Transcript of Development Drums [Episode 36 – Accountability and Openness]

Host: Owen Barder. Guests: Rakesh Rajani and Martin Tisné

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Owen Barder
Thanks for downloading Development Drums. My name is Owen Barder. And my guests today are Rakesh Rajani and Martin Tisné and we're talking about Open Government and Citizen Accountability.

Rakesh, Martin, welcome to Development Drums.

Rakesh Rajani
Thank you.

Martin Tisné
Thank you.

Owen Barder
Rakesh, let's start with you, and if I may can I just ask you to explain about Twaweza, the organization you lead? I think it will help listeners to understand what it's about.

Rakesh Rajani
Twaweza works in East Africa, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and it's kind of big experiment to test the idea that if you enable millions of citizens to get the kind of access to information of the sort that many of us take for granted, being able to get stuff on the internet and the radio and television, pick up the phone, talk to a friend, buy a book, if poor people can approximate that and have that sort of access. And secondly also, and as importantly can generate their own information and share it, would that empower them? Would that enable them to be able to do more things? Because they have accessed to more ideas, more data, more information. And be able to also tell their own stories to others so that they can have greater effect. So it's an experiment about information increasing agency leading to change.

Owen Barder
Okay. So we're going to explore all of the ideas in this chain of information and agency. But before we do that, let's find out from Martin. You work for the Omidyar Network, tell us about that.

Martin Tisné
Thanks. So I work for the Omidyar Network, which is the, in West Coast parlance, philanthropic investment firm started by Pierre Omidyar, the founder of eBay and his wife Pam. And there are number of initiatives we're in. The one that I'm the Director of policy for is called Government Transparency. And essentially, partly placed on the genesis of eBay, our focus is on how the Web and mobile technologies can really increase citizen agency that Rakesh spoke about and I think do two things that our field has been really bad at doing. One of them is reaching scale which Twaweza is very good at doing, but generally the field has been poor at doing. I think we're experts in having fantastic impact on one village in Rajasthan and touching the lives of 300 people. But by and large, we haven't been so good at reaching scale, so that's one thing. And then the other one is really reaching people directly. Broadly our field is – it's happy in the wonk books, it's happy in cities and its happy reaching thinktanks, but it hasn't been so successful up until now to really reach people and engage them in what's a pretty sort of wonky, nerdy, what can be at least a pretty wonky, nerdy topic.

Owen Barder
Fantastic. So let's explore the idea of citizen agency and why it's important. Rakesh you were beginning to say something about the kind of parallel between the lives of people in rich countries using Amazon and

things and poor countries. But flesh out for us a bit, perhaps with the example of education, the kind of work that Twaweza does and why you think that's important?

Rakesh Rajani
So, agency I think I defined it very simply, it's just people being able to do things, people being able to make a difference, people having more control over their lives. And so take education. Schooling is everywhere now and it's grown and one thing we've managed to do now is to get most children to primary schools. But there are lots of problems beyond that. Teachers don't show up, if they show up they're not teaching, we don't have enough books, the money that is increasing in national budgets isn't getting to schools and most importantly children are not learning. And when you talk to parents about it, first of all, many parents don't even know about these things; they're completely in the dark. And even when they get to know about them, there is a sense that most people are that 'I can't do anything about this, I'm just an ordinary parent.'

So the idea of citizen agency is how can you turn that around? How can very ordinary people, not fancy types, not just the activists, not just the wealthy folks, but how can very ordinary people be able to make a difference?

Owen Barder
And what are you doing to enable that or to empower that? What kinds of thing – what's the answer to how can ordinary people do this?

Rakesh Rajani
Right. Well, I think there are many answers. So one of the things that we're doing is an initiative called Uwezo. Uwezo is a Swahili word meaning capability or ability. And what that – what this initiative does, is it's devised a very simple test that fits on one page, that tests basic literacy and numeracy. And what we do is across the country in Tanzania, and in Kenya and in Uganda through hundreds of thousands of households, we test the young children on the Grade II level, Class II level literacy and numeracy and see what they're able to do.

Owen Barder
'We test' – who tests?

Rakesh Rajani
So it's – we organize it as Uwezo, Twaweza, but the work is done by thousands of volunteers across the country. Many of these are students who are in their gap year or who have just finished high school, secondary school. Some of them are retired civil servants, others are NGO folks. Anyone who has a 10th grade education, like an O level education and wants to give three, four days of their time to help improve education in the country. And it's really a wonderful energy to see among these people.

And you train them. And with these basic tools, it only takes two days to train and then on the third and fourth day you actually do the assessment in households. And the advantage of doing it in people's homes is that you can actually get kids who are in school as well as those who are out of school. And you involve everybody in their home. So while you're testing the children, the parents are watching, the grandparents are watching, the neighbors are watching and that begins a whole discussion.

Owen Barder
So the idea is that you're testing whether children are actually reaching the levels of literacy in this case that – or numeracy – that you would expect them to be reaching for their age. And you're testing that in the household with some kind of expert, sufficiently expert people coming into the household and working with the children and the parents to test it. And then what happens?

Rakesh Rajani
Well, the exercise of doing the test itself is quite revealing, because what happens is sometimes for the first time you may have had your child in school for three, four, five, six years and you just make the assumption that because I'm sending these children to school, they must be learning. So it can be quite a

powerful moment for many parents and others to suddenly realize that when the child does the test, the child can't read. We find for instance that of the third graders who should all be able to read everything that we test them on, only one out of five can actually read to the level required. So four out of five children in third grade cannot read at the required level.

Owen Barder
And this is in Tanzania or...?

Rakesh Rajani
This is in Tanzania, in Kenya, they do slightly better and Uganda is the same as Tanzania. So, overall when it comes to key Swahili and arithmetic, you find four out of five children in third grade are not able to read at the level required. You might say, well, perhaps they catch up, there's a lag and once they finish primary school they will. And what we find is even when they complete primary education, which depending on the country is 7th grade or 8th grade, there are still significant numbers of children who can't read at the second grade level. In Tanzania for instance, children who complete primary schooling, which is seven years of schooling, half of those children's still cannot read English at the second grade level.

Owen Barder
So I want to take this back to the idea citizen agency, right, anybody can measure – we don't do it very often and we don't do it enough – but anybody can measure learning outcomes with things like literacy tests. But you're not stopping there, right? I mean, that's presumably – the purpose of your exercise isn't to inform you or people in Dar es Salaam that the education system isn't working, you're actually trying to empower communities and citizens to do something about it? So how does that work? What happens next?

