CONNECTED BY DATA

Theory of change

About this document

This document sets out our Theory of Change (ToC). This embodies our current working assumptions about how our activities will lead to the change we want to see in the world.

To put this ToC into practice we will develop various **strategies**, **tactics** and **programmes** to act on it, and test its assumptions.

Contents

Our vision

We want communities to have a powerful say in decisions about data so that it is used to create a just, equitable and sustainable world.

Our mission

We campaign to put community at the centre of data narratives, practices and policies by advocating for collective and open data governance.

Our approach

We work openly, collaboratively and relationally. We know that we cannot create change alone: we want to galvanise and give our support to partners within a broad movement for change.

We work with an awareness of power, privilege and pluralism. We believe collective data governance practice should be shaped by different communities across the globe, and we seek to work in ways that use our privilege to work for greater social justice.

We strive to play a bridging role. We work to connect between different communities: from translating work between technology, policy and research communities, to making connections between grassroots groups and global networks.

Overview

The problem >	Our actions >	Outcomes >	Impacts
We know that...	**We campaign to foster...**	**Our advocacy will lead to...**	**When we succeed then...**
Data governance isn't working People are and feel overly surveilled Our societies, environment & economies are harmed by unaccountable data practices Some public benefits of data are being missed	**Publics** through developing a compelling narrative of collective data governance, placing stories in the media and other key venues that will influence communities and decision makers, and working alongside diverse communities to help define how data governance should work for them.	Journalists, storytellers and thought leaders adopting a narrative of collective data governance and public participation, rather than placing the burden of data governance on the individual alone	Communities will have a powerful say in decisions about data, and it will be used to create a just, equitable and sustainable world
We are working in a context where...			**Resulting in impacts such as...**
Solutions focus on data ownership – the public lacks a narrative of collective data governance Communities feel disempowered Organisations lack capacity and established models for embedding participatory data governance practice Policymakers don't know how or why to design policies and regulation for collective data governance	**Practice** through surfacing and sharing examples of collective and participatory governance, and building a community of practitioners who lead and support collective data governance activities. **Policy** through providing evidence-based public policy recommendations and language that creates an environment for collective and participatory data governance.	Communities feeling empowered and equipped to demand a powerful say in data governance Organisations committing to and adopting collective and participatory data governance Tech workers implementing meaningful collective data governance practices Politicians and policy makers creating legislation and policy documents that enable, encourage and enforce collective data governance	Marginalised communities are no longer profiled and excluded through data School pupils and parents have confidence that education data is being used to support improvements in teaching and learning Consumers know that when they give new digital services access to their banking or finance data, it is being analysed in ways that support, rather than exploit them Refugees can gain access to services without fearing exploitation and misuse of their data Public service leaders are more confident in designing housing support services that use data responsibly and ethically Cross-border health research is able to discover new treatments, while retaining trust of research participants

Narrative

The problem

Current approaches to data governance in both public and the private sectors are not working. As a result, people are overly surveilled and their rights violated. Our societies, environment and economies are being harmed by monopolistic and unaccountable collection, sharing and use of data. And some public benefits of data are being missed.

Data governance decisions are frequently opaque, made without any attention to the interests of the communities most affected. This erodes public trust and undermines the legitimacy of organisations that use data.

The context

We are all connected by data, so our collective interests should be at the heart of decisions about how data is collected, used and shared. **Deliberative and participatory practices are powerful tools** to align decisions about data governance with the interests of the communities affected by them.

However:

- The public lack a narrative of collective data governance. When data issues are framed in terms of only privacy, ownership and individual control, the solutions proposed fail to deliver fair and effective outcomes. Some of the loudest voices calling for change are pushing the wrong solutions.

- Communities affected by data, algorithms and AI lack understanding and feel disempowered. Their trust in organisations collecting and using data is tenuous.

- Organisations lack capacity and established models for embedding participatory data governance practice.

- Policymakers don't know how or why to design policies and regulation for collective data governance

Our actions and approach

Our approach is rooted in advocacy and campaigning: we cannot successfully change policy and practice without also shifting the data governance narrative and enabling communities to advocate for themselves.

