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Introduction

The MacArthur Foundation’s Big Bet On Nigeria program supports Nigerian-led efforts to reduce corruption by strengthening accountability, transparency, and participation. Sustainability and institutionalization are essential to the success and legacy of On Nigeria. Given this, in the time remaining before the program’s anticipated exit at the end of 2024, consolidating the Program Team’s understanding of: (1) grantees’ strengths and weaknesses and (2) how grantees and the Program Team might further strengthen grantee organizations, are important priorities.

This learning brief aims to help address those priorities by exploring Learning Question 4.4 from On Nigeria’s Evaluation and Learning (EL) Framework and Learning Priority 2 (see box).¹ The brief presents an analysis of the organizational characteristics and practices of a crosscutting group of On Nigeria grantees and unpacks their views on organizational and portfolio-level sustainability. The evidence in the brief suggests that while individual grantees exhibit many of the characteristics and practices of strong, sustainable organizations and contribute to changes in the broader accountability ecosystem, more work is needed to strengthen the sustainability of cohort and portfolio-level practices and outcomes.

Learning Question

4.4 *How have grantees institutionalized policies, practices, and functions that contribute to the long-term sustainability of their efforts to promote greater transparency, accountability, and participation (as defined by sector)?*

Learning Priority

2 *How do grantees come together to address other topics beyond anticorruption in the broader accountability ecosystem?*

¹ In December 2022 and early 2023, the Program Team and EL Partner identified three “learning priorities” to explore throughout the duration of On Nigeria. These priorities complement the EL Framework’s learning questions.

Sample and Methods

To define the characteristics and practices of strong organizations and explore what sustainability might mean in the context of On Nigeria, EnCompass reviewed documents related to sustainable grantmaking and programming from a variety of sources, including other foundations, the extant literature, and resources shared by the Program Team. Based on the results of this desk review, EnCompass then created a draft framework for understanding organizational strength and sustainability and, after discussions with the Program Team, finalized it based on their feedback and insights. The final framework (Exhibit 1) posits that organizational strength characteristics lead to the practices necessary for organization-level sustainability and that these collectively contribute to the sustainability of the overall On Nigeria portfolio and intended outcomes.

Exhibit 1. Organizational strengthening and sustainability framework

Term	Components	Description
Organizational Strengthening Characteristics	<i>Leadership Internal Processes Staff Capacity</i>	Strong organizations have knowledgeable and capable staff supported by internal processes that allow for efficient and effective communication and decision making. They have successful fundraising and leadership to support these processes and their staff as they plan for the future.
Organizational Strengthening Practices	<i>Adaptation Collaboration Scaling</i>	Organizational practices necessary for sustainability include reacting and adjusting to changes in the operating environment while enhancing their work through strategic partnerships and broadening or deepening successful initiatives in the accountability ecosystem.
Sustainability	<i>Resilience Influence</i>	Sustainable results in the accountability ecosystem need resilient organizations that can continue their work beyond On Nigeria funding and through external changes. Fostering a collective of strong organizations can create influence through lasting changes in the accountability ecosystem.

EnCompass leveraged the framework to identify, collect, and review proposals and reports from a crosscutting sample of 12 grantees representing all four cohorts, selected based on the confidence they reported in the 2023 Grantee Survey regarding their ability to sustain On Nigeria outcomes.² The team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with ten grantees based on the same criteria.³ EnCompass then coded, analyzed, integrated, and synthesized the collected data to generate the overarching findings and conclusions presented in this brief.

² To get a mix of grantees, EnCompass reviewed results from the 2023 grantee survey and identified individual grantees in each cohort who expressed high, medium, and low confidence in their ability to sustain their work in the future. We then selected one grantee from each category within each cohort for inclusion in this brief.

³ All cohorts were represented by three organizations in KIIs (one from each confidence level) apart from Media and Journalism, which was represented by only one grantee due to availability constraints. The majority of KII respondents were also part of the proposal and report review sample, with two exceptions due to grantee availability. A total of 14 grantees are represented by the data in this learning brief.

Findings

Findings are presented in four sets that align with the Organizational Strengthening and Sustainability Framework. The first finding explains how grantees define sustainability in the context of their organizations' work. The second set describes whether and how grantees exhibit the characteristics of strong organizations. The third set explores how grantees engage in the practices of strong organizations, such as adaptation, collaboration, and scaling. The final finding provides perspectives on how grantees work toward sustainability, individually and collectively, and the emerging results they feel their work contributes to in the accountability ecosystem.

How do grantees define and feel about sustainability?

