>The TAs have remained the same across the programme, though the PMT formally engaged them half way through the project. Country or region specific mentors could have been engaged for sensitivity to cultural context. The PMT tried to introduce this at a point in the project, however, there was very little uptake by the partner teams. The difficulty was with the workshops – some of the TAs could not travel and attend in person, either for medical reasons or because the project could not cover business class (due to VfM), so this meant that the PMT had to find other resource persons for some workshops.</p>
<p><b>5. Include a communications and dissemination focus from project start up:</b> This was added to the project only mid-way. Outreach and sharing research results from the use of each tool-PBA, BIA, CEA and PS with the policy community could have created interest in the research and increased its use in making policy changes.</p>	<p>Fully agree.</p>
<p><b>6. Explore pairing or partnering organisations from inception:</b> Peer-learning was considered by most to be very valuable, perhaps partnering two countries in a region to work together could have created synergies and a natural competition</p>	<p>Peer-learning was done through the regional and global workshops. Beyond this there was some pairing of organisations dealing with the same policy questions or the same methodological challenges. For example, the partner from Nigeria (CSEA) worked closely with the team from Ghana (ISODEC) to help strengthen their research results in the PS exercise.</p>
<p><b>7. Ensure there are sufficient technical and management staff for project implementation:</b> Both the technical (R4D) and management (GDN) side required additional staff than originally envisioned to implement the project. Both sides underestimated the time and resources needed to lead a project with this scale and scope, and rectified this omission after the first year or so. Assigning staff to work with different organisations to maintain continuity and understand their challenges is also important.</p>	<p>The PMT engaged technical and management staff on both sides, although this could have been further strengthened. In the last and most intense phase of the project, the PMT assigned personnel to particular organisations work with teams more closely, strengthening the overall technical and management leadership to ensure consistency and deepening understanding of the status and challenges faced by the partner teams.</p>
<p><b>8. Combine technical tasks and management tasks as being the responsibility of one organisation:</b> Having two separate organisations in charge of</p>	<p>Disagree. The PMT capitalised on the comparative advantages of the two organisations, GDN and the Results for Development Institute (R4D), therefore,</p>

<p>decision making - one for management and the second for technical content creates time-lags in resolving issues that include a program design change.</p>	<p>enhancing the value that one organisation could have brought to the table and deliver. Communication was open and regular, and decisions taken jointly. If there were ever time lags, they had to do with workloads or with trying to identify the right resource persons, and not with the split responsibility of decision-making between the two organisations.</p>
<p><b>9. Include additional resources for on-site visits to partner organisations as part of the monitoring and evaluation:</b> Telephones and Skype are effective only up to a point. The quality of calls was not always good and caused frustrations. On-site visits were done for a few partners and considered very helpful.</p>	<p>Yes, although it will be very expensive.</p>
<p><b>10. Invest more resources in developing a more user-friendly webspace dedicated to encouraging sharing of information among partner organisations:</b> There was a lack of knowledge among partner organisations regarding others' research topics and analysis methodologies prior to the workshops. Development of a platform that allows the partner organisation to very quickly understand the topics and analysis methodologies being used by the other partner organisations during the development of reports would facilitate greater peer-learning.</p>	<p>Agree fully. Reports were available, although there was very little cross-reading outside of workshops. The features of the webspace could have been enhanced and this is one of the important take-aways for the PMT managing a programme of this magnitude. Depending on the availability of resources, PMT may look at developing a platform for interaction among this epistemic community beyond the life of the programme, through a knowledge sharing platform.</p>

#### **4.2 Programme management**

During the course of its implementation, the CN-164 project witnessed minimal changes at the programme management level. The project was conceptualized and launched (October 2008) under the leadership of Gobind Nankani (the then President of GDN), with technical support from R4D. Throughout its execution, a team at GDN oversaw all financial aspects of the project. An external agency, NORC, was engaged to undertake the independent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the programme from the inception. Depending on the progress made by the project and the feedback received on the annual reports, appropriate adjustments were made to the M&E schedule and programme Logframe (For details regarding the approved changes made to the programme Logframe, please refer to Annex 2-Final Logical Framework).

