



Why Trust (not Money, Data, Evidence, Argument, Credentials) is the Currency of Change

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7 KEY GAPS TO ACHIEVING SYSTEMS CHANGE

1. Most CSOs, philanthropy, consultancies don't get *what makes govts tick*. CSOs and govts demonstrate little curiosity on what motivates/constrains actors on the other side.
2. Politics is the biggest determinant of systems change, but many of us are trained to shirk politics in development. Poor understanding of how to foster real accountability.
3. Gender equality and other forms of inclusion are acknowledged but treated superficially. Particularly the underlying drivers of discrimination and deeper manifestations of agency. Great work often has no scale.
4. How people's lives are improving is not clear. Activities reign, processes are fetishized. Lack of prioritization means little focus on outcomes that matter.
5. Capacity is thought of as *individual skills* not *system* relationships, incentives, motivations. Little idea of how to get bureaucracies to think, function with confidence
6. We are reaching the limits of solving problems through logistical efficiency. But our practices do not help us do the deep work that our big challenges require.
7. The nature of most types of funding creates noise/distraction on the sidelines, undermining true systems change and furthering cynicism.

5 MISSING SUPPORTS

1. Getting the technical aspects right matters, but the major constraints to progress are **political and institutional** rather than technical.
2. Good design and planning are crucial to success, but **effective implementation** makes the lived difference in people's lives.
3. Delivery matters, but it's not all about deliverology. **How people experience public systems**, how they are treated, matters.
4. Leaders struggle with isolation, they crave **trusted relationships and community** to be their best selves.
5. Funding and support that can help get much **better value/impact out of existing resources**.

7 KEY MINDSET & MUSCLES WE NEED

1. Focus on state capability, culture and practice to get things done well instead of pushing for specific issue or solution. Start with where govt is at.
2. What matters is a methodology – a set of questions, a way of thinking, an approach–rooted in values and purpose, rather than policy ideas or solutions.
3. Real systems change takes deep work, but our environments reward shallow work. One needs to stop, step back and cut out the noise to focus and do deep work.
4. It takes unusual partnerships and (political) coalitions. Elites matter a lot. One needs to generate trust and commitment for shared outcomes across difference.
5. We need to reimagine accountability from adversarial (naming and shaming, only pressure) to relational, as shared responsibility for shared purpose.
6. People seeking to drive systems change need certain sensibilities, including clarity of purpose, a grounding in values, a curious, open and learning mind.
7. The right kind of resourcing: strategic, flexible, trusting, patient that can leverage much bigger sums from the state and private sector.