Exploring the Emerging Impacts of Open Data in Developing Countries: Research Network Outcome Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary
Exploring the Emerging Impacts of Open Data in Developing Countries (ODDC) is a two and a half year project, started in February 2013, run by the World Wide Web Foundation (WF) with the support of the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It is a research driven project with the dual overarching objectives of exploring the role of open data initiatives in developing countries, and building capacity in these countries to engage with open data issues. The network of this project is comprised of the WF and 17 research partners in 12 countries. The purpose of this outcome evaluation is to provide a mid-term evaluation of the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the ODDC research network.

Relevance of the Activities and Outputs to the ODDC Goals
The intention of the project was to strengthen and enhance global knowledge of the role of open data in pro-poor sustainable development by developing the ODDC network and producing research on open data policy. As a whole partners and mentors felt that the work they have produced thus far has been relevant for their organizations as well as for the open data field. It has already increased the understanding of key issues in open data (policy) among the network partners, engaged Southern researchers in global conversations on open data, and brought a clear focus on development issues into the open data debate.

Effectiveness in Achieving Activities and Outputs
As this is a mid-project evaluation, many of the activities and planned outputs of the ODDC research network are still in progress or just recently concluded.

Thematic Country and Region Case Studies
The ODDC network was expected to produce 17 case study reports – at least 1 from each research partner. At the time of this evaluation, 10 final reports or drafts were published on the Open Data Research Network webpage, and 7 have not been completed (July 2014), falling short of the proposed target of all cases completed by this point. However, it is expected that the remaining 7 case studies will be published soon as all were in progress at the time of publication of this evaluation.

Research Network and Capacity Building
The second component of the ODDC network was to build a strong research network, and increase capacity to engage in open data policy among research partners in the global South. The WF is the central driver of online data sharing among the network, evidenced by the network’s shared drive, and the open data research network Linkedin and Twitter pages. The Open Data Research Network has an active presence on social media, both on Twitter and Linkedin. The Linkedin group has 684 members (as of 30th of July 2014) and is mainly used as a platform for sharing research knowledge and information on upcoming calls for proposals, new grants, etc, rather than a platform where in-depth discussion is happening. The twitter profile is more active, with a total of 962 tweets – of which approximately one-third have been re-tweeted. 646 other twitter users have directly engaged with the @ODRnetwork twitter handle, by further sharing its content with their own followers which count easily into the tens of thousands of twitter users.
Several of the researchers have been highly effective in engaging in local policy debates and introducing open data concepts to policy makers. These conferences and meetings with regional government councils and bodies and city hall open a dialogue on how government departments can meet open data criteria. In two cases, the research partners have been asked by regional government bodies to design road-maps or policies for how government bodies can begin to make policies compliant with open data.

**Efficiency of Project Delivery**

Key stakeholders for the project initially had a generally low level of understanding about ‘open data’ concepts which inhibited the speed at which many of the partners could move. Several projects then made use of the connections between known concepts like Freedom of Information policies, Access to Information and Full Disclosure policies, to piggyback off accepted concepts and policy space to get stakeholders on board with new ideas.

**Impact**

Of the research partners, all agree that their knowledge on open data has improved since joining the ODDC project. Significantly, a number of projects have developed their understanding of the definition of open data and are better equipped to speak about the issues as experts. In most cases, the projects are now also better able to make connections to other concepts and develop a more nuanced definition of open data that fits closely to their local context. Several partners also highlighted that they now have a better understanding of open data practices in other countries, and of global debates.

Since open data is a new/emerging field in most countries, there is limited existing research on the topic and research produced at this point is likely to have an impact if well publicized. In fact, many of the research partners highlight that they have initiated discussions about open data, increased its 'profile' among stakeholders and list this activity as one of their main impacts. Specifically, raising policy makers' awareness of open data concepts has been a central element for many of the research projects.

However, around half of the research partners do not feel like their research has been re-used (yet) or cannot cite specific examples of reuse at this stage. The most common forms of reuse are evidence of case study information being requested/used by city officials, parliamentarians, journalists, and other NGOs/networks.

One of the largest barriers to achieving these impacts was the widespread skepticism about open data in some locations. As a result, key stakeholders may be reluctant to learn about the concepts or engage with it in a meaningful, public, way. This initial skepticism was successfully overcome in most of the case studies.

**Sustainability of the Project**

The sustainability of the ODDC project looks promising. All partners questioned expressed that they intend to keep working on open data after this project is over and adopt it as a key theme/approach for their regular work (for example on budgets or on
ODDC mid-term outcomes evaluation.

accountability) or as a topic in and of itself. 60% of research partners surveyed have
started working on other open data projects since joining ODDC, with other
international and local governments and international development funders. One
research partner, Sinergantara has already secured new funding for open data related
work.