In its initial months, the project was managed by two members from the GDN team (Ramona Angelescu Naqvi and Savi Mull) and two members from the R4D team (Courtney Tolmie and Courtney Heck). In 2009-2010, GDN underwent certain changes at the leadership level. Gerardo della Paolera joined GDN as its President in August 2009. Under his leadership, GDN embarked on a strategic planning exercise. Raman Abrol joined GDN as the Chief Finance and Administrative Officer, heading the project's financial management team. While the personnel responsible for the day-to-day operations remained the same, owing to the demanding nature of the programme, Pooja Sarin joined the PMT as a Program Associate at GDN, providing support with partner communications, project timelines and deliverables, financial monitoring and management, and routine coordination with stakeholders. At R4D,

Nicholas Burnett (Managing Director, R4D) joined the PMT, and in his role provided strategic guidance to the project in general, and the analysis in the education sector in particular.

In early 2012, Pierre Jacquet commenced office as GDN's new President. Previously, Pierre Jacquet was the Chief Economist of the French Development Agency, the Chairman of the Department of Economics and Finance, and Professor of Economics at the Ecole des Ponts – ParisTech. Savi Mull assumed the role of Coordinator, M&E at GDN in late 2011, becoming GDN's liaison with NORC. Savi was succeeded by Kaushik Ganguly, who joined the PMT as a Program Officer. Having over five years of experience in budgets and public expenditure related issues, Kaushik played a crucial role in supporting the strengthening of country-level analysis. To provide additional guidance and support to the partners at the final stages of the programme, Shubha Jayaram (Program Officer, R4D), and Mark Roland (Program Officer, R4D), were also engaged by the PMT. Having expertise in the education and health sectors respectively, Shubha and Mark provided tailored support to partner teams.

**Technical Support:** Apart from the PMT, the project involved a six-member Steering Committee comprising of representatives from the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, Thailand Development Research Institute and University of Ghana. The Committee provided strategic direction and technical support for the overall management of the project. In 2010, the project appointed sectoral experts as TAs to provide additional hands-on mentoring and support to partner teams. The panel included Lyn Squire, consultant, member of the project's Steering Committee and expert in the education sector; Anil Deolalikar, Professor of Economics and Associate Dean of Social Sciences at the University of California Riverside, and expert in the health sector; and Dale Whittington, Professor at the University of North Carolina and expert in the water sector. Charles Griffin, consultant, assumed the role of the Lead Technical Advisor. Apart from technical training and individual mentoring, the TAs provided detailed feedback on the research methodologies and outputs under the project.

In early 2011, the project's Mid-Term Review brought to the fore the need for tailored communications strategy for the remainder of the programme. In partnership with Commsconsult UK, Mendizabal Ltd and GNet, the PMT formulated and implemented a research communications training strategy to further build the capacities of the partners to effectively engage with stakeholders. Additionally, with the support of the communications experts, partners developed their own country-level strategies. They received training on the use of mediums such as policy briefs, working papers, newspaper and journal articles, press releases, social media, budget guides and specialised debates to impact public opinion and engage with key stakeholders such as policymakers and the media. Building on these efforts, GDN provided partners with vital platforms to disseminate their research results at various national and international forums and conferences all through the project. Short documentaries were also produced to highlight the project's human impact in select country. These are available on GDN's YouTube channel and website ([www.qdn.int](http://www.qdn.int)).