We target...	Through (channels)...	To motivate change by...
Publics	Mainstream media	Creating a clear narrative on what is wrong with the status quo, and how collective data governance can help
Journalists, storytellers and thought leaders who talk about the role of data in our society	Social media	
	Strategic relationship building, including with affected communities	Showing that doing nothing is not an option
Individuals and organisations that represent communities affected by data	Partnerships with larger established influencers (think tanks; trade unions; etc.)	Building a movement that creates both peer pressure and a sense of solidarity
Practice	Policy conferences and publications	**And build capability by...**
Organisations who govern data, and their leaders (eg Chief Data Officers)	Industry conferences and publications	Working alongside communities to help them define how data governance should work for them
Tech workers who implement data collection and use	Coalition building with a diverse range of actors, including both insider and grassroots voices	Surfacing and sharing examples of collective and participatory governance to build and learn together with a community of practitioners
Policy	Community building events and platforms	
Politicians who set policy priorities around data		Providing evidence-based public policy recommendations and language
Policymakers, think tanks and academics who design and advise on data policy		**And prompt action by...**
		Leveraging news stories or scandals about data
		Seeking opportunities offered by new legislation or policy initiatives

Our outcomes and impacts

Our actions will lead to...

- Journalists, storytellers and thought leaders adopting a narrative of collective data governance and public participation, rather than placing the burden of data governance on the individual alone.

- Communities feeling empowered and equipped to demand a powerful say in data governance.

- Organisations committing to and adopting collective and participatory data governance.

- Tech workers implementing meaningful collective data governance practices.

- Politicians and policy makers creating legislation and policy documents that enable, encourage and enforce collective data governance.

When we succeed, decisions about data will be made collectively and openly. Communities will have a powerful say in decisions about data, and it will be used to create a just, equitable and sustainable world.

The rights of individuals and communities will be prioritised in the way systems handle data.

Organisations will be held to account for how they collect, share and use data. Data-driven surveillance practices will be reduced, harmful uses of data will be prevented, people and communities will gain redress, and data monopolies will be disrupted.

At the same time, trustworthy, public good uses of data will be enabled, encouraged and facilitated.

Resulting in impacts such as...

- Marginalised communities are no longer profiled and excluded through data

- School pupils and parents have confidence that education data is being used to support improvements in teaching and learning

- Consumers know that when they give new digital services access to their banking or finance data, it is being analysed in ways that support, rather than exploit them

- Refugees can gain access to services without fearing exploitation and misuse of their data

- Public service leaders are more confident in designing housing support services that use data responsibly and ethically

- Cross-border health research is able to discover new treatments, while retaining trust of research participant

Strategies

Focus our storytelling on specific sectors

To allow us to develop clear and grounded narratives on the harms of the status quo, and the difference collective data governance can make, we will focus our proactive research on stories from a limited set of sectors, chosen to be of value for influencing our key targets. These will represent a range of types of impacts, organisations and kinds of data governance challenges.

Build policy experience in the UK, and expand from there

In 2022/23 we will focus our policy advocacy on the UK, responding to the opportunity of the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill, and building on our existing networks and experience.

We will have a watching brief on the development of relevant policy in other areas of the world. Our partnerships with Research ICT Africa, the Aapti Institute and ITSRio mean we have routes to influence policy in the African Union, India, and South America, and the G20 through their upcoming presidencies.

In future years we aim to develop our policy and advocacy expertise in other regions and countries, with an emphasis on expanding to EU policy making in the first instance.

Work where the doors are open

To build experience, develop case studies and grow momentum, we are initially prioritising working with organisations that are most amenable to arguments about equity and justice: social enterprises and cooperatives; data-intensive charities; and frontline public sector organisations.

Connect with a global community of practice on collective data governance

We recognise that different groups around the world are coming to realise the value of a collective data governance perspective. We want to learn from practice across the world, and to work with others to develop a coherent global narrative and community around collective and participatory data governance.

We will dedicate time to building our global links, and to supporting the creation of common narratives and positions with partners in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America.