Finding 1: The majority of grantees share a common understanding of sustainability, defining it as the continuation of their initiatives in the future, irrespective of shifts within or outside the organization. Grantees consistently feel that their own organizations are sustainable.

When asked what 'sustainability' means for their organization, most grantees across cohorts referred to the continuation of their work, regardless of internal or external changes or challenges. In line with the Organizational Strengthening Framework, they noted that strengthening internal systems and capacity is important for ensuring resilience and 'continuity' of efforts beyond 2024.

All ten grantees interviewed expressed confidence that their organization would be sustainable in the years to come.⁴ Grantees feel confident that they are resilient and that improvements in staff

Sustainability is ensuring that all we have done or we are doing...is sustained and not affected by the inherence or the leadership of the organization, whether primarily from the secretariat staff or from the governing council, and that we are able to sustain or keep up with that momentum of the change that we are currently built on. – Criminal Justice Grantee, KII

capacity and planning processes equip them to withstand changes. Organizational sustainability is something that grantees have been, and continue to be, focused on. One Criminal Justice grantee, in particular, noted that integrating their organization and work into the country's legal framework will facilitate their continuity.

When it comes to sustainability in the broader context of On Nigeria, beyond grantee organizations, four grantees (from the Behavior Change, Joinbodi, and Criminal Justice cohorts) of the ten interviewed said that, for them, sustainability

⁴ This is somewhat at odds with the 2023 Grantee Survey, in which grantees involved in this brief reported varying levels of confidence in their sustainability. These variations could be down to several factors, including:

- 1) Slight differences in the way questions were worded in the survey and the key informant interviews;
- 2) Previous lines of questioning in the interviews nudging respondents to have a more favorable impression of their organization's sustainability (prior to answering this question, they were encouraged to reflect on and speak to the strength of their organization);
- 3) Different organization representatives completing the survey and participating in the interviews; and
- 4) Grantees' assessment of sustainability changing in the nine months since the grantee survey was completed.

While assessing the relative impact of these factors is not possible, the slight variation between survey results and these KII data reinforces the importance of continuing to explore sustainability throughout the duration of On Nigeria.

means that citizens and government continue to carry out grantee initiatives, without the support of the grantee (see box).

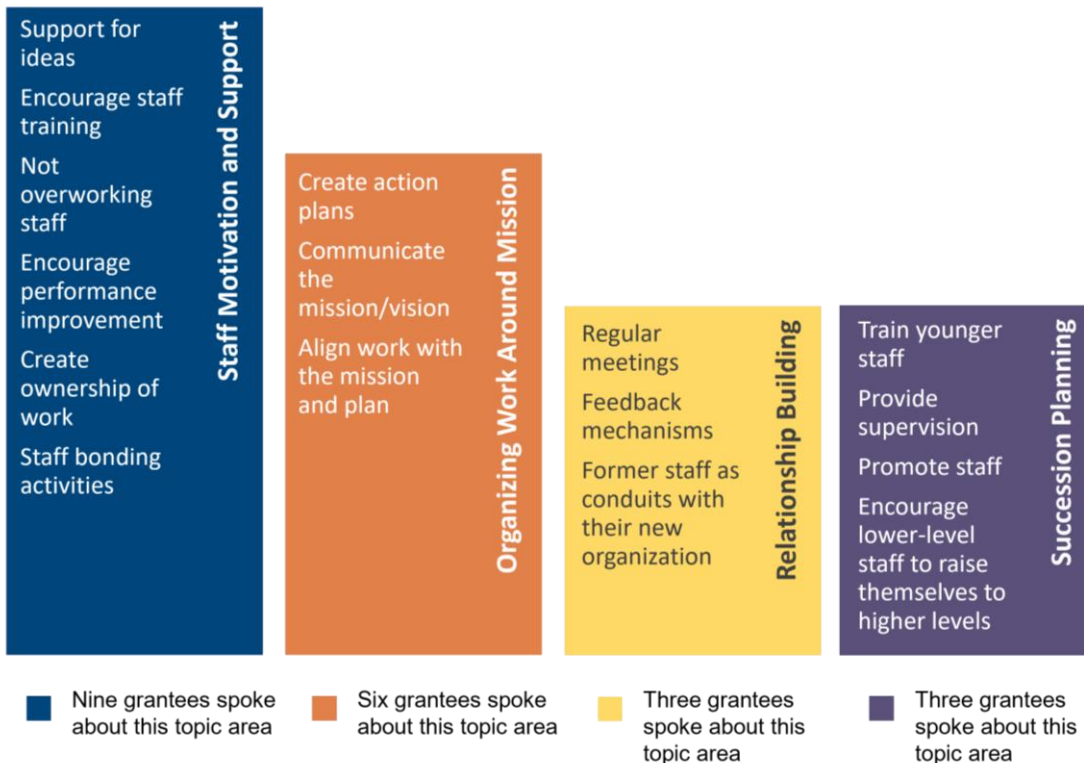
Which characteristics of strong organizations do grantees exhibit, to what extent, and how?