Rakesh Rajani
We're trying to do both. I mean, we are trying to inform, but in addition the way in which this all exercise is done is first it's done at a very large scale. We take all 130 plus districts of the country and in each district we take 20 villages and each village we take 30 homes. So if you look at it, it's the largest survey, and that's deliberate, because we want thousands and thousands of parents across the whole country to be involved in watching this. So the very act of doing it, involving volunteers and doing it in an open and transparent manner brings in the whole community to look at this. And what that begins is an exercise of reflection and thinking. It breaks the assumption that schooling is the same as learning, which is a huge thing for many, many people. It gives them data, it gives them information about their own child and even though we only test in 20 households, what happens is because there are lots of neighbors and others watching, and we leave the tools behind, you find that the lots of people in the community now start testing other children and the idea just spreads across the country.

So the first level of engagement is in the testing process itself and people start asking these questions, and what can we do about it? We also leave behind some materials and ideas of what parents can do. For example we have a poster that says here are six things that you can do. Then after the testing process is done and the data has been analyzed, we do a national report, but we don't just stop there. We do a large media communication and engagement exercise. So the information is put on all kinds of materials that reach people, on buses, and pamphlets and magazine, as inserts on packaging of soap and pens and so forth. And the whole idea is to create a debate across the country, for all kinds of people to be asking the question, why are our children not learning? What will it take for children to learn? And what that does is, it not only does it come engender action across communities, but it puts pressure on the policy makers, who have had this data, but for some reason they've just chosen to ignore it. But now because everyone's talking but, it creates bottom up pressure that concentrates the minds of the politicians, the MPs as well as the bureaucrats.

Owen Barder
So, Martin, this seems like a very different way of doing development than we've often done in the past. Where in the past we've tracked aid projects from the top down, the donors are filling in log frames and theories of change. Do we have – how broad is this movement towards bottom up accountability as a way of driving change in say service delivery in developing countries? Is this something that you're seeing – is

Rakesh's example of Twaweza a one-off as you implied it was at least in scale? Or are there lots of other examples that make you think this is a growing movement?

Martin Tisné
Yeah, I think it's a good and tricky question. I think there's definitely a growing movement towards openness in government. And just reeling back a little bit, so 10 years ago you had a movement against corruption, right. And then that movement against corruption I think gradually changed and is now a movement for transparency, for accountability and for participation. Where the movement now stands is that you have a big focus, we still have a big focus on more supply side reforms, where there's certainly a movement globally –

Owen Barder
So by supply side reforms, you mean things like improving teacher training, the quality of schools and those kinds of things?

Martin Tisné
No, no I'm using it in a sense of sort of open government. So supply side reform is where you're working with government to open up and to open information, so open data platforms, releasing data in easily readable formats.

Owen Barder
Okay, the supply of information.

Martin Tisné
The supply of information, right.

Owen Barder
Right.

Martin Tisné
So the Open Government Partnership, which we'll talk about that in a second had I think 450 commitments off the top of my head. The most popular commitment of all and this is across 58 countries now is open data. So governments releasing more information, there's clearly a movement around that. When it comes to the demand, so working with an encouraging and helping citizens to engage with information and with the government, there are – then it's back to my earlier point.

Owen Barder
Right.

Martin Tisné
There are episodic instances of this. There's great work, famously done by MKSS in Rajasthan, in India where around socials audits. There's work in East Timor, there's work in Afghanistan, in a number of different countries. But it's still too rare to see scale, the sort of scale that Rakesh is talking about while you're engaging hundreds of thousands and potentially millions of people.

Owen Barder
Okay. So what do we know about, and perhaps Rakesh you can tell us about how – whether this is working? I mean, it's early days, yes, and obviously these social political institutional changes take time. But what's your sense in the education space – and we'll come to the water one in a second, which I think is a very interesting example. But in the education space, do you think that Twaweza is really making a difference yet?

Rakesh Rajani
Yes and no. I mean, I think one thing that surprised us is how quickly the debate in the country, both in terms of what people are thinking, what media is covering, what the talk shows are talking about, as well as the policy makers are now talking about change, more quickly than we had imagined. I think a combination

of that public pressure through the media and that sort of middle up or bottom up as well as the donors and government feeling a sense of crisis and we need to do something. So that's moved faster. If you now look, even five years ago, all the discussion was about enrolments, how do we increase enrolments. Now the core question is completely different. It's about how do we make sure that children learn, particularly how are they literate and numerate?

So that's great. I think the part that's proven to be tougher than we had imagined is how can citizens themselves and communities begin to make a difference to take actions. And what we realize is that some of us who are used to the idea that we can do things and have experienced that all our lives, can sometimes underestimate what it is to get communities to act. You know if you've live for 20, 30, 40 years with the idea that education is what happens in schools, and is done by trained teachers, you have no role, particularly if you have low levels of literacy, then it's – just having one engagement over a weekend and even if it's followed up through stuff on radio and media, isn't going to be enough. So, I think the – it's, we're beginning to see some actions, but I think that's going to take a longer haul. And what we're also realizing is that we need to pay much more careful attention to questions of motivation, questions around collective action, questions around what will it get people to believe in? And which people? Because I think the other thing we need to do is differentiate while our aim is millions of citizens, change is likely to begin with a few and we need to get better at targeting those few.

Owen Barder
So we'll come to the case of Daraja, the water case, which – where there's a story to tell about what citizens will do. But let's just differentiate two things that are going on. One is that we want citizens to engage because that creates a political groundswell and puts pressure on the leads, whether its service providers, bits of government politicians, media, because they realize that the public is caring about this, they're talking about it and they feel the need to respond. The other is the thought that citizens themselves might actually act, they might pull together a reading club for their kids after school or they might as parents help their children move with their homework, if they're in a position to do that, or get one of their neighbors or friends to do that.

And as I understand that, you're saying that there's some evidence of the – the first of those to begin to work, the kind of the feedback loop working back through the political economy of changing people's attitudes. But its proven quite difficult to do some of the second, the idea of people actually taking action themselves to improve the way these – the big society idea, in some ways, of communities themselves doing these things the state is not doing well enough. Is that a correct summary?

Rakesh Rajani
Yeah, I think that's right. I mean, it's beginning to happen, but it takes longer and it take – it's harder work. The other thing is you see we have to also remember that some problems are best solved by governments, but others are for communities. If the teacher in your community is not showing up or if she or he shows up, he's not doing a good job. I'm not sure whether making a big protest to the central government or even the district government helps you much, because that teacher is one of you, lives among you and I think the best course of action is probably to look in the mirror and see what we can do ourselves.