Several organizations expect to continue to work with the ODDC network in the future.
They are mainly expecting to use the ODDC structure as a platform to fundraise,
research collaboratively and to act as a peer dissemination and sharing network.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the ODDC has been extremely successful in building research capacity
and knowledge of open data policy in the developing world. However, at this mid-point,
many of the research results remain disconnected from each other, despite similar
themes or approaches taken and by and large the impacts of the project remain at a
very direct one-to-one relationship from a single case study research to a specific
impact.

In order for the project build its cross-cutting impacts in the second phase, it will be
important to (a) build a strong network brand, and central message which all members
gravitate towards; (b) engage the partners more deeply in online discussions, to
facilitate feedback loops between the local projects and global debates; and (c)
encourage more co-creation of research and analysis among smaller (sub) groupings
of network members where relevant.

- Diogo Silva and Elise Montano (Independent Evaluators)
  July 2014.
### Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ATI</td>
<td>Access to Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPPEC</td>
<td>Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento / Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>FDP</td>
<td>Full Disclosure Policy</td>
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<td>FOI</td>
<td>Freedom of Information</td>
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<td>GPOPAI</td>
<td>Grupo de Pesquisa em Políticas Públicas para o Acesso à Informação / Research Group on Public Policies for Access to Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSDRC</td>
<td>Governance Social Development Humanitarian Conflict Resource Centre</td>
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<td>IDRC</td>
<td>International Development Research Centre</td>
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<td>JHC</td>
<td>Jesuit Hakimani Centre</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>ODDC</td>
<td>Exploring the Emerging Impacts of Open Data in Developing Countries Project</td>
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<td>RTI</td>
<td>Right to Information</td>
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<td>SDI</td>
<td>Society for Democratic Initiatives</td>
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<td>UCT</td>
<td>University of Cape Town</td>
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<td>WF</td>
<td>World Wide Web Foundation</td>
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ODDC mid-term outcomes evaluation.

Report

1. Introduction

About ODDC
The World Wide Web Foundation (WF) initiated a two and a half year project in February 2013 on Exploring the Emerging Impacts of Open Data in Developing Countries (ODDC) with the support of the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC). This research driven project was designed with the goals of:

1. Exploring how open data improves governance, supports citizens’ rights, and promotes more inclusive development in developing countries;
2. Supporting knowledge sharing, policy learning and evaluation based on, and feeding into the developing research findings;
3. Developing and testing common methods for assessing the context, and the strengths and weaknesses, of open data initiatives over time;
4. Identifying how global standards, platforms and infrastructures for open data impact upon the use of open data in developing countries.

In addition to these (research) objectives, the ODDC project seeks to develop research capacity in developing countries around open data issues.

The WF, through the ODDC has sub-granted over $800,000 to 17 case study partners across 12 countries to conduct their own research into open data and governance. These research partners include academic institutions, NGOs and research consultancy organizations from across the Global South.

Purpose of the Evaluation
The purpose of this outcome evaluation is to provide a mid-term evaluation of the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the ODDC research network. This evaluation will provide an overview of what has been achieved (qualitatively and quantitatively) by the research network as a whole, and what the impact of these activities have been on the wider open data policy world, on the Web Foundation and on the research partners themselves. The purpose of this work is to identify where network activities have had the greatest impact according to the project’s overall objectives and make recommendations for shaping phase II of the project. Furthermore, this (outcome) evaluation follows an independent evaluation of the process and functioning of the ODDC network itself, which provided specific insights and recommendations for the structure and efficiency of the network.

2. Sampling and Methodology

For this evaluation input was gathered from:

- An on-line survey sent to all research partners. The evaluators received 18 full survey responses to inform about network impact. Surveys were submitted by 15 different research partners.

1For more details on each partner please see http://www.opendataresearch.org/emergingimpacts
Document analysis which included review of opendataresearch.org website; project proposal document; reporting logs; report analysis networks; full proposal guidance document and interim report document.

Analysis of research sharing webcast and sharing of impacts session, during the Open Knowledge festival 2014, where research partners met to share and discuss results, findings and lessons learned from the initial phase of the ODDC project.

Analysis of social media accounts associated with the open data research network, to determine the reach and extent of online discussions which various network members are engaging in.

This report includes in-depth interviews from five sub-grantees and four mentors. The individuals interviewed were:

- Bernard Sabiti of Development Research and Training (June 2014);
- Francois van Schalkwyk of University of Cape Town (May 2014);
- Ricardo Mateus (initially of Instituto Polis, now an independent researcher) (June 2014);
- Sandra Elena of Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (May 2014);
- Michael Canares of Step Up Consulting (May 2014);
- Raed Sharif (Mentor) (June 2014);
- Ineke Buskens (Mentor) (May 2014);
- Michael Gurstein (Mentor) (June 2014);
- Maurice McNaughton (Mentor) (June 2014).

In addition to these, written input was provided by Alvaro Herrerro, the former executive director of the Association for Civil Right in Argentina, as an independent observer/external stakeholder to one of the research projects.