**Implementing Teams:** The project began with a presence in 4 countries (India, Ghana, Kenya and Peru). Through an open call for proposals, in late March 2009 the PMT selected additional partner institutions from 11 countries (Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Tanzania and Uganda). The partners constituted of think tanks and academic and policy research institutions operating independently that were either relatively new or well established with technical capacity to undertake rigorous analysis of public expenditure priorities. The countries from which the partners were selected were ranked politically free or partially free by the Freedom House index. The coverage across the developing world, mixing countries with different income levels, geographic size, institutional capabilities, and governance systems encouraged learning across the participating organisations. GDN entered into contracts with all 15 partners that ran through till the end of the project (October 2013). However, for better

programme and financial monitoring, all partners submitted annual budgets and work plans for each financial year (April to March every year). In 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, additional grants were awarded to select partners on merit bases to undertake extensive dissemination activities and relevant extensions to their analysis. These included Town Hall Meetings in Armenia, 'Knowledge Bits' on social media in Guatemala, 'Eye on the Budget' contest for students in Peru and budget guides in Bangladesh, Nigeria and Uganda.

As the project was multi-year, many partner teams witnessed a certain degree of change in their team compositions. Over the course of the programme, teams from India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru and Uganda saw changes at the leadership level. Owing to high staff turnover due to career advancements and moves to pursue higher studies, teams from Ghana, India, Nigeria and Uganda underwent changes within their primary research teams. These changes did not affect the quality of outputs produced or the ability to meet deadlines, as partners engaged personnel with robust research backgrounds. Similarly, many partners (from Argentina, Bangladesh, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru and Uganda) expanded their teams to include sector-specific researchers or staff with communications skills. The PMT worked closely with all teams, providing additional needs-based technical assistance and rigorously monitored their progress. Apart from annual global technical training workshops, regular regional workshops were organised each year on topics that required additional tailored individual training. To stay up-to-date with partner progress and to discuss relevant technical and management related matters, the PMT also maintained regular communications with teams (through teleconference, Skype, Webex and e-mails), along with individual meetings at workshops. The partner from the Philippines (CRC) received individual on-ground technical guidance and support from the Health sector TA. Extending the project's peer-learning component, the partner from Nigeria (CSEA) worked closely with the team from Ghana (ISODEC) to help strengthen their research results.

Despite the efforts made by the PMT and TAs (through rigorous tailored training, technical workshops, individual mentoring, written and verbal feedback) to improve the quality of research undertaken by the partner from Tanzania (Economic and Social Research Foundation-ESRF), their progress made was below par and continuously deteriorating. As approved by the GDN Board of Directors, and as communicated to DFID, the team's inability to improve the quality of the analysis and to meet timely deadlines resulted in the termination of their grant in February 2012. The PMT decided not to bring any replacement for the remainder of the project. Furthermore, regardless of the PMT's attempts at providing additional technical support (through a local expert) to the partner from Kenya (Institute of Economic Affairs-IEA), the team's research with regard to the education and water sectors was delayed. This resulted in limited number of outputs received, and therefore, reduced grant given to the team.

#### **4.3 Programme results and impact**

With the primary goal of strengthening institutional capacities, the project supported 14 partner organisations to pioneer a process of evidence-informed policy dialogue for effective and efficient public spending programmes in their countries. The overarching objective of the project was the deepening of policy processes at the government levels in the 14 developing countries through capacity creations within the selected policy research organisation to undertake rigorous research in public expenditure analysis. Over the years, the programme supported the formation of two-way channels of influence or interface between the 14 partner organisations and the policy-making community.

The project's theory of change suggests that by building partner capacities in providing timely evidence of efficiency, equity and costs of public spending, the project will improve public service delivery, improving the life conditions of the citizens from the selected 14 countries. Through applying a set of standard methodologies, that included PBA, BIA, CEA and PS, to

examine efficiency and equity implications of public expenditures in the education, health and water sectors, the project attempted to demonstrate areas where service delivery reforms could occur, leveraging efficiency gains to induce cost savings and/or better outcomes. Based on the policy recommendations that emerged from the analysis, the partner teams engaged with the concerned government departments and ministries in their countries to incorporate their research findings in key policy documents or deliberation processes. The research results also allowed further capacity building to raise awareness amongst relevant stakeholders. During the course of the programme, several key results, in terms of policy influence, strategic networking and collaborations emerged (For more information, please refer to Annex G2- Policy Outcomes and Funding Opportunities Update). Four of these results have been analysed in detail as part of the MSR exercise (Annex 5-Most Significant Results Analyses).