Owen Barder
Martin?

Martin Tisné
Thanks. I think a colleague of mine mentioned really interesting sort of difference a couple of days ago to me, which is between national impact and nationwide impact. And my sense is that we've had, all too rare still, but still, in some countries we've had instances of national impact. So the case in India, where you have citizens mostly, but not only in Rajasthan, engaging social audits, so basically meaning, going out, volunteering and looking at the difference between how much was spent on infrastructure projects and how much was originally in the bill of quantities and the contract et cetera. Now that culminated in the most groundbreaking, arguably most effective Right to Information Act we have out there, the Indian Right to Information Act in 2005. So we have these quite amazing examples of national impact. What we have still again far too little of is nationwide impact, which is your point, right, the sort of ideal of the big society,

which is if what we want to do, which is what I think we want to do, is change fundamentally the relation between citizens and government, ultimately we need nationwide impact. So we need localized impacts and many, many pockets of local impact where people are engaging differently in their schools, with their healthcare providers, etcetera, at scale.

Owen Barder
You're listening to Development Drums with me Owen Barder from the Central for Global Development, in Europe. My guests today are Rakesh Rajani from Twaweza in Tanzania and Martin Tisné from the Omidyar Network and we're talking about Openness and Accountability in Development.

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I'm interested in the analogy with what happens in our own societies, where on the whole – the way the World Development Report some years ago described this, you have these long feedback loops where governments in the United Kingdom do or don't provide a good public health system, for example, through the NHS. And if people in their communities get fed up with long waiting lists or dirty hospitals or whatever, they are more likely to vote for a government, a national level government that promises an agenda or plan to do something about that. And the way change happens in many of our public services is through these long feedback loops through national level policy changes. We don't on the whole say, my word our hospital isn't working as well as it should, we must get together a gang of people to go and clean it or to go and provide late night portering services there.

On the other hand we do have some local management, like for example, with the example of teachers, we do have Parent-Teachers Association, which is the mechanism by which we put pressure on schools to deal with particular poor performing teachers. To what extent is what you're talking about as citizen agency in say Tanzania or Uganda or Kenya different from the kinds of feedback mechanisms that work well in rich countries? And to what extent are you suggesting something different from – I'm just curious to know whether you have a model of public service management and delivery that's fundamentally different from what happens in the wealthy societies at the moment?

Rakesh Rajani
So, it's a little difficult for me to respond because I'm not exactly sure what happens in the wealthy societies like in the UK. You see what we're trying to do is in part seeing what is already working, in some others spheres and asking well could this work with our public services? Because what – if you look across East Africa, you find that people take all kinds of actions to solve problems, individually and collectively. And that's in fact how we get by; the state of services that our governments provide are very rudimentary compared to what you get in the richer countries. So if people can organize for instance around how they transport their goods to market or if people can organize in terms of getting innovations around solar energy and so on, we're saying could we use those forms of informal organizing and those forms of information networks that are working on this side and see if we can transpose them into the levels of public service?

Now some of that – and I think we're kind of agnostic and open-ended about what kinds of action you take. Sometimes it may be that a group of people say 'let's help you out here, because what – we've seen that you guys are really working hard, but you're stretched, perhaps we'll give a hand.' But at other times it can take a very different form, it can be that we know that the headteacher is corrupt or is lazy and we're not going to let this go on. So it's about getting involved in how we do that. And even there, we're quite agnostic about do you do it through formal means, i.e. show up at your school committee meeting, or do it through informal means such as go and talk to the priest to put pressure on the head teacher. The idea is, use the best means that you can figure out, that you can conjure up to make the difference you want.

Martin Tisné
So do you mind if I jump in on your question? I think there's two things. One of them is that some of the most exciting innovations or most of them, the exciting innovations in this field come from the global

south. So it's not an agenda that's being – it's not a great, cozy Western agenda that's then being imposed on others. And that's the big lesson, exemplified by the Open Government Partnership. So we were talking about social audits, we were talking about the way in which the Indian Right to Information Act came into being, which is fundamentally different from others and we can talk about, if it's relevant, participatory budgeting in Brazil. I was just talking thoroughly to a high ranking official in the UK Government a few days ago and he was saying that at the Department for International Development, he was saying 'I went to Brazil' and talking about our Aid Transparency Guarantee. And the Brazilians said 'well this is great, we're excited that you're doing this, but we started doing it 11 years ago.' So I think, that's one point, the innovations come from the south.

And the other one is that historically in terms of our little movement around the government we tried the long feedback loop and it failed. I mean 10 years ago a lot of – when particular region when funders, donors were pouring millions of dollars of assistance on the Balkans, on Central Eastern Europe and South Eastern Europe all the funds for anticorruption went to one or two things, either really long-term national anti-corruption commissions or awareness raising campaigns for the people. So effectively what happened is you pour millions in awareness raising campaigns, you have big posters outside of Sarajevo that say don't bribe, musn't bribe, some really bad things about impact then people are frustrated and they try and use what they have, which is elections, and ultimately the election system in those countries don't always work and they get more frustrated and public trust in government declines, which is the worst of any scenarios you want.

So it's partly I think there's a couple of different things happening. One of them is innovations in the South and the other one is that we tried this and it didn't work. And at this point, we're innovating in exciting ways in these countries.

Owen Barder
Excellent. Now I've got a question that was asked on our Facebook group. So just a note to the listeners, if you want to ask questions for future guests on Development Drums, go to our Facebook group and you will see who the guests are coming up and ask a question. But here's one put by Amanda Beattie and she says, for Rakesh "what reactions and changes have you seen as a result of testing basic literacy and numeracy and published results? Have ministries, local governments, parents and also citizens taken notice or action. What resistance challenges have you faced from trying to turn learning results into action?" So what has the impact of this being on these people?

Rakesh Rajani
Initially there was a lot of resistance and people tried to pick all kinds of holes with the methodology because they didn't like the results. Prior to Uwezo starting, the kind of official narrative is we've done wonderful things. In fact they were getting accolades, they won a big prize for MDGs and that was a narrative that was convenient for everyone, for the government and the donors and Uwezo data punctured that. So at the beginning there was a lot of resistance, but as – because we do this every year and because the work is done so carefully and so robustly and because we make the entire methodology and all the data completely open, after a while it became increasingly difficult for the government to continue to resist this data.