Finding 2: Grantees consistently highlighted strong leadership as key to organizational strength and sustainability. Effective leaders are important for staff motivation and support, furthering the mission/vision of the organization, and to a slightly lesser extent, for relationship building and succession planning.

Grantees explained that effective leadership manifests in several ways in their contexts, with staff motivation and support (see box), alignment with mission and vision, relationship building, and succession planning being especially important (Exhibit 2).

“For staff support, we are encouraged...I do not think the well-being is just about money but, when it comes to also understanding issues that people are passing through, there is this empathy there for staff.” – Media and Journalism Grantee, KII

Exhibit 2. How leadership contributes to grantees' organizational strengths



Of the ten grantees interviewed, four grantees also referred to corporate governance structures, such as a board of directors, in their discussion of leadership. Boards play a variety of roles in grantee organizations, including developing internal policies and practices, re-branding, and strategic plan development. One grantee stated that they have seen improvement in the strength of their board and that it is key for their organization.

Finding 3: Grantees report leveraging fundraising efforts, including revenue generation and pursuing external funding, as well as using financial management practices to strengthen their organization's financial health. However, significant room for growth remains in financial sustainability for continued accountability efforts.

Almost all grantees reported seeking to raise funds by generating revenue and/or pursuing external funding. Specifics varied across organizations, but revenue generation efforts included seeking to monetize products and services in various ways, whereas external funding work involved pursuing new funders, writing proposals, and soliciting donations (Exhibit 3). Across the ten interviews, only two grantees detailed the connection between their finances and sustainability, where one emphasized how their organization’s financial planning is a vital component of their five-year strategic plan.

Exhibit 3. Grantee fundraising activities

Revenue Generation	External Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing and conducting training sessions• Developing capacity building group with membership fees• Renting office space• Writing and selling books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational mapping to identify new funders• Supporting communities to request funding from local government• Writing proposals• Creating charity arm of organization to solicit donations

Four grantees of the ten also referred to the use of financial monitoring and oversight systems to ensure effective management of funds. Five grantees explained that accounts and annual audits support financial management, and two grantees noted these processes have led to cost savings. One grantee also mentioned that being transparent about finances, including publishing audit results and sharing them with their board, was a good practice.

Overall, grantees’ financial sustainability remains somewhat unclear, though some report that they are still in the early stages of addressing financial sustainability concerns (see box for an example).

“We have started conversations with financial institutions about raising funds to execute some of the projects. We kind of have not been stable for a while due to lack of funding...now, with the body of work we have been able to accumulate over the past couple of years, we are beginning to have those conversations.” – Behavior Change Grantee, KII

Finding 4: A majority of grantees report developing and using strategic plans, with five out of ten grantees explaining that this is important for organizational sustainability. Some grantees also described using internal policies and practices on communication, knowledge management, capacity building, revenue generation, and participatory leadership to anchor strategy implementation.

Seven grantees across all ten interviews reported the use of a work plan, action plan, or strategic plan, the length of which ranged from 2–5 years. These plans were generally created with input from various stakeholders, including the board, multiple staff, and external partners. Grantees use such plans to determine program activities and make strategic decisions regarding financial administration, capacity building, and other internal policies and practices. Two of the three Behavior Change grantees explained that they review and adapt their plans regularly, including in response to an organizational assessment that identified areas for improvement. The majority of grantees that use these plans believe they have the potential to contribute to the organization’s sustainability. Two grantees also complemented their strategic plans with either a resource mobilization plan or a strategic communication plan.

“Yeah, we have our strategic plan, which is still in process...what we have identified in our strategic plan, where we want to see ourselves in the next 5 years... and what we need to do to get there, and one of the things that we identified that will take us there is how to see beyond MacArthur, how do we continue to sustain what we do.” – Media and Journalism Grantee, KII

Grantees also reported that strategic planning informed the development and use of internal policies and practices for strengthening knowledge management (via staff knowledge sharing sessions and filing and backing up documents regularly), monetizing services and pursuing additional funding, building staff capacity, and adopting participatory leadership models. The use of such policies and practices resulted in more strategic decision making.