#### **4.3.1 Armenia**

**Change in Policy:** In Armenia, AST shared its research results from the BIA in the education sector with Ministry of Education and Science (MES). The MES, in turn, incorporated the findings into a new strategy for more equitable higher education spending. The ultimate beneficiaries of the new strategy will be students from the poorest income quintiles (poorest 20 percent of the population).

AST's BIA study revealed that, while the poorest income quintile received only 8 percent of government subsidies in higher education, the richest income quintile cornered around 39 percent. Such regressive distribution is largely due to the lack of efficient targeting mechanisms in the policy space and the absence of enabling factors at the high school level that prevent students from poorer income quintiles to access higher education. The Ministry accepted the findings from the study and adopted these into its Education Strategy namely '2011-2015 State Program on Education Development' which was adopted as a law (Law # 246) on 19 July, 2011. Although, AST's research findings may have contributed to a significant policy pronouncement, further policy changes are yet to take shape in correcting the 'misbalance' in subsidies for higher education. In a policy statement by the President during his 2013 February election campaign, the team has welcomed the statement that "The factor of being poor will be eliminated in the process of access to high education in Armenia". This resonates closely with the team's research findings.

**Potential Beneficiaries:** One of the key assumptions of the analysis, borne out to be true from the household survey, is that high school level programme services (despite being free and open access to all) play a deterministic role in the entry into the higher education system, particularly for students from poorer income quintiles. The policy reform is aimed to benefit the youth from poorer income quintiles (bottom 20 percent) who do not have access to higher education either due to structural constraints at the high school level or lack of finances.

**Experience of Implementation:** Within the overall framework of the project's theory of change, the underlying concept employed by AST was that public expenditure analysis, aimed at policy changes in public subsidies for higher education, and targeted communication of findings would bring about a policy change, allowing students from poorer income groups to aspire for higher studies. Based on the policy recommendations from the PEM analysis, the Ministry brought out a policy document, incorporating AST's findings, to bring about more equitable spending in higher education.

**Approaches, methods and tools used:**

- Collection of data and information through Household surveys (1600 households);
- Collection of budget data, unit cost data and perceptions from line ministries;
- Conducting BIA for the higher education sector through rigorously identifying income quintiles, user cost and unit subsidies in service delivery;



- Sharing the results from the analytical study with high ranking government officials, including the Education Project Implementation Unit, MES and Deputy Ministers; and;
- Employment of formal and informal channels to communicate research findings.

Useful Lessons: In this process of strategic policy outreach, internal and external factors played a significant role in ensuring success. Strict quality control of the data collected and the rigour of the analysis proved to be a *sine qua non* for policy uptake. A nationally representative sample of the household survey was undertaken that lent credence to the evidence. Timeliness in the production of research results and matching these with key policy events proved to be essential in drawing the attention of key policymakers. The key factor in the success of the outreach effort was that the MES itself was in the process of drawing-up a new strategy and AST's findings matched its policy agenda.

#### **4.3.2 Nigeria**

Change in Policy Practice: In Nigeria, CSEA undertook constructive engagement with the Budget Office of the Federation to support the move toward a Performance Based Budgeting system (PBBS), shifting from inputs to outcomes.

At the federal level, the move towards PBBS had started in Nigeria in 2010. CSEA maintained a continuous engagement with policy officials, media representatives, civil society and other advocacy groups to further this move. However, even if this shift towards PBBS and greater transparency is well-recognised in Nigeria, it has not yet been institutionalised. The change, however, has resulted in greater transparency in revenue allocation, with government functionaries making additional information on budgets now available.

Potential Beneficiaries: The direct beneficiaries of this policy change are the different levels of government in Nigeria, as this shift can improve allocative efficiency of the public spending programmes. Other beneficiaries include legislators, researchers and the civil society who are engaged in public expenditure analysis in the country. Indirect beneficiaries are the general population, who will benefit from better transparency, accountability and better public service delivery.