The information gathered through this process has been analyzed according to the evaluation principles of:

- Relevance - to determine if the activities and outputs are consistent with the overall goals of the project;
- Effectiveness - to determine to what extent the planned activities have been achieved and what were the major factors influencing the achievement of objectives;
- Efficiency - to determine whether objectives were achieved on time and in a cost efficient manner;
- Impact - to determine what the ODDC project has achieved in terms of influencing policy and practice in the open data field, determine what have been the real world changes as a result of the activities in partner countries and to what extent it has built partner capacity;
- Sustainability - to determine to what extent the benefits of the ODDC project continue after funding has ceased.

The conclusions drawn from this analysis are bound by several limitations. While almost all of the research partners were surveyed (15), only 5 partners were interviewed and 4 mentors were involved. While surveys were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, the interpretation of (subjective) qualitative interview data is of less use when trying to extrapolate these findings across the whole network. Finally, much of the research was in the process of being concluded while this
evaluation was conducted. This especially limits the ability of the partners and evaluators to accurately assess the medium-term impacts and uptake of the research, and the long-term sustainability of the project. A final evaluation is recommended to assess not only the second phase of the project but also the ongoing impacts of phase one.

3. Evaluation Findings and Analysis

Relevance of the Activities and Outputs to the ODDC Goals
Based on the ODDC research network project design, a theory of change for the network has been elaborated in Annex I. The focus of the network activities thus far has been on individual (case study) research on open data in 12 countries, and some early analysis across the cases. By building this network, and producing research reports, the intention of the project was to strengthen and enhance the global knowledge of the role of open data in pro-poor sustainable development.

The long-term impacts of this are expected to be that open data initiatives are better suited to development objectives, and that resources for working with open data initiatives are more efficiently and effectively used in the future.

Figure 1: Simplified ODDC Theory of Change

As a whole partners and mentors felt that the work they have produced for the ODDC project has been relevant for their organizations as well as for the open data field. The research being conducted by all of the partner organizations is contributing to the objectives defined by the WF in several clear ways. Specifically, it has already increased the understanding of key issues in open data (policy) among the network partners, engaged Southern researchers in global conversations on open data, and brought a clear focus on development issues into the open data debate. According to one of the research partners – Francois van Schalkwyk working with UCT – the freedom within the project to simply do research, and not necessarily engage in advocacy work, has been important as there is a potential conflict between conducting research and lobbying at the same time (as it can affect the impartiality of the researchers).

Effectiveness in Achieving Activities and Outputs
As this is a mid-project evaluation, many of the activities and planned outputs of the ODDC research network are still in progress or just recently concluded. A full list of the activities and outputs can be found in the Exploring Emerging Impacts of Open Data in
ODDC mid-term outcomes evaluation.

Developing Countries research proposal document. In setting up this evaluation, a smaller number of outputs and outcomes were selected for prioritized focus. The indicators and targets for these outcomes, and an assessment of which indicators have been met is included in Annex II.

Component 1: Thematic Country and Region Case Studies
The ODDC network was expected to produce 17 case study reports – at least one from each research partner. At the time of this evaluation, only 10 final reports or drafts have been published on the Open Data Research Network webpage, and 7 have not been completed (July 2014), falling short of proposed targets. However, several organizations have published their work in additional formats, including journal publications, fact sheets, blog posts etc. It is expected that the remaining 7 case studies will be published soon as all were in progress at the time of publication of this evaluation.

Component 2: Research Network and Capacity Building
The second component of the ODDC network was to build a strong research network, and increase capacity to engage in open data policy among research partners in the global South. While a few specific indicators on shared data have not yet been realized, several of the researchers have been highly effective in engaging in local policy debates and introducing open data concepts to policy makers.

Shared Data:
Datasets related to the Open Data Barometer 2013 research outputs have been placed online on the opendataresearch.org website (six files in total). Research partner datasets related to their research do not seem to be present in the ODDC shared folder. An exception to the data sharing among research partners is UCT that has placed its datasets online for public access.

Apart from contributions from the WF to shared folders related to communication resources, events taken place, glossary, stories and methods, contributions from research partners have not been numerous. A few contributions have been made to the methods (including survey questionnaire) and stories folders. To further facilitate this the WF has held a web meeting to sensitise network members to the practicalities of sharing data, and to share useful methods and tools. However, it is clear that at this point, it is still the WF who is driving almost entirely the sharing of data online.

Contributions to Policy Events:
All but one research partner surveyed believe that they have made contributions to (local) policy events. In most cases this has been in the form of discussions with local government agencies and/or ministries about open data where they are actively bringing attention to the issue. This is significantly more than the initially proposed target of 60% of partners being able to cite examples. A few examples of this are:

● Step Up’s research has reached the provincial governor and provincial development council of the Bohol region in the Philippines. Step Up had a meeting with these stakeholders to discuss the study’s findings and got into

2 https://zenodo.org/search?f=author&p=OpenUCT&In=en
contact with Bohol ICT unit to see how they could respond to the openness criteria outlined in the study.