Finding 5: Grantees view building internal capacity as an essential component of their organizations, including with respect to sustainability. They deliberately engage staff in technical, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), and operational capacity-building efforts, some of which are conducted internally, with others led by external organizations.

“We have...the staff performance appraisal, where we get staff to talk about their strengths and their weaknesses and areas that they think they will need capacity building...so that they can arrange for trainings for such staff.” – Joinbodi Grantee, KII

Technical Capacity Building: In the ten interviews, eight grantees reported conducting and/or participating in activities intended to strengthen staff’s technical skills related to programmatic focus areas, such as behavioral insight, investigative and data-driven journalism, legal training, and constituency project tracking, as well as more generally in IT, writing, and presentations/public speaking. One grantee also mentioned building capacity in social

media, gender equity, and public relations. Two grantees supported or encouraged staff in obtaining master’s or professional certificates.

MEL Capacity Building: Eight of the ten grantees described participating in MEL training facilitated by other organizations. Six of these grantees mentioned MEL training conducted by the Technical Assistance (TA) Partner, while others worked with organizations such as German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption, Partners West Africa (a grantee), the University of Sussex, USAID, and Cloneshouse Nigeria. Specific topics included indicators, project monitoring, theory of change, skills gap assessments, and documenting results. Three grantees detailed how they used their improved MEL capacity to conduct assessments, disseminate their

theory of change, and, in the case of one Media and Journalism grantee, to train partners in MEL. Moving forward, grantees mentioned that further improving MEL processes will be important for sustainability (one grantee specifically explained that using Key Performance Indicators has supported learning and sustainability, while another acknowledged that they needed to better document their work to identify lessons learned).

Operational Capacity Building: A few grantees are strengthening staff capacity in administration and operations, fundraising, project management, and HR related topics. The majority of these efforts are undertaken internally. However, one grantee mentioned an upcoming Communications training led by the MacArthur Foundation.

“In our own little way, we are trying to imbibe some of the principles we are taught... We have a little knowledge of M&E, and... we are applying it, but I still very much believe that we still have very much to learn. We want to be more effective in the area of M&E. It is an area where we will appreciate more interventions, more support, to be able to build our capacity in this respect.” – Criminal Justice Grantee, KII

Which practices of strong organizations do grantees exhibit, to what extent, and how?

Finding 6: All grantees noted the importance of collaboration, and some explicitly acknowledged the role of collaboration and partnership in achieving sustainable impact. However, grantees highlighted ways in which collaboration with others—especially around knowledge sharing—must improve to better facilitate sustainable programming across their cohorts and the broader On Nigeria portfolio.

Grantees consistently noted the importance of collaboration and partnership to achieving program impact. Collaboration with other grantees within and across cohorts, and with others in the accountability ecosystem, on activities such as information sharing and joint programming, was a key consideration in program design and featured significantly in all grantee proposals.

In interviews, Joinbodi, Behavior Change, and Criminal Justice grantees emphasized the importance of information and knowledge sharing for collaborating effectively and sustainably. As reported in the 2022 Social Network Analysis (SNA) Baseline report, grantees have access to several platforms aimed at sharing information, including module and cross-module meetings, Partners United Against Corruption (PUAC) (a website on which many On Nigeria grantees already share data, reports, and lessons), WhatsApp groups, and X-grants. However, grantees’ engagement with these platforms varies.

“What I will plead with our cohorts is to... get a knowledge-sharing platform beyond the On Nigeria project. We really need to do that because there are so many ways we can help ourselves even though we are prospering individually. That collaboration, that knowledge-sharing, will really go a long way to helping the cohort sustain what they do and in fact, increase momentum.” – Behavior Change Grantee, KII

All three Joinbodi grantees, one Media and Journalism grantee, two Criminal Justice grantees, and two Behavior Change grantees reported that more and more effective collaboration is needed to improve sustainability. Joinbodi grantees noted that, though opportunities for collaboration within their cohort are useful, they still often work in silos

and do not have comprehensive knowledge of other organizations’ activities. They appreciated that an X-grant brought members of the cohort together for a limited period of time but explained that participants all returned to their silos at the end of the grant. Because they do not know what other grantees are working on and because they do not often co-write or co-develop projects, developing longer lasting collaborative opportunities was challenging. Relatedly, one Joinbodi grantee shared a wish that they could focus more on complementary programming with other grantees in the Joinbodi cohort and beyond, such that organizations across cohorts could work together as a collective system.

Finding 7: Grantees plan, and are in some cases beginning to employ a variety of 'scaling' strategies to improve sustainability. These include engaging other organizations and actors to deepen current activities, access new audiences, and carry out programming themselves, as well as expanding or replicating activities for other geographic locations or groups of people.