Experience of Implementation: The PBA undertaken by CSEA led to a better understanding of the budget priorities by the organisation. The team faced considerable challenges in undertaking the analysis and hence, the need for greater transparency was one of their key policy demands. Nigeria has an opaque system where budget and finance-related information are often restricted to top government officials and regarded as sensitive, making it difficult to examine and analyse the impact of social spending in the budget. The reluctance to divulge the much-needed data led to delays in the budget analysis, as efforts to retrieve any information on the actual budget expenditure required a great deal of patience and time for data requests to be processed. CSEA has shared the results and policy implications derived from the research with wider audiences to raise public awareness in Nigeria.

Approach, Methods and Tools used:

- Collection of data and information on government spending programmes, particularly in the education, health and water sectors. Data collected include budget data, unit cost data and perceptions from line ministries and the federal budget office in Nigeria;
- Conducting PBA and meticulous classifying spending categories for all three sectors through the identification of all line items contributing to expenditure in the selected sectors, user cost and unit subsidies in service delivery;
- Sharing of research results with high ranking government officials, including the Director-General of the Budget Office of the Federation, Nigeria;
- Employing formal channels of research communication, including presentations to ministry officials, workshop on budgets and policy briefs; and;
- Targeted meetings with the Budget Office of the Federation throughout the research.

Useful Lessons: The CSEA team faced considerable challenges in procuring requisite budgetary data to undertake PBA. The team partially overcame this through repeated interactions with the officials of the Budget Office of the Federation, which helped in creating initial buy-ins on the research undertaken by the partner, thereby providing an immediate audience amongst the policy community. Therefore, early communication of the research agenda may not just help in facilitating research but also support the creation of stakeholder awareness on possible research findings.

### **4.3.3 Ghana**

**Strategic Collaboration:** In Ghana, ISODEC has been successful in supporting the formation of a Budget Media Monitoring Network (BMMN) to track the implementation of pro-poor activities in the budget.

ISODEC has, over the years, recognised the impact of media in effecting change in policy and giving voice to the citizenry. Based on this understanding, a BMMN was established in 2011 with the mandate to monitor and evaluate budget implementations to ensure transparency, accountability and effective utilisation of state resources. The BMMN was founded to serve as a platform through which the media could play a central role in collaborating with civil society organisations in monitoring and evaluating the national budget, for realising national policy objectives and ensuring that the public is able to track the flow and utilization of national resources. In the course of this engagement, the BMMN engaged with stakeholders in parliament, ministries, departments and agencies, especially those that work in the education, health and water sectors.

**Potential Beneficiaries:** The BMMN was established to help equip media and civil society to track budget allocations and foster openness of the policymaking community to credible and evidence-driven research. A more open and accountable policy discourse with active inclusion of citizen voices through media channels will improve the effectiveness of public expenditure and service delivery in a nascent democracy like Ghana.

**Experience of Implementation:** The members involved with the BMMN are drawn from the print media, television and radio channels along with civil society groups. In establishing the network, ISODEC has also leveraged its partnership with UNICEF. The team is regularly sharing its research findings from the GDN-GTF programme with the Network and other stakeholder groups through dissemination workshops. The Network members are playing an instrumental role in raising public awareness through publishing the research results provided by ISODEC. Apart from raising public awareness, the Network has had limited success in bringing about positive policy changes and these include increasing the coverage of capitation grant and school feeding programme in Ghana; issues studied by ISODEC under the guidance of GDN-GTF programme. However, such policy changes are difficult to attribute to the work of the Network. Moreover, implementation of any policy change in Ghana is quite slow and there is a need for constant mobilization and engagement with policymakers to effect the necessary changes.