What has changed now is without kind of formally acknowledging Uwezo all the kind of key targets and indicators in the new plans for education that the government are making have changed. So for example there is a new plan that they have just prepared for the next five years. If you look at the primary goal now it says improved learning by increasing literacy and numeracy. There is something in the works right now called the compact for reform or something of that sort and if you look at it, you can clearly see the Uwezo results or the Uwezo impact right in there. So I think my sense is now that shift has happened completely at the policy level. Across the country what is happening is a lot of the community groups, non-governmental organizations, the media groups are also changing what they are talking about, the questions they're asking. So the nature of the debate I think has completely shifted. We're also beginning to see this in parliament now. The stage as I said earlier that is – has moved much more slowly, but on the other hand it shouldn't surprise us because this takes time is the action at the community level and that's what we're zeroing in right now.

Owen Barder
Let's focus now on Daraja and the water example because that's really interesting because it hasn't worked by and large. I should declare an interest here, which is that I am a member of the advisory committee of Twaweza which is partly how I know a bit about these projects. Tell us what we know about what has and hasn't worked in that case and what the lesson is?

Rakesh Rajani
Daraja is in its concept is a lovely idea. It's just here is the basic context. Most people in a place like Tanzania don't get their water in their taps at home. They get them through public water points. And over the last couple of decades thousands of these have been put across the country by the government and many donors. The problem is that about half of these water points don't work. They don't function. And we thought what can, you know, and the fact is even though people know about this, there is no action taken, nothing changes. So we thought why don't we create – to get our partners, Daraja, thought why don't they create a system whereby people using their mobile phones because most people have mobile phones, simply report whether that water point is functioning or not and that information will be sent to the water people concerned and then it would go – it would escalate up to higher and higher levels and the idea was that if I'm the local water engineer and I don't do what I'm supposed to do, well it will be passed on to my superior so that will create a kind of incentive for me to do the right thing. And then after a month or so the idea was that all this data would also be made public and particularly sent to the media organizations to create another level of pressure, another level of incentive for you to do the right thing.

Owen Barder
So this so to speak, so people are going to send in a text message saying my water point isn't working and then you were going to aggregate that and have it like a map or something showing what was working and what wasn't working, some league tables and those kinds of things and it didn't work.

Rakesh Rajani
Right. And it – well it didn't work, we – first we were finding some of the messages didn't make sense so what our partner did and together with us is we spent a lot of time perfecting the system, we thought the technology must be easier and it still didn't work. We thought what about the cost and we made sure that the SMS was free, even though the cost of sending an SMS is pretty low, we thought let's make it completely free in case very poor rural women can't do this. It still didn't work. Then we thought it might be that people didn't have enough information about this. So there was a huge kind of awareness campaign in the three districts where this was piloted so that I think in many ways over the top awareness, every day at a radio program for half an hour. It still didn't work.

When we did a careful evaluation of this, what we learned is there are several reasons but the key reason, we had made a key assumption that was wrong, which was that once given the opportunity people will use this system. But when we asked people, they said why should I bother, it won't make any difference anyway. I've been asked many times in the past for what I think about water points and all kinds of other things. I tell people about it, I tell NGOs, I tell governments, I tell researchers, nothing happens. So, I don't believe in this system and I just – I'm not going to be bothered. Because the project had failed to handle that very core human political economy issue right there, all the technology in the world would not have solved it. And what we have learned from this process is that some very core basic things we should have done right at the beginning on iterating on how this works and some core research was not done right. And let's be honest about it, partially because we were mesmerized by the opportunity that technology offers. We were – and in some ways let the geeks take over and we forgot some very one-on-one human problems.

Owen Barder
Let's just pause to appreciate an NGO which does a careful evaluation of a project, learns a lesson, identifies and is public about failure and learning lessons from that. That's something that is all too rare in our business. So just having this conversation is terrific in itself. But…

Rakesh Rajani
And I just wanted to point out that Ben Taylor who used to run the organization until recently has written some really great blogs on this. If you go to daraja.org, you will read some wonderful blogs he has written on this.

Martin Tisné
Yeah, no I think exactly but to your point, Owen, with an emphasis on the fact that they are public, they are understandable, they are written in blog formats, anyone could read them and I think it's fantastic. Two quick points on that example. One of them is in – a number of years working in this really exciting growing field there is one big takeaway that I have is that it roughly divides into two camps. There is the camp that works on the sort of demand side of information, citizens – it seems strange now caricaturing and then the other camp which is known as supply side, you work with the government, you build the systems, you build the reforms. And I really think we need to work on both sides. And that's what's striking.

So very crudely caricaturing a theory of change, you start with sort of standard setting, so here are the standards really clear. The water point works, it doesn't work, it should work. You monitor it, so the idea is to monitor it, but then there is this moment of answerability, responsiveness. You want the state to answer, to be responsive and then it doesn't and then it moves on to sort of sanction, sanction of reward mechanisms. And all too often what doesn't happen is I think working on both sides, working both with the SMS, exciting campaign, getting citizens in scale, but also doing the more bureaucratic work working with government and identifying – doing two things. One of them identifying reformers in government who want to respond, how do they respond, how do we work with them, what are the incentives for the reformers within government to engage with this, and then just the more sort of public service management bureaucracy of how they could respond.

And another brief point is based on the example that I've been chucking around in MKSS, in Rajasthan, it goes back in some ways I think to the national and nationwide change, which is who are the decision makers in this particular case, which I'm familiar with to a degree but not that familiar with, where are the decision makers? Is it a national level decision or is it a very localized decision. I think the beauty of the MKSS example in Rajasthan, it's very local and the reason it worked is purely through the power of shame. They got information around how much was spent on – how much should have been spent on building a road and how much eventually was spent and then in a beautiful, Indian fashion there is a big party called Ajan Sinai [ph] where they make a lot of noise and they read out very publicly in these small villages or clusters of villages the results. And in some instances, not all, but enough instances the responsible officials were present, were publicly shamed and in some cases actually gave the money back very publicly to the community to get over this shame. So there is an interesting, again, sort of local element where the decision lies.

Owen Barder
I'm going to move on in a second to the broader questions of transparency and so on. But I just wanted to – just to close off on the Daraja example, the water points example where as I'm hearing you describe the problem, Rakesh, it's not that bits of government were refusing to respond to data that was provided to them. The problem was that we were stuck in a low equilibrium in which the community didn't believe that there would be action from government, probably with some justice, and so weren't generating the demand for change that the government might or might not be in a position to respond to or some agency might be in a position to respond to. And that seems to me to be quite a difficult problem to solve. If the community has low expectations of government responsiveness they are unlikely to invest in the time, the energy, perhaps the social and political difficulties of pressing for – the naming and shaming you described, Martin, people need some guts to stand up and name and shame public officials, people who might well be the person who decides if they're going to get the next permit for their market stall or something. So how do you – I mean, if the problem is that people have this low expectation, how do you break into that vicious circle of a low equilibrium?