- Research Group on Public Policies for Access to Information (GPOPAI) recounts: “opening a dialogue with the city hall and with other groups, we made pressure that resulted in a movement, inside city hall, for better open data”.
- Sinergantara has been asked to design and implement an open data road-map for its regional government.
- Jesuit Hakimani Centre (JHC): “Through a national conference, we have engaged government officials, specifically from the ministry of ICT, where we hosted the Principal Secretary on the subject of open data and its relation to citizen participation in governance processes. Partly, we could claim that the renewed interest of government in setting up citizens service centres countrywide it attributed to the research finding supporting this model of access to government services”.
- iHub: “We have been part of a number of conversations with the Government program managers of the Open Data Initiative including Open Government Partnership regional meetings and the Post-2015 agenda conversations. We have also hosted policy makers from the government to our open data research dissemination events”.
- Freedom Forum: “The stakeholders’ mapping workshop followed by consultative meetings and awareness raising workshop on open data sensitized policy makers and practitioners on open data linking it with governance. Mostly the interview with government officials, intermediaries and end-users (journalists and researchers) was a great opportunity to make them know about open data and its multiple effects in governance”.
- University of Ilorin: “In one case a Nigerian ministry made a public declaration at the close of a workshop that they would engage the University of Ilorin team in the future to help the government define its open data position. This may just be a nice statement, but it may show that the project has tangible resonance with primary constituents” (taken from interview with Maurice McNaughton).

Online Network

The Open Data Research Network Linkedin group has 684 members (as of 30th of July 2014). The group is mainly used as a platform for sharing research knowledge and information on upcoming calls for proposals, new grants, etc, rather than a platform where in-depth discussion is happening. A total of 95 posts have been made in the group since February 2013 which have sparked some response from the community (a “like” or response). More posts have been made, but group members did not engage with the content. This is an average 5.27 posts per month (which exceeds the proposed 5 posts per month from the WF’s Metrics and Evaluation Framework). The graph below shows the monthly breakdown of when members shared content on the group’s page.

Figure 2: Number of Posts (Monthly) to Open Data Research Network Linkedin Page (February 2013 – July 2014)

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4https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=4790214&trk=anet_ug_hm
On average, each post generates 1.69 “likes” and 2.53 replies, which are often comments, rather than discussion. The 4 most popular posts, generated between 10 and 39 responses, showing that they generated the most in depth discussion points. These posts were related to announcements for the call for proposals, and discussion topics posted by Tim Davies on the challenges and impacts of open data (research).

The Open Data Research Network is also present on the social media networking site Twitter\(^5\). Since it’s creation, the profile has tweeted 962 times, an average of 1.28 tweets per day, 39% of which are re-tweets of other users, and 6% are direct replies to other users. 298 of the @ODRnetwork tweets have been re-tweeted by 646 distinct users, and 195 tweets have been favorited by 296 other users.

Figure 3: @ODRnetwork most retweeted Tweets

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\(^5\)www.twitter.com/ODRnetwork
@ODRnetwork tweets that are re-tweeted by others, reach on average a further 1,768 other twitter users for each re-tweet. The most popular tweet sent out by @ODRnetwork is estimated to have reached an over 40,600 twitter users. Although this does not mean they all necessarily saw that tweet, or that they engaged with the content, it does indicate that on Twitter, the ODDC project is connecting with high level influencers in the open data research field and they are producing or sharing some content that is interesting for the wider community.

Component 3 & 4: Evaluating Existing Assessment Methods and Developing an Assessment Method for Open Data Initiatives & Cross-Cutting Analysis and Synthesis

Work for components 3 and 4, are scheduled throughout the first and second phase of the ODDC Network project, thus progress towards these objectives have not been evaluated.

However, some early conclusions can be drawn regarding research partner's contributions to other technical and policy open data networks. This evaluation found that the majority of partners feel that they are contributing or have contributed to other open data related networks with know-how and experience. Research partners have grown significantly in their own learning and their stature, to be seen not as pioneers but primary movers in an early space. Some have mentioned providing insights and that they have shared early findings. Contributions to other networks have mainly been with other CSOs and working groups and to a lesser extent with government. Step Up for example has been reaching out to wider audiences through the Open Governance Partnership (by writing blogs for them).

**Efficiency of Project Delivery**

While some of the objectives of the first phase of the ODD project have not yet been finalized, it is possible to analyze the budget and spending of the various partners in order to complete the case study researches. A full overview of over/under-spending by partners can be found in Annex III. Of the 17 projects, 12 have submit invoices for
the exact targeted budget amounts. Two partners underspent by less than 15% of their targeted budget, and one overspent by less than 15%. Only two research partners under-spent by more than 15% - UCT and JCV.