**Approach, Methods and Tools used:**

- Collection of budget data, unit cost data, unit subsidies in education, health and water sectors, and perceptions from key policymakers in ministries;
- Conducting PBA through identify all administrative sources of spending for each of the three sectors, BIA through identifying income quintiles, user cost and unit subsidies in service delivery;
- Beyond the PBA, primary data was collected from all 10 regional capitals in the country. In addition to the 10 regional capitals, one rural district was randomly selected from each of the ecological zones based on Ghana Living Standard Survey categorisation. A total of 13 districts were involved in the study;

- Key informant interviews were held with public officials at the national, regional, local and facility levels;
- Packaging of research findings was done in user-friendly formats and products to equip the civil society and media for public engagements;
- One-on-one engagement took place with key drivers of change to sensitise them on the research findings so as to enable them to use findings to bring policy issues to the center of public debates; and;
- Sensitisation of media and civil society on important policy issues and research results.

Useful Lessons: In a young democracy like Ghana, there are ample policy spaces for think tanks, civil society organisations and other citizens groups to engage in constructive dialogues with the policy community and media groups. However, in a young democracy such spaces can provide fleeting windows of opportunity to engineer positive policy changes, although developmental challenges facing such countries are long standing. Therefore, sensitising and engaging with media groups could be a useful ploy to reach out to large number of stakeholders within policy circles and citizens groups to raise timely political awareness.

#### **4.3.4 Guatemala**

Changes in policy, legislation and budgets: In Guatemala, the Government has institutionalised the Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) programme by creating a new Ministry (Social Development Ministry). Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala (FUNDESA) is now working with the Ministry to support a private-public alliance (Program de Apoyo al Ejecutivo) to improve the way the programme is implemented and evaluated.

One of the key recommendations by FUNDESA, arising out of its research under the GDN-GTF project, included the formation of a dedicated ministry to co-ordinate and regulate all social programmes in the country. This suggestion resonated with key stakeholders and the new Government of Guatemala. As a result, a Social Development Ministry has been created within a short duration (24 days) of the formation of the new government. The Ministry's mandate is to oversee the administration of all social programmes, ensuring the sustainability of the national system of information for the beneficiaries of social programmes.

Potential Beneficiaries: 900,000 families who are potential beneficiaries of the CCTs programme will be benefitted directly through the enhanced implementation of CCTs. Apart from direct beneficiaries, the Government of Guatemala will benefit from cost savings due to the removal of inefficiencies by the institutionalisation and better oversight of the programme.

Experience of Implementation: Given that the Government of Guatemala was willing to continue with the CCTs despite its low cost-effectiveness, FUNDESA recommended the Ministry should undertake key reform measures that could lead to cost savings. The results were presented in an easy-to-understand manner. Additionally, even though the initial results demonstrated the programme was not cost-effective, because of the government's decision to continue with its implementation FUNDESA's work was guided towards improving its execution. FUNDESA also maintained a channel of communication with the Transparency Commission in the Congress of Guatemala and worked with the Commission Presidents to contribute to a discussion on a law that created the Ministry of Social Development.

Approach, Methods and Tools used:

- CEA of the CCTs programme with respect to other existing initiatives in the sector;
- With the new government in 2011, the results of the analytical studies were shared with high ranking government officials, including the present Minister of Social Development;
- Both formal and informal channels were employed to communicate research findings. Formal channels included, presentations given to ministry officials, workshops on

budgets and the effectiveness of CCTs, media releases and policy brief on research findings (in English and Spanish), excel databases;

- Informal channels include pre-election meetings with political parties on important development issues, post-election outreach to the technical teams of political parties and the political executive through the programme 'Apoyo Técnico al Ejecutivo'; and;
- Social Media was extensively used with short Knowledge Bits (for example <http://fundesa.org.gt/blog/capsula-programa-de-transparencia-en-el-gasto-publico-para-la-inversion-social/>).

Useful Lessons: FUNDESA leveraged the 2011 elections to its advantage, in addition to its lobbying efforts with political parties to bring a positive change in the way social development programmes are managed in the country. This led to FUNDESA's continued involvement with the Government to monitor and improve the programme. In achieving its objectives, the team maintained high-level professional contacts with key policymakers. Even though there has been a change of guard at the Social Development Ministry in recent past, FUNDESA continues to provide support to the Ministry through its 'Programa de Apoyo al Ejecutivo'. FUNDESA approach reflects the opportunities in leveraging key political events, apart from the identification of a "champion" in the Minister of Social Development for continuous engagement on policy issues. For a more comprehensive analysis, please refer to Annex 5-Most Significant Results Analyses and Annex 6-Final Evaluation.