Rakesh Rajani
I think it's very, very hard work. But what we're doing now increasingly is focusing on stories of change. See part of the idea here is about imagination and about aspiration. It's getting people to say, okay yes this

is hard, yes, the likelihood of getting answerability is low. Yes there is fear, you may take action and get in trouble, but this is our life and these are our children and this is – and are we just going to accept it or are we going to try to do something now.

What's very important is what that something is, how you assess your own risk, that is very personal and very local and it's very important that Twaweza or nobody else kind of dictate that or require that. So what we try to do by telling these stories of change and real stories of change is to get people to get inspired. This idea that hey, if they could do it in the community next door, why can't we do it. If they could do it in health, why can't we do it in education. And usually what we're finding is it doesn't – it's not like the whole community uprises. It takes a few people, the odd ones, the outliers who start trying to do something. And look, often it fails. You might stand up and shout out and you might get beaten on the head and that might be the end of it.

So I think we also want to be very honest that simply taking action doesn't guarantee results and this is a long haul, and part of telling the story is telling the stories of people such as those who fought Apartheid in South Africa or those who fought for independence in East Africa or the women's rights movement in our own counties, that showed this is a long slog. Sometimes you're lucky and you get results quickly and sometimes it takes much longer and that's part of, I think, the honesty of storytelling that we also need to be a part of.

Owen Barder
You're listening to Development Drums with me Owen Barder and my guests today are Martin Tisné from the Omidyar Network and Rakesh Rajani from Twaweza. We've been talking about citizen agency and how change happens from below. I'd like if I can to switch to the question of the roll of transparency and open government in this because part of the story as Martin was saying earlier is the connection between what happens at a grassroots level and the extent to which governments are more open. And in the example you gave, Rakesh, early on about education it wasn't the government publishing hitherto secret results of education tests that made the difference and has been making the difference. It was you actually putting in place a system to go around and empower citizens themselves to collect and report that information. And yet often when we talk about these questions of bottom up accountability we connect that to the question of open government and open data and so on. So I guess, Martin, this question is for you really; to what extent is the transparency agenda important for the kinds of citizen agency that Rakesh and Twaweza and people like him are working on? Do we have good examples of where transparency has really helped drive this kind of process?

Martin Tisné
I think there's a couple of things. I think the open government movement is more than just about transparency, so it's about transparency, it's about participation and responsiveness and it's about accountability. So, going back to the earlier example, briefly working within government to open government up to the possibility of citizen input in policy making is a nice example of a reform that touches on both sides. So, for example in the Philippines right now, I don't know if the number is exactly right but I think 2.6 million people engaged in bottom up budgeting in an amazing exercise organized by Secretary Butch Abad who deserved to be recognized for this work, the Secretary for the Department of Budget Management in the Philippines.

So a government that's conscious that it doesn't have all the answers, that wants to open up and that wants to engage with citizens to hear their views, in this case around participatory budgeting, I think is a nice example. There are other examples and in some ways the obvious answer to your question is to say, well, you need the information out there, it's foundational, you have to have the governments that are open, information belongs to the people which is the FOI argument which of course is right, the open data argument which is if the data is machine readable, if it's in open formats, if people can re-use it in different ways, we will find patterns and we'll be able to nurture it. I think all that's right and there's an argument which is simply it's the necessary but not sufficient argument, in order for these to work it's a massive amplifier if government's open and transparent the information that they have. But what I want to emphasize in my answer is that the movement itself if there is or if we can have a movement is around transparency, it's around engagement participation, it's around responsiveness of government and

ultimately it's obviously around accountability as a result. And it's that cocktail that we need to reinvent the relation between citizens and government.

Owen Barder
Rakesh, in your mind how much is transparency a part of what your movement is about, what you're trying to do? Are you relying on governments to be more transparent and open or is this something that you think that you can take forward without that?

Rakesh Rajani
So first I think transparency is hugely important. I think it is the underlying condition which makes many other things possible, not automatic, there are no guarantees, but without transparency it's much harder to do anything. It's harder to organize when you don't know what's going on; so I think transparency is crucial. Now, I would make two points; one is that you want – government transparency or government releasing what it holds on behalf of the public is a key part of it, but it's not the only part. A lot of it is about generating new information and in other ways and kind of interesting ways and things like mobile phone technologies now make that possible. But the other key point that I think we often overlook is that for most people to get engaged that data needs to be very local. If I am somebody who lives in an urban neighborhood and even if you're in London and you're in a London neighborhood and you hear that the mayor has a budget of £20 million, what does that mean for you? How do you translate that at your level in terms of your children in your school or your street? So the level of disaggregation is very important.

And then finally I think another key aspect that Twaweza tries to focus on is information makes sense in comparison. If somebody tells you, you got £500 per child for your school; well how do you make sense of it, is that a lot? Is that not enough? But if somebody told you, you got £500 this year but you got £1,000 last year then you say, how come I am getting only half of what I got. Or if you got £500 and the community next door got £800 then you say, hold on, how come I am getting… So it's giving people information, A, that's disaggregated at the lowest level and two, in comparison with previous years or other communities or other things and that's what helps people to kind of make sense of those numbers.

Owen Barder
Martin, do we have good examples of where transparency and access to information – you gave examples where there had been participatory budgeting and so on but what does that amount to in terms of improvements of people's lives, how did that participatory budgeting lead to better service? Is there any examples where we know things actually got better as a result of people being more engaged say in budgeting or in service delivery or and so on or is that still to come? Is the final impact still to be demonstrated or do we already have good examples of this?

Martin Tisné
I think we've got – first of all, the honest answer to that good question is that our evidence base is weak. I mean the excuse to that is partly our field is relatively young, but still our evidence base is still weak. We have got decent examples – we have got decent evidence when it comes to sort of short-term outcomes. So, in aggregate X amount of money was saved thanks to very localized community monitoring. But in terms of the impact of transparency and accountability reforms and activities on health outcomes in the long term we don't have very much. You will smile, Owen, because I have mentioned this before, you know where I am going. The one, the Uganda example, the famous Uganda case which dates back a little bit --

Owen Barder
Tell the case because not everyone will have heard it.