Several research partners and mentors highlighted challenges faced in introducing their research because of a generally low level of understanding about 'open data' concepts. Several projects then made use of the connections between Freedom of Information (FOI) policies to introduce the concept of open data to stakeholders. This allowed them to build on existing (accepted) concepts and policy space which appears to have been helpful in terms of speeding up the pace of getting others on board with new open data ideas. Examples of this are the bridges Step Up Consulting built to demonstrate the links between open data and the Full Disclosure Policy (FDP) to local government. Step Up underlines this process: “I think that that’s also why the open data task force in the Philippines is interested in the work we do because I think they’re starting to see how the FDP can be at the center of open data”.

Another example of a research partner that used this strategy was the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC). CIPPEC is part of a coalition for Access To Information (ATI) in Argentina and has used this platform to introduce the concept of open data in any discussion that relates to ATI with public officials.

Impact
After one year, the ODDC Network project has already had significant impacts, both internally for the network members, and externally on key stakeholders affected by the research.

Impact on Research Partners
Of the research partners, 74% strongly agree and 26% agree that their knowledge on open data has improved since joining the ODDC project.

Significantly, a number of projects have developed their understanding of the definition of open data and are better equipped to understand and speak about the issues as experts. Sinegantara has cited that they are now being seen as the 'defenders of open data' by government, and several other research partners have echoed this position, that they are now the defacto regional experts called upon for open data advice.

Through peer-to-peer learning, many of the projects have developed a sharper understanding of the technical definitions of open data. In some cases, the projects are now also better able to make connections to other concepts and develop a more nuanced definition and conceptualization of open data that fits more closely to what they are seeing and experiencing in their local context. Secondly, a number of projects have deepened their understanding of the practical and theoretical constraints surrounding open data, and how open data operates within a specific political, legal and social frameworks.

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6The JCV contract with Instituto Polis was terminated due to non-reporting, and new contracts established with individual researchers leading to savings on admin costs.
Several partners also highlighted that they now have a better understanding of the international landscape, about open data in other countries, and how open data is being discussed and pushed for globally.

Finally, the partners have also reported that they are better able to make connections and links between open data and other concepts that are already in place (e.g. budget systems, judiciary, right to information [RTI] and privacy). In some cases this may be due to a pre-existing interest or expertise in these topics (on the part of the researcher).

The research has also impacted their own understanding of open data and the issues around it. Specifically, they have learned:

- Location and socio-political context matter - developing countries may need a different approach to open data (e.g. efficiency is more compelling than transparency in South Africa);
- We can move from lobbying for transparency, to lobbying for better quality service delivery. For that we need governments to open up their data (in usable formats) for people use it;
- There is a disconnect between supply and demand for open data - sometimes there is supply but not demand (or vice versa);
- Open data is not just a policy issue, it requires infrastructure and resources to implement to start having an impact on social change;
- In several countries, despite the appearance of strong open data policies, the practice is weak;
- There is a strong link between open data, open governance and the effectiveness of service delivery.
- There is a critical connection between good governance and access to information;
- Open data can be packaged in different forms and different communication means to reach the right target;

**Impact on the External World**

The ODDC network has also begun to reach external audiences and have an impact on other stakeholders. The impacts of research are hard to pinpoint by research partners as research is still in progress or just recently concluded. Since open data is a new/emerging field in most countries, there is limited existing research on the topic. Research produced at this point is likely to have an impact if well publicized. According to one of the mentors, one of the mentee organizations sits on some of the most original data in terms of open data in the world.

The process of conducting the research has also had an impact on the external world. Many research partners conducted extensive interviews with a broad range of stakeholders, which has helped to open a dialogue with diverse parts of society. It was especially noted, in post-conflict and newly democratic regions (e.g. Sierra Leone and Nepal) that this rebuilding of dialogue was a “trust building” exercise that was helpful in the peace-building process.

Many of the research partners point to increasing the “profile” of open data and initiating the discussion about open data as one of their main impacts. Not only have
researchers had an impact on their target audience – policy makers – but also within their own professional networks, for example building the profile of open data at their organization. An example of this would be within the University of Ilorin, where open data is now a growing topic.

Carrying out research and talking to other stakeholders builds momentum around the issue with government. A by-product of such contacts is that it also helps policy makers better understand linkages to other concepts like RTI. In fact, raising policy makers’ awareness of open data concepts has been a central element for many of the research projects. In Sierra Leone for example, a commissioner who attended a Society for Democratic Initiatives (SDI) event and was responsible for implementing RTI laws in the country, now pledges to implement RTI in a way that supports open data. “They took this up and it should be implemented, it is an extremely powerful and significant connection” (taken from Michael Gurstein interview). Here, the Open Government Initiative (OGI) has not only been influenced by the research of SDI to better understanding general issues of open data, but has also become the focal institution within the government to work on open data.

Several projects identified their main external stakeholders as various government bodies and decision makers. In these cases, beyond simply raising awareness of policy makers, the research teams were also able to get preliminary commitments to work together on open data policy issues concretely in the future. For example, Transparent Chennai signing a two-year Memorandum Of Understanding with the city government to bring about a comprehensive approach to improving data management and use of data for decision making. In Kenya, as a follow-up to the joint research dissemination workshop held by JHC and iHub, the Deputy Governor of Isiolo County invited the research teams to explore the possibilities to set up open data initiatives for the county. Furthermore, the Head of ICT in the national government invited the teams to present the findings formally to the government.