#### **4.4 Sustainability and value for money**

##### **4.4.1 Sustainability**

An assessment of the sustainability achieved by GDN and its partner organisations needs to be undertaken in the light of the primary objective of the programme. The key goal of the project has been institutionalisation of public expenditure analysis at the partner organisation level, establishing these organisations as credible resource centres on public expenditures in their respective countries. Accordingly, sustainability needs to be measured with respect to a) the extent to which the partners have extended their learning from the project to other areas, b) the extent to which partners have used knowledge generated from the project to deepen their work and c) the extent to which other organisations and stakeholders in the policy community have found the skill and knowledge developed by the partners to be useful. Anecdotal evidence on the various accomplishments in terms of extending partner expertise and services to other sectors or stakeholders, as well as undertaking strategic engagement, abound (For details, please refer to Annex G2-Policy Outcomes and Funding Opportunities Update). However, this evidence also needs to be adjudged within the organisational context of the partners.

Partners who are based in universities, such as the Research Center of the University of the Pacific (CIUP) in Peru, Center for Research and Communication (CRC) in Philippines, CEDS in Indonesia and EGAP in Mexico have actively incorporated the methodological skills and awareness on social sector policy issues into courses and theses work by students in their universities. These centres, with support from GDN-GTF and other sources, have also initiated different forms of competitions (example: Eye on the Budget by CIUP and video competition on developmental issues by CEDS) that seeks to foster wider participation by different actors outside the project's ambit, as well as lend a continuity to the knowledge process initiated beyond the duration of the programme. CEDS have also reached out to collectives of journalist and civil society organisations in their region to sensitise these bodies on key issues, results and techniques developed through the GDN-GTF project to foster better public expenditure accountability. Most importantly, the work undertaken by these partners have also evoked interest from other donors such as USAID and AusAID.

Most of the partners who are independent think-tanks, have extended their analysis in other sectors and have ratcheted up their efforts towards strategic engagement with other stakeholders including donor organisations, government agencies and other civil society groups to undertake research and advocacy in public expenditure management and analysis. The partner in India, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS), has not only supported the Government of Karnataka with policy formulations in the education and health sectors, but has also been engaged by other sub-national governments (Odisha) to provide consultation services. In addition, CBPS has received additional funding from several other sources (Oxfam India, UNICEF and McArthur Foundation) to carry out similar research. Similarly, Policy Research and Development (PRAD) in Nepal has partnered with the World Bank to implement training programmes for parliamentarians and key stakeholders to develop better understanding of budget processes. In Nigeria, the team from CSEA has been engaged by DFID, Nigeria to study pro-poor budgeting. The team is working with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Nigerian President on the M&E of a project linked to ministerial performance and efficient use of budgetary resources. Similarly, in Guatemala, FUNDESA has developed a national development strategy for the next 10 years involving social expenditure analysis. The initiative has received substantial funding support (to the tune of US\$ 10 million) from other sources. These initiatives will not only deepen the expertise of the partners in public expenditure analysis and evaluations but also maintain consistent visibility with government agencies, other organisations and donor agencies, lending to sustainable impact of the project.

The PMT, as a measure of providing support to the continuity of learning and knowledge processes from the project, is developing course modules, methodological notes, toolkits and open access data to support partner initiatives in the long run. For more in-depth and general discussion on the sustainability of the project, please refer to section 3.8 of the project's Final Evaluation Report (Annex 6).