Martin Tisné
All right. This is my test if I can remember the case well enough. But essentially what the Uganda case is, it's a randomized control trial that was done in a number of villages in Uganda a few years back which essentially was at a local level with health care facilities, and citizens were given information as to the services that they should be provided with, but crucially the health care providers knew that the citizens had that information and were engaged in delivering the service. So there was an element of participation and transparency. And to cut the long story short, in the treatment cases the ratio, infant mortality went down by

a third. So – for kids under five. So a third of children under five didn't die who in other cases would have. And that's our big sort of shining hope and there are relatively few of these examples, but what we need. And what a number of groups like Twaweza and The International Budget Partnership and others are doing are quantitative but also qualitative case studies that are longitudinal, so that run alongside studies for – alongside projects for a number of years.

Owen Barder
So just to clarify for listeners, you can look this up, Svensson & Bjorkman wrote the paper about the study of the Ugandan health case, and in the cases where clinics had monitoring, randomly chosen group of clinics, they had no extra funding, no extra anything else, just monitoring by communities, you had these big improvements as Martin's saying in infant mortality, but also in things like vaccination and so on. So there's – we have an example there where community monitoring plainly makes a big difference to an actual outcome; the reductions in infant mortality is pretty much as an outcome, as good an outcome measure as you can get. Martin you're looking, you're furrowing your brow.

Martin Tisné
I'm furrowing my brow just because I want to make this point on the record, which is a number of listeners will be saying 'ahah, yes, there's the Ugandan study but there's also the Ben Olken study in Indonesia' which says the contrary, which is that community monitoring and citizens did nothing.

My understanding of the case in Uganda is that the key piece is that citizens were not only given the information, but they were trained and there were capacity building support for them to engage. So I think partly we may be going to some of the incentives which Rakesh talks about, training at – you not only have the information, but this is possible; you have the power to change the situation. Which is very different from the Indonesian study.

Owen Barder
Okay so I'm going to suggest a difference between the Ben Olken studies, the Indonesian studies and the Uganda health clinics. And the Ben Olken Studies were about road building in Indonesia and in those cases he did a randomized controlled trial where you either had nothing, the control group or you had auditing, top down, this traditional top down way of tackling corruption, actually in this case they threatened to send in the auditors. Or you had the bottom up monitoring by communities. And the top down auditing worked and the bottom up community monitoring didn't. My explanation for that is that, if somebody told me they're going to build the road along, near your neighborhood and it's going to cost $10 million and can you keep an eye on it and see if it's done properly, is that I would be in no position to do that. I wouldn't know whether I had that amount of – this comes to Rakesh's earlier point about the granularity of the data, that there needs to be information that people can connect to. So, asking somebody to monitor whether the road is made with the right materials or whether it's really $10 million worth of road or not seems to me to be a big stretch,. Whereas asking people is your clinical working, are the doctors good, is it open, is it dirty, seems to me a perfectly reasonable question that people can probably answer.

So it maybe because in the case of Uganda they were training community organizations or it may just be that it depends of what question you ask and what it is you're asking people to monitor, that some people can monitor clinics better than they can monitor road building.

Martin Tisné
Yeah I think that sounds about right. I think partly the emphasis on roads, I mean I'm not getting into the head of the scientist who did the study, may come from Indian cases where a lot of the focus is on infrastructure monitoring. But what's interesting in those cases is actually it technically wasn't the villagers who were doing the monitoring, they were trained volunteers who did the monitoring then submitted the results to the villagers. So I think that sounds intuitively right. I do think as well that one of the differences is that in the Indonesia study, which we should find the right reference for, that my understanding again is that the citizens were simply given the information, and like 'make of this what you will.' The other point in the Indonesia study that's always puzzled me a little bit is that if I remember correctly the chances of having, being audited officially were 90% which is, as a test I guess makes sense but in practical – in realistic terms it's highly, highly unlikely.

Owen Barder
Very interesting. So, I think the conclusion of that is that we need more evidence both about whether this works and I think more precisely in what circumstances it works, what kinds of problem does it help address and what are the conditions for that and what are the ingredients that you need that go alongside transparency to enable communities to hold their governments to account.

I'd like to move on to the Open Government Partnership if we may, which is – both of you have been involved with since its inception. You can go on the internet and see Rakesh making a speech of the first meeting of the Open Government Partnership. Martin why don't you tell us what this partnership is?

Martin Tisné
Okay. So the Open Government Partnership is this quite wonderful sort of concoction of 58 different countries that have come together to, in very practical terms, implement – well, develop and implement open government reforms at the national level. So, what Open Government partnership is in a nut shell, it's a vehicle, it's a hook, it's a lever for civil society groups, for reformers both within and outside of government to say, I have an idea for an open government reform in my country, it's a great idea, I think – we think you should do it and it provides them with the hook that they didn't have beforehand, so that's one thing.

The second thing is that it's a very unique – it's a unique initiative in the global context. It's governed by a steering committee, the steering committee has 18 seats, half of those seats are occupied by civil society groups from around the world and the other half are governments and out of those governments you have BRICs, you have developing countries, you have developed countries, it's a really – it's a very exciting mix that's reflective of the world that we live in. So that's the second point.

And then I think the third point is that it's – OGP occupies this beautiful sort of squishy area which is that our Open Government field is governed by this alphabet soup of international initiatives, so IATI, the International Aid Transparency Initiative, EITI, meta or medicines, costs on the construction center, et cetera and – but for this to be a movement, which is certainly what myself, Rakesh and others are driving to, we need to be able to tie these together. We need to be able to have the thread that binds them and really tells the story and that's what we're not good enough at doing. And Open Government Partnership bring these together, we can talk about, it's relevant in a second, how it's relating to other international initiatives. But it really brings them together and it's a locus to showcase at the international level some very basic truths. The point that innovations come from everywhere and especially they come from the global south has now been made very strongly at the highest levels of government via OGP.

And just the last point that I should have started with is that OGP has given us inroads into the highest levels, into head of state level. To the highest levels of government that our movement simply didn't have before. So President Obama started it by the speech he gave at the general assembly in September 2010 and then from then on we had head of state engagement in Brazil, in South Africa, in Indonesia and a number of different countries, which has really galvanized and I think it's a fantastically exciting development in the past few years.

Owen Barder
Rakesh you have been involved in this from the beginning. What difference do you think it's going to make? How does it seem to you as a civil society activist from a developing country? What's good about the Open Government Partnership?