Grantees recognize the importance of 'scaling' activities and operations to sustainability. Strategies around 'scaling' varied across different organizations and cohorts, with Joinbodi and Behavior Change grantees—in keeping with the theory of change for each cohort—deploying more, and more diverse, scaling strategies than grantees from other cohorts (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Planned and ongoing strategies for scaling as reported by KII respondents across cohorts (n = 10)

	Geographic expansion		Engaging new audiences and participants			Collaboration with new partners	
	States and localities	International	GESI groups *	Local and community stakeholders	New issues, sectors	International NGOs and donors	Nigeria-based organizations
Criminal Justice (n=3)	X			X			
Behavior Change (n=3)	X	X	X	X		X	X
Joinbodi (n=3)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Media and Journalism (n=1)	X	X	X		X	X	

*Youth, women, persons with disabilities, speakers of local languages

GESI: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion; NGO: Nongovernmental organization

Geographic expansion. Most grantees mentioned activities and plans related to expanding and replicating activities in other localities and states. Though not implemented yet, Behavior Change and Joinbodi grantees were particularly interested in expanding programming regionally to other African countries, especially elsewhere in West Africa. Most Criminal Justice grantees did not mention plans to scale their work in the future, though this may be because the cohort has *already* scaled programming across Nigeria (at the federal level and within each state).

Engaging new audiences and participants. In proposals and annual reports, two of three Media and Journalism and three Behavior Change grantees described ‘scaling’ as reaching larger audiences, especially through disseminating information via new media platforms and engaging audiences in dialogue. Considerations around reaching new participants and audiences included Gender Equity and Social Inclusion strategies. One Behavior Change grantee noted that they deliver much of their programming in Hausa, but they are still constrained in terms of reaching other groups or regions where languages such as Yoruba are spoken. One Joinbodi grantee scaled programming through targeting and empowering marginalized groups within project communities, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. A Media and Journalism grantee hoped to focus more on engaging young journalists in activities to encourage sustainability.

“We are looking at regional expansion, especially with the games that we are developing, and at least we started those initial conversations with the Open Society Foundation... we do have like a relationship with them through a sister company [and we seek to work with them] in terms of spreading the reach of our interventions, particularly across West Africa, to begin with, and across the continent. These are conversations that we started, and we are also looking to deepen.” – Behavior Change Grantee, KII

Collaborating with new partners. Grantees mentioned beginning outreach and planning to engage new Nigeria-based and international donors or partners. For example, one Joinbodi grantee reported that when expanding activities to different states, they partnered with local level organizations or community leaders to conduct activities to also build the capacity of these community groups. Grantees also mentioned seeking work or working with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Kingdom’s Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, and the Open Society Foundations, which could potentially provide funding.

Scaling through ‘localization’

Many grantees also reported that they identify, train, and build the capacity of “grassroots” partners to carry out future programming without direct support. All three Joinbodi grantees, for example, described training partners in advocacy, monitoring, and community engagement, whereas one Behavior Change grantee reported training of trainers, and a Criminal Justice grantee trained legal professionals across the country to monitor law enforcement, legal institutions, and courts for signs of corruption. All of these “localization” efforts are intended to contribute to the sustainability of grantees’ work and achievements.

Finding 8: Grantees worked strategically to adjust programming in response to changes in the political context, the COVID-19 pandemic, and emerging MEL data, including by shifting to sub-national and community-level activities and leveraging virtual programming to reach larger audiences.

In ten out of 12 grantee proposals reviewed, grantees mentioned plans for adapting projects to potential challenges. In annual reports, grantees explained that they applied various strategies (Exhibit 5) in response to changes in political operating environments, public feedback and MEL data, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Interview data corroborated these reports.

“...what [the adaptation] has done is that apart from achieving the goals of the project, it has actually left more skilled members of the community with [the] technical capacity to be able to carry out the various community engagements and activities like community outreach, project tracking, capacity building around Open Government Partnership (OGP), engagement with government, and contributing to the budget process.” – Joinbodi Grantee, KII

Adapting to contextual changes. Two of three Joinbodi grantees and one Criminal Justice grantee reported that they adapted programming in response to changes in political or security contexts. Grantees used these potential challenges as an opportunity to innovate and still achieved intended results. For example, one Joinbodi grantee encountered a deteriorating security situation in one of their project states, which prevented travel to deliver in-person activities as planned. The grantee responded by instead training local trainers and building the capacity of community members to conduct accountability activities.