#### **4.4.2 Value for Money**

GDN engaged an independent external evaluator to undertake an intense VfM exercise for the project. The exercise was undertaken with a clear view of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving project results. The exercise concluded that the project is mostly well balanced in economy and effort/focus on efficiency. With respect to effectiveness, it was realised, before the mid-term review, that there was a need for greater focus and support to partner organisation on communication and dissemination activities, else they would not see effective results. While some results have been achieved, more could have been done to set the stage at the start of the project. For detailed discussion on the VfM exercise, please refer to section 3.7 of the project's Final Evaluation Report (Annex 6).

#### **4.5 Innovation**

The project is unique and innovative in bringing together elements of capacity building in rigorous research and strategic communications. As the independent evaluators of the project have noted, the focus of the programme was squarely on evidence-based policymaking, given the expectation that if advocate-analysts bring solid empirical information to policymakers the chances of constructive engagement are much higher. Therefore, much emphasis was laid on developing project and partner communication strategies, as well as strengthening communication skills of individual researchers.

While the project possessed a solid conceptual framework in terms of methodology and sectoral issues, the partners had considerable freedom to choose sectoral issues for research that had maximum traction for the existing policy discourse in their respective countries. This ensured that the research from its conceptual stage was tuned in to policy priorities of the governments and other stakeholders. The partners also used innovative means of research communication to engage with key stakeholders during the course of the

project. While most partners used traditional means such as policy papers and policy briefs, they also used social media, use of Infographic, blogs, online simulators, essay and video contests, town hall meetings with citizen's groups and focused outreach with networks to widely disseminate their research results. The PMT, on its part, engaged external communication experts to help partner teams undertake stakeholder mappings and develop communication strategies within their country context. The PMT also supported policy dialogues in partner countries at regional levels to bring together policymakers and researchers to share results, challenges and best policy practices. For more comprehensive analysis of the innovative aspect of the project, please refer to section 4.1 of the project's Final Evaluation Report (Annex 6) and for examples of individual approaches by partners, please refer to Annexes G1-Activity to Outcome Update and Annex G2-Policy Outcomes and Funding Opportunities Update.

## **5. Recommendations**

### **5.1 Organisations implementing similar programmes**

Larger investment should be made to provide technical support to local partners, both on the analytical side and research communications as it can greatly enhance results. A dedicated and comprehensive communication strategy should be adopted from the start of the programme to help build and strengthen skills on effective engagement with key stakeholders. Country-level mentors, who have a deeper understanding of the local context, can help strengthen research outputs. Furthermore, integration of M&E from the inception can help customize support to meet the specific needs of a multi-year, multi-country project. The learning-by-doing and peer-learning approaches used during the GTF-GDN programme proved to be significantly effective to strengthen abilities. Such methods should be employed to build capacities, transfer technology and knowledge and, in turn, improve research results.

### **5.2 Civil society**

Civil society should stay the course, using evidence as the basis for policy and reform proposals. They should be very specific in the "ask" and in laying out the benefits and costs of both "action" and "non-action."

### **5.3 (UK Government) Department for International Development**

Trade-offs in outsourcing management of an important, large-scale project such as this one should be considered. For one, scope for direct intervention, steering mid-course and learning is limited. Also, reporting requirements, both financial and narrative should be streamlined and reduced. The reporting burden for this project was unparalleled by any other project or donor. Accountability and transparency aside, balance at some point shifted from allowing staff time to be devoted to implementation, reflection and cross-learning among grantees to mostly in favour of collating information from sub-grantees for donor reporting. In the initial years, workshops for cross-learning among grantees were helpful but then were discontinued. The programme's final evaluation should be commissioned three months after the conclusion of the project to ensure all activities and, at some level, emerging immediate outcomes are documented and covered. Alternative could be to commission a follow-up evaluation one-to-two years after the project is completed. Overall design of the M&E could have been more robust. Restrictive logframe did not allow for freedom in choosing additional indicators and therefore, did not capture the breadth of the project activities and results.

### **5.4 For other donors**

Investment should be increased for projects that bring research and advocacy together in pursuit of greater government accountability, responsiveness and more efficient spending, given better service delivery for the poor being the ultimate goal. Greater investment should also be made in capacity and skill building, both analytical and research communications, even though this is a harder, longer route to take.