

THE ENGINE ROOM

Accelerating Social Change

WHAT WE DO

The Engine Room's Partner Support

Data and Technology for Social Change

The Engine Room is an international, multi-disciplinary team that is singularly focused on supporting partners to use data and technology to increase their impact.


The reusability, scalability, and efficiencies of technology present an opportunity for organisations to cut costs, unite new communities and build new narratives. The flood of data and data collection mechanisms pervasive technology offers can help social change agents drive advocacy with evidence and narrative, measure and target impact, and build a robust civil society able to seize the opportunities that technology brings.

We believe that the only way to reach positive change at scale is for the social sector to strategically apply data and technology.

How do we support organisations to hone their projects, approaches, and strategies to do so?

Systemic change is our goal. This requires thoughtfully designed partnerships with individuals, organisations, networks and communities.

Our work with partners is predominantly in the fields of Transparency and Accountability, Human Rights, and Environmental Justice, though our methods are applicable to all civil society organisations and we work with a broad range of other sectors. Our team continues to grow in technical, cultural, and geographic diversity, and we believe that that diversity greatly increases our effectiveness.



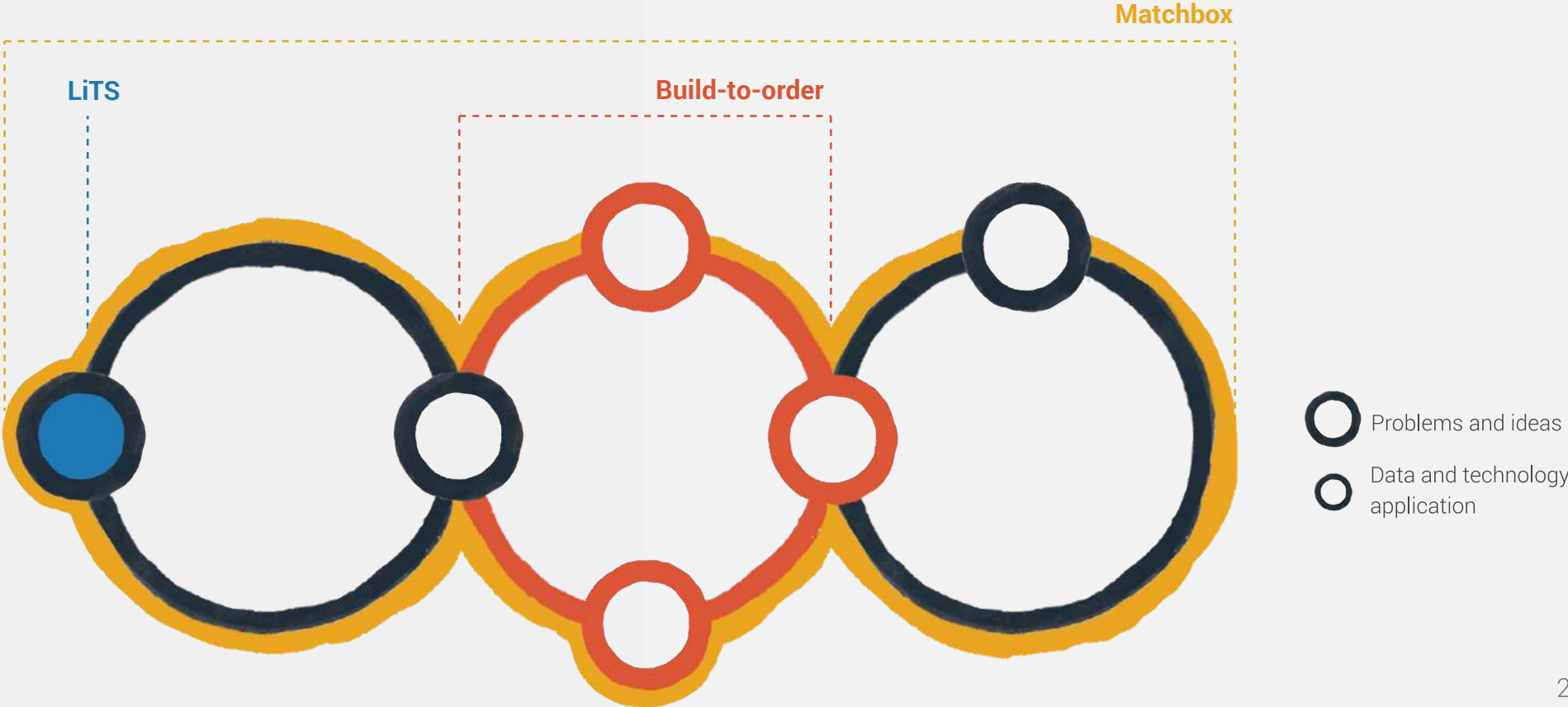
We target support to groups who seek it. This **demand-driven approach** directs our time and energy towards increasing the power and impact of organisations at the frontlines.