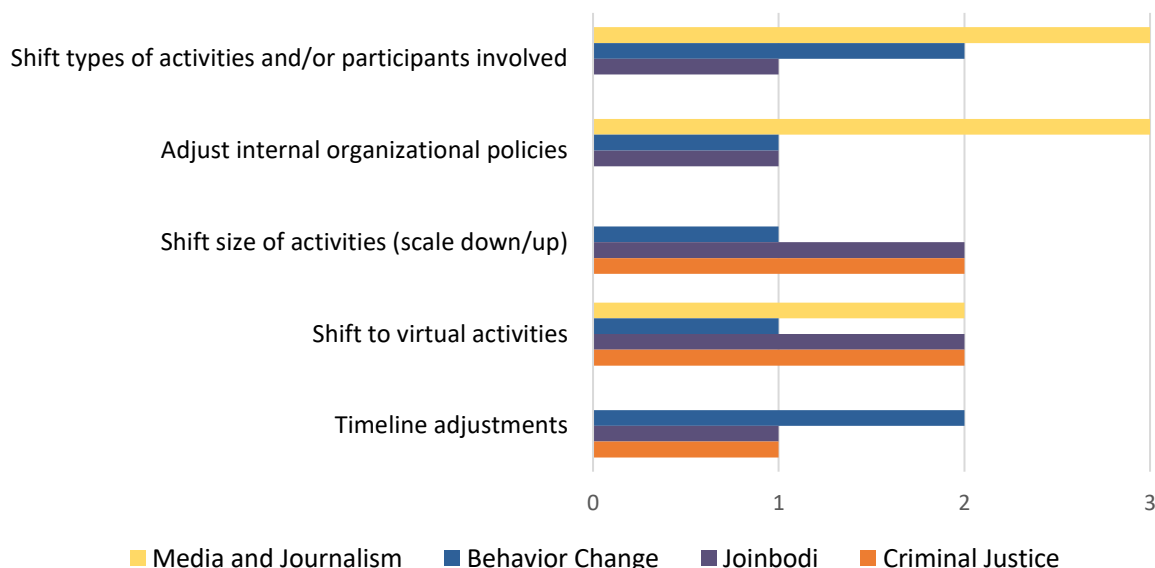
Adapting to the pandemic. Grantees most often referenced the COVID-19 pandemic as the major disruption that led to changes in activity approaches and their internal systems, some of which have been sustained and integrated into their work post-pandemic. For example, grantees across cohorts began working remotely, using virtual tools such as Zoom and Google platforms to sustain operations. One Behavior Change grantee reported that their shift to virtual training programs helped them to reach more participants than would have been possible if they had only implemented in-person training.

MEL efforts informing adaptation. During the ten interviews, four grantees (two Behavior Change, one Joinbodi, and one Media and Journalism) reported that they used information gathered from MEL efforts to adjust their activities and serve intended stakeholders more appropriately.

“Our evaluation and monitoring revealed the need for face-to-face, interactive sessions with people in rural communities, where a sizeable percentage did not have access to television. For instance, the town halls offered people at the grassroots the opportunity to ask questions, offer suggestions...It also offered us [the] opportunity to gauge and measure the impact of our project.” – Media and Journalism Grantee, Annual Report

When considering and implementing programming adjustments, two Joinbodi grantees, one Behavior Change grantee, and one Criminal Justice grantee also said that taking an open and collaborative strategic approach facilitated successful adaptations. For example, the Criminal Justice grantee said that open decision-making processes enabled innovation that would not have occurred if executive staff managed unilaterally. In this specific instance, the grantee collected more than 20,000 additional court rulings and judgements after a staff member (without significant legal expertise) recommended going directly to court and judicial institutions to gather and publish legal documents as open source data. Grantees also described including staff and board members as relevant for decision making around adaptations.

Exhibit 5. Grantee strategies to adapt programming to respond to contextual challenges or changes, as explained in annual reports (n=12 [three grantees from each cohort])



In what ways are grantees contributing to sustainable outcomes?

Finding 9: Though significant challenges remain, grantees in all cohorts believe they have achieved outcomes that will contribute to lasting and influential change in Nigeria’s accountability ecosystem. These outcomes vary by cohort and grantee but include: strengthening voice actors’ ability to take action and contributions to the improvement, monitoring, and implementation of laws and policies related to anticorruption and criminal justice.

Grantees reported many examples of what they described as their sustainable influence within the accountability ecosystem (Exhibit 6). For example, in reports, all three Criminal Justice grantees and two Joinbodi grantees described how their advocacy work affected policy, while all Media and Journalism grantees provided evidence of how their published content has driven action among stakeholders. Behavior Change grantees provided the least evidence of influence in their reports.