Rakesh Rajani
Well I'm excited about it for all the reasons that Martin mentioned, and let me mention two others. One is that, governments particularly perhaps the middle and the lower end in terms of wealth, governments sometimes work in mysterious ways. You might find that a country like mine, Tanzania, is willing to do a reform because it's part of an association where others are doing it, it thinks it's cool to be part of it and there are these pressures that you might find that our Head of State meets another Head of State and says 'oh I also want to be a part of this.' So, I think what we've seen certainly in the short life of OGP is that

sort of peer encouragements, that sort of peer pressure if they do it we better kind of have something to show as well. And so in that sense I think the OGP creates an impetus of some kind of rising to the top.

And also sharing idea. Just by convening these countries once a year and being able to tell stories of what others are doing you can have countries that are beginning to share ideas that would not have happened otherwise.

There's one other element about the OGP that I think is really important, which is the independent review mechanism. Because look it's all well and nice for countries to get together and say 'look we're going to make these wonderful commitments' but what matters is the rubber hitting the road and a referee there saying 'on this you're doing well' or 'on this it's all bollocks.' And the independent review mechanism that is a key part of OGP creates an independent group of experts who set the rules of the game, who then employ local experts to assess each country on a periodic basis, and all this is made very open. And I think that's crucial to kind of holding our feet to the fire and making sure that all this excitement is kept real.

Owen Barder
So this is a coalition of willing countries who have come together and signed up to the commitments. It was described in the Economist a few months ago as a kind of new international division not between left and right or communist and capitalist but between open and closed. This was, the British government and the American government's kind of new cold war between those who are broadly on one side of the fence and those who are broadly on the other. Is that something that you recognize in this and/or was the Economist – you're both shaking your heads. Which one of you wants to tell us why the Economist was wrong on this?

Martin Tisné
I'm not sure the Economist necessarily is wrong here. I tend to disagree which is, I don't think that the story is OGP is open versus closed at all. The governments – first of all the governments sign up to their own commitments, there is no – OGP is not a standard setting body. There's no blueprint that governments sign up to, first point. The second one is there's a relatively low eligibility threshold for governments worldwide to be part of OGP. There's roughly I think 75 or 76 governments worldwide that qualify according to four different criteria: freedom of information, participation in budgets, et cetera. And the impetus in the earlier stages was that it doesn't matter where you start, what matters is where you go, it's the race to the top notion.

So not everyone has to be Denmark tomorrow. And in the publication that we did in the early days called Opening Government which you can find on the website of the transparency accountability initiatives, we spent a lot of time thinking about, right. if you take any given issue in the field be it big issues like freedom of information or some more technical issues or sectoral issues like atransparency, what are entry level reforms that governments can do, what are mid-evel reforms and then what are most or more ambitious reforms. I think that's really one of the big excitements of OGP, and there are all sort of different governments, and governments can be wonderful at one thing and let's good at another. South Africa is on the steering committee and number one on the Open Budget Index and perhaps do slightly less well in other part of the Open Government field. Azerbaijan is part of the OGP, does well in some areas, does much less well in others. So there's a diversity and there's a complexity within OGP that reflects the world that we live in and reflects the Open Government field at large.

I think that's why Rakesh is right to emphasize the independent review mechanism, which is that the flip side of what I have described is to say 'oh, well that's all very nice but it's just a talking show of governments are patting themselves on their back and being in the club and then not doing very much.' That's why – it's not a – the important point is it's not a peer review mechanism, when governments are at the table right and review themselves as peers. There's an independent review mechanism where in a sense we are all peers. Civil society, the private sector, trade unions, the government and others will be asked what their assessment is of how well the country did or not.

So it's very young, I mean 2010 …

Owen Barder

But it is an interesting new form of multi-lateral co-operation. I mean, there really has been nothing like this it seems to me. So what's your assessment so far of – you know, early days, but have we seen the fruits of that? Is this something that we should be celebrating or is it – what's your sense of it in terms of where it's performing – and where do you think it will go next. But let's start with where we've got to so far?

Rakesh Rajani
I think we should celebrate and we should be very wary and skeptical at the same time. There have been some victories, the Freedom of Information law in Brazil I don't think would have come about without the OGP. There's all kinds of other projects, initiatives, from open data to greater participation, to paying attention to how service delivery can be more participatory that countries are beginning to do. So if you want to look for successes, yes there's a kind of dozen or so, two dozen successes that I can see. And I also think it is meaningful when a country signals to its people that on these – and through its plan that we're going to do these things, and it gives a hook for civil society and others to focus.

But will OGP be this great transformative thing which changes the nature of government fundamentally? I think time will tell, it's way too early. My own assessment is that it can go either way. And if anything, I think there's a less than 50-50 chance it will succeed because its core ambition is really, really – it's really big. It's about changing the fundamental way in which government works. If you look at the declaration that's what the vision is about. But there's lot of vested interest, inertia being another problem, and leadership I think both on the part of governments and then on the part of civil society, it will take an enormous amount of leadership to come through.

Owen Barder
Martin the UK is about to take over the chair of the OGP in next year. What would you like to see the UK doing? What happens next? Where does this go in the coming year under the UK's leadership?

Martin Tisné
Technically the UK is already chair, and has been lead chair since September. So, it's still very new – and will be chair until this next September 2013. I think there's a number of ways that we could have done OGP differently a couple of years ago. The way we did it, and it happened to be done, is to have a lot of the countries sign up very fast. Now 58; Argentina as of last week is the 58th country. I think the main story of OGP right now is to implement the commitments and deliver the independent reporting mechanism, the independent review mechanism to really assess these and then take stock. The nature of OGP is always very fast. You launch and then, countries and – momentum, we wanted countries to sign up. I think at this point taking stock is what's important.

But if I can make a quick point on sort of multi-lateral co-operation and OGP, I think where we've have – it comes to the distinction between national, to a degree, nationwide we were making earlier, OGP has had some success on the national level reforms, much less on nationwide, and that will take a lot of time. The question is, is will we be given that time? Will OGP be given the time to have that aggregate impact on the nationwide level? At the national level where it's been successful is this notion of hook that I was mentioning. And there's four quick ways it's being doing this. One of them is, where you have – so again OGP is not a standard setting mechanism, but it's like a machine that can turbo charge standards, we should throw the standards in it. So, existing standards like International Aid Transparent Initiative, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, fantastic. Your country is part of OGP; yes you should sign up to EITI. United States signed up to EITI because of the Open Government Partnership.