We are **tool-agnostic**. This means we are free to advise and support using any type of strategy that fits a demonstrated need. We are not a hammer looking for nails.

We coordinate **multidisciplinary** teams to offer the diverse combinations of skills needed to tackle unique challenges.

Support Formats

Our support targets an end-to-end change process. Whether at the start of defining the problem, or working through critical roadblocks, we assess partner needs for applying data and technology to their social change efforts, and offer appropriate support formats to meet those needs. Our three formats - light (LiTS), medium (Build-to-order), and intensive (Matchbox) - can be mixed and matched to suit needs accordingly.





Light-touch Support (LiTS)

We provide light-touch support to partners who seek quick and targeted ways of developing their ideas, or tackling their challenges. We combine active listening with a semi-structured problem-solving process, to rapidly learn about partner needs. We then provide on-the-spot advisory followed by desk research to offer considerations for partners to take forward. LiTs is particularly useful for:

- Early-stage project design and idea refinement
- Navigating considerations for technology tool design and implementation
- Illuminating partnerships for human and financial resources



"Thank you so much for the time and effort put into compiling the in-depth analysis, feedback and recommendations. This document is really well appreciated and the insight you provide is useful and will be key in guiding our next steps."

- Rutendo Smyles (Founder, Queerstion)

Build-to-Order (BTO)

We provide accompaniment and management for partners to accelerate their work, and provide training-by-doing. We conduct research to inform effective decision-making, and we pair partners with mentors who have unique skills and domain knowledge. Our flagship BtO service is a rapid technology design and development process, or Replication Sprint - a method we use to replicate effective projects in context-dependent ways. BTO is particularly useful for:

- Managing clean technology projects that meet technical and strategic specifications
- Informing decisions with action-oriented research
- Defining a clear direction for an organisation looking to make significant changes to data and technology strategy
- Solving thorny problems with diverse stakeholders through facilitation and research



"Through a series of hands on workshops and research, The Engine Room helped the Amnesty team define the project scope and framework, understand what is possible ensuring we learn from other similar initiatives, assess available technologies and crystallise our ideas into a focused pilot project."

- Milena Marin, Amnesty International

Matchbox

We provide intensive support to partners seeking to design, manage, implement, and leverage data and technology projects with socio-political aims. We accompany partners through a long-term process that involves exchanging knowledge and growing capacities. Matchbox is particularly useful for:

- Developing digital leaders in civil society who can fluently combine strategy with technology
- Pulling off complex projects with significant technology components that target systems change



"Thanks to the Engine Room's Matchbox process, we understood that strategic planning is fundamental for the creation and implementation of a strong project."

- Elidet Soto, ¿Quién Compró?

Vectors

Within each of our support formats, we mix and match services which we call 'vectors'. We apply vectors on their own or together, depending on partner needs. Typically, Matchbox support requires a variety of vectors, while BTO may only entail one.

Strategic Advice

Technology without strategy is just hype and harm. We work with partners to assess the mechanics of impact so technology can be a driving force to generate the change they want to see. This ranges from organisational strategy development, learning framework support, project design and planning, political economy analysis, and research for understanding stakeholders and system levers.

Prototyping

Working with technology and data without methods for iterative experimentation and development is difficult. Most organisations take one shot to develop a technology project: if they fail, it's over. We recognise the critical value of testing and iterating on models to optimise outcomes. We build prototypes (paper, interactive, data modelling) to allow our partners to refine their models before committing, and to communicate the design process to stakeholders.

Technical Design & Development

We apply user-centered design to technical development of products. We build not just to meet technical specifications, but to meet strategic goals as well. We focus on usability and reusability. The critical determinant of a technology



product's success is how easy its intended audience find it to use. Reusability is a critical component of the social change community's success at scale. We work towards both through using agile development methods, and remixing approaches and technology.

Practitioner Research

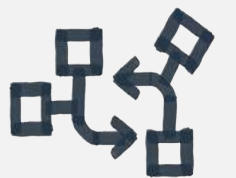
Research unpins everything that we do: it informs how we understand our ecosystem, and how our partners understand their work. We conduct various types of research - scoping studies, market, user, and evaluative - with the core aim of developing actionable knowledge for practitioners to use in their social change endeavours.

Leadership Development in Digital

We focus on individuals who are well-suited - with the motivation and capabilities - to change our world. We are ever aware of dynamics that block smaller organisations in the Global South from accumulating power in civil society. One of The Engine Room's driving aims is to support leaders to build digital acumen that can reverse this trend. We partner, coach, and connect to build direct pathways between partners and resources.

Organisational Change Management

Organisations are often slower to change than the individuals that work within them. We offer ways to close this gap by guiding organisational development - from vision to culture to operations. To do so, we embed ourselves to study and observe organisational dynamics so that we can create recommendations, resources, and processes that lead to long-lasting change.



Partner with us to increase your impact
with data and technology.

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www.theengineroom.org