Also, the research produced by Ricardo Mateus, Silvana Fumega and Fabrizio Scrollini across South America has been picked up by government bodies in several countries. According to Ricardo Mateus, Rio de Janeiro’s portal is believed to be the largest open government data portal in the world with around 30,000 archives. The city of Rio de Janeiro has created an open data portal based on Mateus’ research. In this case specifically, these additional impacts are byproducts of a range of projects in which Ricardo Mateus/Instituto Polis is part of. Meanwhile, in Uruguay, Montevideo City has used the results to support the Por Mi Barrio project, developed with Avina DATA.

External stakeholders have also confirmed that the research being produced is having a positive impact on their own work. According to Alvaro Herrerro⁷,

“I have used CIPPEC’s research information for my own work on judicial transparency. There is not much information on the subject, therefore Sandra’s work is very valuable for me. I used CIPPEC’s research for a paper I am writing on access to public information and transparency. In general, I am quite knowledgeable on the subject of

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⁷ Alvaro Herrerro is the former executive director of the Association for Civil Rights, expert on justice issues, a researcher, and an advisor to a congressman on justice and transparency matters.
open data, particularly when it comes to judicial-related information. Unfortunately, the use of public data in the judicial branch is not a very popular issue and judiciaries have not yet move into concrete open data reforms. Therefore, CIPPEC’s research is extremely important as it contributes to putting the issue on the public agenda, to making judges and judicial personnel more familiar with open data policies, etc.”

Mentors have also confirmed this. According to mentor Michael Gurstein the work carried out by Transparent Chennai is very innovative in a static policy environment so it is breathing new life into that policy sphere. Gurstein believes the work can be applied to other urban Indian contexts so could have significant reverberations as research.

The ODDC project has also had impact on other CSOs. The most common impact mentioned was that the research partners have started discussions with groups that otherwise did not talk about open data, by for example actively moving the discussion from RTI to the issue of open data. The results of the various case study researchers are hoped to empower other local CSOs, who are better suited or more experienced in lobbying governments for transparency, in the future to challenge governments for better practices regarding open data and better enforcement of other laws, like ATI.

Around half of the research partners do not feel like their research has been re-used (yet) or cannot cite specific examples of reuse at this stage. However, for many its likely that dissemination is scheduled for the next few months, and uptake will happen after that (the evaluators are likely too early to evaluate this). Examples of re-usage mentioned by research partners were: Ricardo Mateus points out that the City of Sao Paulo is relying on their studies to build an open data portal; Sandra Elena of CIPPEC recounts her article published in Clarin – the largest Argentine newspaper - as a form of re-usage of her research. In this article Elena informs about some of the main findings of the ODDC research work in a way that is suitable for a broader audience; JHC mentions an article about their research published in a national newspaper (The Standard) and that copies of their research have been requested by members of parliament and senate; University of Ilorin’s research has fed directly into another a commissioned research report for the UK Department for International Development (through GSDRC – Governance, Social Development and Humanitarian Conflict Resource Centre) on transparency and accountability, as well as serving as input for numerous blog posts and presentations.

### Barriers to Impact

It was also found during this evaluation that one of the largest barriers to achieving these impacts was the widespread skepticism about open data in some locations. For example, in Nepal both government and civil society were perceived to fear that open data would increase the vulnerability of the country to foreign rivals. As a result, key stakeholders were often reluctant to learn about the concepts or engage in a meaningful, public, way. This initial skepticism was successfully overcome in most of the case study researches, but where it did not happen it made it very difficult to have

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8[http://web.clarin.com/opinion/camino-Justicia-datos-abiertos_0_1142285828.html](http://web.clarin.com/opinion/camino-Justicia-datos-abiertos_0_1142285828.html)

9[http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=1067](http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=1067)
ODDC mid-term outcomes evaluation.

a positive impact on the understanding and usefulness of open data policy in those contexts.

**Sustainability of the Project**
The sustainability of the ODDC project looks promising. All partners questioned expressed that they intend to keep working on open data issues after the ODDC project is over.

Some research partners have said that they are picking up open data as a key theme/approach to their regular work (for example on budgets or on accountability). Others are focusing on open data in and of itself, as its own topic. One research partner has even said they want to change their organizational vision and make open data the main theme of the organization.

60% of research partners surveyed have started working on other open data projects since joining ODDC, which meets the indicators set in the monitoring and evaluation framework for this evaluation. For example, iHub is doing outreach in Botswana with the World Bank and is soon launching an IDRC funded Open Science project; Ricardo Mateus is doing the open data and open government public policy for the city of Rio de Janeiro; Freedom Forum is working with Open Nepal to develop case studies and briefing papers on open data (work is funded by DfID); DRT is involved in the Data Interoperability Project (part of the Gates Challenge).