Exhibit 6. Grantee influence in the accountability ecosystem, by change type and module

Policy adoption/ implementation	Improving criminal justice system	Transparency, accountability, and participation	Change in local gov’t behavior/practice	Empowering communities
Engagement with Federal Ministry of Justice and Senate Committee on Anticorruption for the renewal of National Anticorruption Strategy (CJ)	Developed case management system to support those unlawfully detained (CJ)	Conducting investigations that lead to a response and action from stakeholders involved to remedy the issue or prevent it in the future (MJ)	Trained journalists in highlighting provisions of the ACJA, and once reported on, some officials started changing their practices (CJ)	Reporting corruption on local issues in local languages to include various populations and empower them to take action against corruption (MJ)

Policy adoption/ implementation	Improving criminal justice system	Transparency, accountability, and participation	Change in local gov't behavior/practice	Empowering communities
Advocacy with state level government to pass ACJL in Zamfara and Niger states (CJ)	Worked with Supreme Court committee on ensuring speedy trials (CJ)	Capacity building of media partners to conduct quality investigations which the partners want to continue after support is complete (MJ)	Trained OGP, which now includes community members in the community development charter (JB)	Hold town halls after investigations with stakeholders that provide space for community members to speak on the issue directly to duty bearers (giving priority to groups that are not typically empowered to speak) (MJ)
Trained criminal justice actors in ACJA/L provisions (CJ)			Investigations into corrupt behaviors of officials has led to better behavior because they know the media is watching (MJ)	Constituency project tracking has led to town hall meetings where citizens demand accountability and inclusion (JB)
Updated ICPC national values curriculum, which will be taught to children (BC)				Through meetings and interventions, women reported being able to stand up and be heard regarding anticorruption work (JB)

MJ: Media and Journalism; BC: Behavior Change; JB: Joinbodi; CJ: Criminal Justice; ACJA: Administration of Criminal Justice Act; ACJL: Administration of Criminal Justice Law; OGP: Open Government Partnership; ICPC: Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission

“[Grantee]’s work will need the cooperation of legislators, including implementing agencies that may not be forthcoming with information. [We] will, however, use its advocacy skills and prior knowledge of the policy environment in Ekiti and Osun States to mitigate this potential risk...” – Joinbodi Grantee, Annual Report

In interviews, Behavior Change, Joinbodi, and Media and Journalism grantees explained that as a result of their work, citizens and communities—including those in communities from historically marginalized populations, such as women, youth, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities—are more empowered to mobilize, advocate to local government, and demand action. Joinbodi grantees and the Media and Journalism grantee also reported changes in the attitudes and behavior of local government officials as a result of their work, with local government officials

practicing more transparency, engaging more with community members, and responding to community requests. Criminal Justice grantees reported that they have influenced passage and implementation of laws and policies through training legal professionals, monitoring government, and building the capacity of states to implement the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA).

Grantees acknowledged that there are and will be challenges regarding political will, economic ups and downs, and funding, but felt confident in navigating these. In reports, the uncertainty of government cooperation was a concern for multiple grantees. They suggested potential means of mitigating this threat, including maintaining strong relationships with other actors in the accountability ecosystem, including Nigerian officials, other grantees, and the MacArthur Foundation.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: In the aggregate, On Nigeria grantees exhibit many of the characteristics of strong organizations, and many grantees are also engaged in at least some of the organizational practices that underpin sustainability. That said, while there is no one-size-fits-all roadmap to creating sustainable organizations, room for growth remains in key areas (aligned with Findings 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8).

A majority of individual grantees exhibit the characteristics of strong organizations according to their unique contexts, strengths, and focus areas. For example, some grantees interviewed for this brief reported developing systematized processes and policies that guide internal knowledge management and corporate governance. Others highlighted their efforts to engage in strategic planning and management, while still others explained how they leverage internal and external opportunities to build the technical, MEL, and operational capacity of their staff based on their needs. The leadership, internal management, and staff capacity-building approaches used across the On Nigeria portfolio appear to contribute to healthier, more sustainable organizations.

This trend persists at the second level of the Organizational Strengthening Framework, organizational practices. Here again, many grantees—in their own unique ways—are leveraging strengths and opportunities to scale and adapt their work. Some organizations report scaling via deploying promising approaches in new geographies, for example, while others are more focused on engaging new audiences to build more momentum behind their work. When it comes to strategic adjustments, some grantees make changes in response to monitoring data, while others report engaging in adaptation due to new ideas offered by junior staff. Collaborative practices, while inhibited by weak knowledge sharing (as is further discussed in Conclusion 2), also vary by grantee.