Owen Barder
And I should say, Britain still hasn't signed up to EITI.

Martin Tisné
And Britain still hasn't. And hopefully may as part of its OGP commitments. Creation of new standards, the Global Initial for Fiscal Transparency, an open data charter that we're working on with others. There's really excitement and enthusiasm in the field that's been generated by OGP. The degree to which countries part of OGP can get together and caucus; what we're hoping is that OGP countries will engage with a high

level panel on the rethink of the Millennium Development Goals to see how transparency, accountability and participation fits throughout.

And I think the last point is when we look at this aggregate, of these 450 past commitments what are – ultimately this is about norm. It's about changing global norms. What are the norms that are bubbling up from below? Participatory budgeting, citizen's budget in the Philippines, obviously in Brazil and other countries. Will this bubble up thanks to OGP?

So I think what we need is we need an independent review mechanism that really works that can be tough, that can show that this is serious, that can help us achieve, that can help us have impact and that can also buy us time. Because the only way that we'll really make that real change, it's on a 10, 15, 20 years' time scale.

Owen Barder
Another question from one of our Facebook listeners, Adam Hudson, who you both know: "what one action would demonstrate though real time simple action by people all over the world making connections and sharing information the power of Open?" what one action would demonstrate the power of Open through simple action by people all over the world. Rakesh?

Rakesh Rajani
I think it's a great question. One could be with our schools, I bet you that most of our, certain all your listeners live within five kilometers of a school. We may have our own kids or our own brothers and sisters going to those schools, and yet we don't get engaged. Imagine if we all decide that we're going to engage with that school, whether it's following the money that gets there or seeing whether our kids are learning, where they're helping the teacher or prodding the teacher to do the right thing, reading, taking time to help manage the school. I think if we could all get involved in our local school, we could transform not only education in our children's learning but we could begin to transform a way in which we think about government.

Owen Barder
You're listening to Development Drums with me Owen Barder from the Center for Global Development in Europe. My guests today are Rakesh Rajani and Martin Tisné. You can subscribe to Development Drums free of charge on iTunes. You can also go to the website developmentdrums.org where you can play individual episodes or download them to your mp3 player.

So one of the interesting things about this discussion about open government and citizen agency is that it appeals in parts to a view of development which is about how societies change from within. And it's interesting that we've talked not at all today about donors and the role of donors in the role of aid. We've talked about how citizens themselves can change their relationship with their government and their service providers.

I'm interesting in how this connects to what it is that the International Development Partnership can and can't do. David Cameron talks about a golden thread of institutions, open societies, open economies that bring about development. And he certainly sees, he's bringing to his role in the G8 high level panel that's looking at the future of the Millennium Development Goals an attitude which is that open and accountable societies that are a fundamental driver of the development process. Is that view that David Cameron is expressing something that you would associate yourself with? Do you think that's part of the story? All of the story? Is this is what your – are you living David Cameron's dream when you talk about Open Government Partnership? Martin.

Martin Tisné
Am I living David Cameron's dream? I think it's right; I think ultimately it's the third stage we're at, post-Washington consensus. Washington consensus really doesn't work, it focuses on governments, and institutions and institutions matter and now the pendulum's swinging further saying demand-side, citizens engagements, open societies, open economies. I think it's right, but I think as mentioned earlier about 45 minutes ago when we started it's both about demand, engagement of citizens, open societies, open

economies as well as engaging with institutions to make them more responsive. So I think, yes, and we mustn't also forget institutional reform.

Owen Barder
The analysis that David Cameron has I think is partly about what it is that we as donors should do. Either of you, I guess especially Rakesh what – I mean, are there things that you would like the western powers to be doing or not doing that would help you and people like you in the developing world to run your campaigns more successfully? To what extent is this just an internal, organic bottom-up process that we should walk in solidarity with you, but there's not much that we can directly do? Or to what extent are there things that you would like to see donors doing differently?

Rakesh Rajani
So yes, I mean change is going to come from ourselves, from within the countries and we need to get the proportions right, that's where the focus needs to be and that's where it's going to be. Now A, it can play a small and in some ways, in some countries a slightly bigger, but even in those countries overall a marginal role. And I think A, it can be done badly, or it can be done well. So my sense is that we've learned some lessons. One is that you focus on a few key things that are outcomes, that you need to get out of the way of micromanaging. Another key aspect on results is right, I believe the focus on results is right, but I think there are bad ways of thinking about results and good ways. I mean one of the good ways is you need to give time; you need to understand that you don't get the quick results – I worry a little bit about some of the DFID talk now that it seems to be very short minded and kind of drains the politics out on how change happens.

And I think the other big thing is that we have to remember that if we're interested in reducing poverty, or ending poverty a key part of it is things like trade. We still haven't made enough progress on the trade agenda. There's also a huge issue that I think we're not willing to touch, which we should address, this issue of migration. I think there is plenty of evidence, Michael Clemens has worked for example at CGD, that shows that a more liberal, more open immigration policies – so one of the questions I would want to ask David Cameron if he was here is that, how is open immigration, open movement of people part of the golden thread?

Owen Barder
Martin?

Martin Tisné
Thanks. So a slightly narrower answer around open government, I think there's a lot that funders can do. On one side, supporting, encouraging governments to open up. As Rakesh mentioned transparency information is the fuel, much of what we do. Data is the fuel as well, supporting open data initiatives, open information, freedom of information campaigns. But the other part is, not all, but many, much of this work is still donor supported and the philanthropic communities in the countries we're talking about at large are still relatively weak. And I think to speak of the perspective of Omidyar network that I work for, pretty much all the funding that we give is core funding to organizations to support those organizations and to support entrepreneurs within those groups. So funding, innovation, supporting entrepreneurs, letting them – giving them a fairly wide berth to figure out what the need to do for their countries is I think what funders should do.

And a small plug on that, as an example, we're about to tomorrow, the 13th of November, soft launch a very big fund, a $45 million fund called Making All Voices Count, which is a partnership between Omidyar Network, DFID, USAID and SIDA, the Swedish International Development Agency, which is exactly around that: trying to nurture and create innovation ecosystems in the open government field in about 12 different countries. That's very needed.

Owen Barder
Martin Tisné and Rakesh Rajani, thank you so much for coming on Development Drums.

Martin Tisné

Thank you.

Rakesh Rajani
Thank you for having us.

Owen Barder
You've been listening to Development Drums with me Owen Barder and my guests today have been Martin Tisné and Rakesh Rajani, and the producer is Anna Scott.