In terms of funding, out of the individuals surveyed, 10 are actively seeking funding, while 6 are considering possibilities. Only one person said they are not looking for funding in any way. Ricardo Mateus for instance is currently in contact with the World Bank, and waiting to see what it brings. One research partner, Sinergantara has already secured new funding (35,000 GBP) from a global competition called “Making All Voices Count” for a project linking open data and maternal health care services.

Several organizations expect to continue to work with the ODDC network in the future. They are mainly expecting to use the ODDC structure as a platform to:

- To apply for new grants, write new synthesis papers and to do action-research;
- To continue to build organizational knowledge of and ability to work with open data;
- To create dissemination and advocacy campaign strategies (promoting the outcomes of the research);
- Remain as a peer and mentorship network for future research outputs, and to continuously share experiences about work;
- to provide (financial) support for new projects, proposals and to meet with people;
- To partner with WF on fundraising and implementation of joint projects

Some of these are in line with the project expectations while others go beyond what is planned and outlined by the project.

Beyond the sustainability of the work being done by the partners, is the sustainability of the overall network and movement behind the ODDC project. In most of the cases studied for this evaluation, external stakeholders were unaware of the existence of the ODDC network, and rather knew only about the research being done by the individual
partner they were in contact with. While this is not necessarily problematic in-and-of itself, it does put distance between stakeholders who are potentially interested in connecting with the wider network, and makes the ODDC “brand” less visible and reachable.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, since its inception in February 2013, the ODDC network has achieved many of its initial objectives, as they were planned for during the first phase of the project. While not all case study reports have been finalized and disseminated, a great deal of research analysis has happened into 17 case studies, in 12 countries to explore how open data influences governments, citizens’ rights and inclusive development in developing countries. Furthermore, many of the research partners have made significant steps towards initiating the knowledge sharing and advocacy process within their countries. Finally, it is clear that capacity for conducting social research has significantly increased among many of the partners – especially those who entered the project with less experience in this area. The various case study researches have unearthed a broad, and cutting edge body of knowledge on open data policy and practice in developing countries.

At this point, many of the research results remain disconnected from each other, despite similar themes or approaches taken. In some cases, due to involvement from mentors, or geographical proximity, some projects have found ways to collaborate and bring a higher level of analysis and synthesis to their work, but by and large the impacts of the project remain at a very direct one-to-one relationship from a single case study research to a specific impact. In other words, the impacts listed by research partners were for the most part only linked to their own national context and field of interest.

As the project now moves into its second phase it is important to reflect on the lessons learned thus far during the research and network-building process to find the synergies and successes within the project to capitalize on to bring these individual results to a level where benefits and impacts can be seen from the network’s collaboration as a whole.

Recommendations

1. Many of the research partners have approached the case study work in different ways (pure research, action research, awareness raising etc.). For future stages of their work, and new research phases, it is important that each organization maintains the ability to define the focus and type of research/advocacy they will pursue, in order to capitalize on the different strengths in the network.

2. In order to minimize the risks of missing final deadlines and delivery points, more internal milestones should be set for each project deliverable. During regular feedback sessions between the WF or mentors and research partners there should be a formal review of which milestones have been met, and a discussion of those that have not, to identify the reasons for non-achievement and steps
ODDC mid-term outcomes evaluation.

that will be taken to address this.

3. Document management in the Google drive is maintained largely by the WF and not the partners. If the intent of the shared drive is to have a shared common resource pool, partners need to take ownership of, and be made to upload their own content.

4. The most engaging content on the Open Data Research LinkedIn group are thought-provoking questions posed by the WF. To further engage (and empower) the research partners, and encourage more dialogue online it is recommended that each partner take one month where they are responsible for posting discussion questions, responding to discussions and moderating comments.

5. In order to use Twitter more effectively, and build on the network the Open Data group has already established, communication on twitter should focus on:
   a. posts around events and the release of new information and publications
   b. directly targeting/engaging with 'influencers' relevant to the content being posted
   c. send out multiple tweets, and use hash-tags for a single news item to ensure it is not lost in users' news feeds over time.

6. The ODDC network has established a strong level of understanding about open data concepts among the research partners. In order to further this understanding and include more original perspectives from experts in the developing world, it is recommended that the network continue to work with partners to develop their ability to critically analyze the concepts they are presented with, in line with other developmental perspectives.

7. Each research output should have a roll-out plan so it can be properly and fully disseminated through the network and partners can promote each others' work. Many research partners have large existing networks with whom they can share not only their own research, but the work of other ODDC network partners.

8. The name and 'brand' of the ODDC network is not always the most visible element when partners are doing research. As a result many external stakeholders are unaware of the wider network, and only the specific research being done at partner level. In order to maintain and deepen the relationship between these stakeholders and the broader ODDC network, it is important for a stronger brand to be built and stakeholders to be aware of the wider network/movement.