The sum of all of this is that there is no single template for organizational strengthening and sustainability that fits **ALL** grantees. Instead, each organization is navigating its own sustainability journey, trying to build the specific combination of leadership, policies, skills, and practices that suit its own context and goals. Though there are evident gaps in grantees' organizational strength related to fundraising, financial planning, and collaboration, the way those gaps show up and how they might be filled is likely to vary considerably by organization type, size, cohort, and programming focus, among other variables. How to best support grantees in addressing their specific needs in these areas, in ways that make sense for each organization and the overall portfolio, is a priority for consideration as On Nigeria approaches its exit at the end of 2024.

Conclusion 2: With some caveats, individual grantees appear to be optimistic that their organizations are sustainable and that they are contributing to lasting changes in the accountability ecosystem. The sustainability of cohort and portfolio-level practices and programming, however, is less clear, especially when it comes to sustaining collaboration beyond the end of On Nigeria (aligned with Findings 1, 3, 6, and 9).

Grantees included in the sample for this brief have worked to strengthen the sustainability of their organizations in many ways. While room for growth remains, these efforts, combined with grantees' reported confidence in the overall sustainability of their organizations and the numerous examples they provided of how their work appears to be strengthening the broader accountability ecosystem, suggests that individual organizations may be well-positioned to achieve further success in the future, even after On Nigeria's exit at the end of 2024.

However, when considering the sustainability of cohort and strategy-level practices and outcomes, the picture is somewhat less rosy. Despite expressing a desire for and belief in the value of collaboration with others, including other grantees, respondents still often work in silos and do not partner with fellow cohort members as much as they would like. As a result, they struggle to share knowledge and only intermittently engage in the complementary programming and sustained collaboration integral to On Nigeria's cohort and strategy-level Theory of Change. This not only hinders progress toward the institutionalization of On Nigeria's intended outcomes. It also has consequences for the sustainability of the accountability ecosystem.

This evidence is consistent with findings previously reported in the *2022 Social Network Analysis Baseline Report*,⁵ the *2022 Synthesis Learning Memo*,⁶ and *Learning Brief 4: Grantee-ACA/Accountability Body Collaboration*,⁷ among other learning products. A strong foundation for sustaining collaborative networks throughout the accountability ecosystem and institutionalizing intended outcomes beyond the anticipated exit of On Nigeria may be emerging. But more work is needed to deliver on the potential of that foundation and ensure grantees are collectively resilient and influential. This might mean facilitating additional capacity building for groups of grantees, even more intentionally linking grantees across cohorts to support complementary programming, and considering how existing funding modalities, including X-Grants, could be (re)positioned to facilitate broader and deeper collaborative efforts that might continue even after On Nigeria's conclusion.

⁵ See, for example, **Finding 12:** *Grantees report that they are well-positioned to draw on existing strengths—the breadth and depth of grantee and partner expertise, ongoing interactions among accountability actors, and platforms for connection and innovation—to develop the collaborative initiatives needed to improve the inclusiveness and sustainability of the On Nigeria-centered network. To capitalize on those strengths, more work and action are needed.*

⁶ See **Finding 5:** *Grantees report that more strategic, systematic approaches to identifying and implementing collaborative efforts are needed to sustain and expand emerging collaborations and institutionalize existing partnerships.*

⁷ See **Conclusion 3:** *Despite grantees' successes to date, two gaps in the overarching accountability ecosystem remain especially apparent: first, anticorruption actions do not consistently include historically marginalized groups, and second, the emerging collaborative relationships, platforms, and mechanisms to which grantees have contributed are not yet fully consolidated.*

Learning Considerations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented in this brief, and drawing on the November 2023 Grantee Learning Event in Abuja (much of which focused on issues related to grantees' organizational strength, the sustainability of the accountability ecosystem, and the legacy of On Nigeria), the Program Team may benefit from reflecting on the following questions:

- 1. The accountability ecosystem in Nigeria faces many constraints and pressures. These include, but are not limited to, disinformation, closing civic space, and declining funding and resources for anticorruption programming. In this challenging context, how might the Program Team help grantees maximize the organizational strengthening and sustainability support it can provide in On Nigeria's final year – including the facilitation of connections with other potential donors and partners, support for both place-based and thematic convenings, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, and offering X-grants – to further the legacy of the program?*
- 2. In what specific ways can grantees leverage these opportunities to deliver the partnerships, collective knowledge sharing and learning, and cross-cohort coordination they think are necessary to strengthen the sustainability of their work?*

