



Big Development DataShift

Theory of Change

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION¹

Context

New technologies offer exciting new ways for citizens to generate and use data in democratic and creative ways. This citizen-generated data provides grounded, timely citizen perspectives that other forms of data are often unable to capture. It is also easier than ever before to aggregate this data, so that something produced for local use can have global relevance.

At the same time, in September 2015 world leaders will agree a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will guide the world's priorities and actions on sustainable development for at least the next decade. To better deliver and monitor the SDGs, a 'data revolution for sustainable development' has been called for, to leverage new sources of data, increase access to data and ultimately, support the policies and decisions that will lead to better outcomes for people and the planet.

This presents an unprecedented opportunity for citizens and their organisations to leverage technology and harness the power of data to identify their sustainable development priorities, monitor progress and hold governments to account on the commitments they make and the action they take.

The challenge is that while there are some great examples of citizens generating new data on important aspects of development, these initiatives remain scarce of mixed quality and sophistication, and cannot be compared within and across countries. Further, many civil society organisations do not have the capacity or confidence to use new technology to generate data, and use it in ways that can support their decision making and bolster their campaigns.

In addition, at the global policy level, while the role of national statistics and big data in driving the data revolution has gained considerable traction, less attention has been paid to the role that citizens and citizen-generated data could play in monitoring progress and supporting accountability on the SDGs and sustainable development more broadly.

¹ Please send comments to datashift@civicus.org or comment directly on the google doc here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12Bnrzh0f3iyN0PCnegpu36GJgNE3z4FmeEsffc1D96g/edit?usp=sharing>. We would love your feedback!

Objectives and Vision

The DataShift is a multi-stakeholder, demand-driven initiative that builds the capacity and confidence of civil society organisations to produce and use citizen-generated data to monitor development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change. Ultimately, our vision is a world where **people-powered accountability** drives progress on sustainable development. This includes Sustainable Development Goals and a data revolution with citizens and civil society at the core.

To meet these objectives, we need to work towards a number of outcomes. The DataShift seeks to:

- Increase the **coverage** of citizen-generated data initiatives across the world, particularly in the Global South, so that greater amounts of citizen-generated data are available.
- Enhance the **comparability** of citizen-generated data, so that it can be aggregated and compared within and across countries.
- Build the **credibility** of citizen-generated data, so that it is widely considered legitimate and reliable.
- Deploy citizen-generated data in civil society **campaigning**, so that the views of citizens inform the demands that civil society makes on governments and other decision makers.

To support these outcomes, that DataShift will work to:

- Increase the capacity of civil society organisations to **generate and use** citizen-generated data.
- Create opportunities for civil society organisations to **collaborate, experiment and innovate** with citizen-generated data.
- Support improvements in **harmonization and coordination** between citizen-generated data.
- Support better connections between **locally-driven, citizen-generated data initiatives** and **global policy processes and accountability frameworks**.

Actions

To achieve our objectives and support these changes, we work with civil society organisations to deliver five work streams.

1. **Global Knowledge Hub** that provides citizens and civil society organisations with online, user-friendly and accessible information and resources on producing and using data.
 - *Why? Information on different methodologies for citizen-generated data production and use is dispersed and therefore warrants the creation of a new hub to coherently bring it together.*
2. **DataShift Ambassadors** who build in-country capacity on citizen-generated data in DataShift pilot countries through technical support and multi-stakeholder collaboration.
 - *Why? Civil society organisations require technical support to build their capacity in citizen-generated data and will be able to collect and use it more effectively if they develop relationships and coalitions with other data and development actors.*
3. **Thematic Forums** on producing and using citizen-generated data to drive change on particular themes, enhance the comparability of citizen-generated data between and within countries and begin to harmonise shadow SDG reporting.
 - *Why? In-depth knowledge exchange and collaboration on particular themes or SDGs is necessary to share innovations in generating and using citizen-generated data. There is also a*

need identify challenges and test solutions for harmonizing and comparing citizen-generated data.

4. A **DataShift Fund** which enables donors and experts to support innovation in citizen-generated data by providing financial, human and technical resources.
 - *Why? More resources are needed to support civil society organisations build their capacity on the production and use of citizen-generated data.*
5. A **DataShift Dashboard** that uses citizen-generated data to provide shadow monitoring of the SDGs.
 - *Why? Citizen-generated data has the potential to be a powerful, alternative source of data on development progress that can support the accountability and campaigning efforts of civil society and the decision making of governments.*

Assumptions and Risks

The DataShift has been designed based on a set of assumptions about the relationship between data, citizens, accountability and transformative change. We also know that a number of risks could impeded our capacity to contribute to the changes we want to see.

The value of citizen-generated data

- *Assumptions:* Citizen-generated data is a valuable complement to official sources of data for monitoring development progress because it is timely, nuanced, fills data gaps and empowers citizens and their organisations to hold decision-makers to account because of their direct involvement in producing and curating the data.
- *Risks:* Inadequate coverage of citizen-generated data initiatives and/or highly-contextualised nature of citizen-generated data initiatives undermines comparability, harmonization and aggregation efforts and ultimately, its value in global sustainable development efforts, including SDG monitoring.

The demand for citizen-generated data

- *Assumptions:* There is a demand from civil society organisations to improve the way they produce and use citizen-generated data in their programming, advocacy and accountability efforts. Governments and key decision makers can be convinced of the value of citizen-generated data, are open to using it to inform their decision making and are looking to invest in it.
- *Risks:* Civil society organisations do not have the capacity, infrastructure (including ICT) or civic space to meaningfully benefit from the DataShift. Citizen-generated data is sidelined, or at worst, ignored in the SDG monitoring and resourcing frameworks, with big data and official statistics being prioritized. The bottom-up, demand-driven approach of the DataShift cannot move quickly enough to keep up with global policy and decision making processes.

The demand for collaboration and learning

- *Assumptions:* There is an openness to brokering relationships and collaboration between organisations with a strong track record in citizen-generated data with organisations that want to learn how to more effectively use citizen-generated data in their advocacy and programming.
- *Risks:* The resources it takes to effectively connect these two types of organisations detracts from other components of the DataShift and/or the DataShift is crowded-out by other initiatives focussed on data use, technology and data literacy at the global and country levels that are less bottom-up in approach and can therefore move more quickly.



People-powered accountability drives progress on sustainable development.

... and ultimately our VISION.

Civil society organisations can effectively create and use citizen-generated data to monitor development progress, demand accountability and campaign for transformative change.

... to support this OBJECTIVE ...

Increased COVERAGE

Enhanced COMPARABILITY

More CREDIBILITY

Data-driven CAMPAIGNING

... which result in these OUTCOMES ...

Increased **capacity** of CSOs create and use citizen-generated data

More opportunities for CSOs to **collaborate, experiment and innovate** with citizen-generated data

Improvements in the **harmonisation and coordination** between citizen-generated data

Enhanced connection between **local** initiatives and **global** policy and accountability processes

... to support these CHANGES ...

Global Knowledge Hub

DataShift Ambassadors

Thematic Forums

DataShift Fund

DataShift Dashboard

DataShift will implement these ACTIVITIES ...