9. Research partners have established or built large CSO and government networks during their case study research. The sustainability of the network is not necessarily dependent on expanding the network, but in maintaining these existing contacts. It is recommended that these stakeholders have opportunities to engage more deeply with other partners.

10. Many of the medium term outcomes, and longer-term impacts of the case study researches have yet to be realized, as the work has only recently concluded. It is important for the partners and WF to continue to track the
re-use and uptake of their publications, blog posts etc. over the coming months to gain a fuller picture of their impact.

11. Make use of existing network analysis to determine priorities and develop action plans to follow-up on successful meetings and events that have already happened.

12. Many of the impacts of the case study researches thus far are very specific and localized to the individual research projects. In order for the project build its cross-cutting impacts in the second phase, it will be important to
   a. build a strong network brand, and central message which all members gravitate towards;
   b. engage the partners more deeply in online discussions, to facilitate feedback loops between the local projects and global debates;
   c. encourage more co-creation of research and analysis among smaller (sub) groupings of network members where relevant.
Annex I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes (Short Term)</th>
<th>Outcomes (Medium Term)</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Project Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A strong ongoing online network focused on the development dimension of open data</td>
<td>A stronger and more robust global understanding of the benefits of open data – and</td>
<td>Open data initiatives are better suited to pro-poor and developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>greater understanding of the risks (and mitigation) of its misuse.</td>
<td>objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic engagement of southern researchers in global conversations on open data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>standards, platforms and infrastructures (e.g. supporting researchers to feed findings into further development data catalogue software; or to offer critical feedback on a proposed budget data standard)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continued use of research tools and data archives developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of materials for cross-cutting analysis and synthesis (short term outcome)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feed into framework for evaluating open data initiatives</td>
<td>A shared understanding of the specific mechanisms which enable open data to bring about positive changes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>External Project Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased understanding of key issues on open data policy across network partners (medium term)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater focus on development issues in general open data debates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resources for working with open data initiatives are more efficiently and effectively targeted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to a feedback loop between local and global debates, and national and local initiatives on open data</td>
<td>Identification of successful strategies for applying open data in favour of pro-poor and sustainable development objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased understanding of the components required to create a framework for evaluating open data initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater knowledge of the impact of open data publication and use in specific cases the South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification of the key factors that enable and constrain the use of open data to improve governance</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### Annex II – Target Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Indicators or Measures</th>
<th>Proposed Target</th>
<th>Target Achieved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>Are the activities and outputs of the ODDC project consistent with the overall goals of the project?</td>
<td>Logical Framework</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the planned activities and outputs been achieved?</td>
<td>Component 1: Thematic Country and Region Case Studies</td>
<td>At least one case study report published from each partner (17).</td>
<td>At least one case study report is published from each case (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Component 2: Research Network and Capacity Building</td>
<td>Number of cases where partners make a contribution to regional and thematic policy events to support policy-maker engagement with the practicalities of open data in driving good governance</td>
<td>At least 3 partners, from the 5 case studies can demonstrate making a contribution to regional and thematic policy events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>What were (any) major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?</td>
<td>Responsiveness and Engagement of other stakeholders (WF, mentors, partners)</td>
<td>At least 10 partners report they are 'satisfied' in surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective is the mentorship process for case study partners' working?</td>
<td>Perceived quality of mentor input to the partner project, including the relevance and timeliness of input</td>
<td>At least 12 partners report they are 'satisfied' in surveys</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perception of partner's growth and development during project trajectory</td>
<td>At least half the mentors from the case studies can provide clear examples of how partners have grown during the project.</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effectively are the WF and partners influencing policy and practice in the open data field?</td>
<td>Number of cases where partners can identify their input being (re)used by others in open data field.</td>
<td>From of the case studies at least 1 out of 5 can cite clear examples of where their data is being (re)used by others.</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>Were objectives achieved on time, and in a cost efficient manner?</td>
<td>Projects (activities) are being completed within budget.</td>
<td>At least 14 projects have clear budget reports that indicate they are operating within +/- 15% of their budgets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has the ODDC project achieved in terms of influencing policy and practice in the field of open data?</td>
<td>Evidence of use of research by others (quality of use)</td>
<td>From of the case studies at least 1 out of 5 can cite clear examples of where their research is being (re)used by others.</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>What have been the real world changes as a result of the activities in partner countries?</td>
<td>Perceived impact of project outputs and outcomes by internal stakeholders</td>
<td>N/A (open)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the project built partner capacity?</td>
<td>Increased understanding of key issues in open data policy across network partners (self-identified)</td>
<td>At least 14 projects can cite examples</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent has the project built the Web Foundation's capacity?</td>
<td>Effectiveness in network/partner management</td>
<td>N/A (open)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>To what extent can the benefits of the ODDC project continue after funding has ceased?</td>
<td>Number of partners who have found (or are seeking) funding to continue related work after project closure</td>
<td>At least 8 research partners will continue working on open data projects demonstrated by the fact that they have begun projects, found funding/actively seeking funding for open data work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>