Global Integrity Insider

This week sees the whole team back at the Open Gov Hub for the first time in several weeks. Johannes and Elsa are just back from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s Governance Weekend in Rwanda. Jorge is recently returned from a three-week road-trip across Mexico, working with access to information commissions and civil society organizations in five states to assess and improve the usefulness of information about the flow of public resources. And I’ve been busy with trips to Tanzania for Twaweza’s Ideas and Evidence reflection session, and Mexico for a National Open Government Summit (see here for a piece inspired by that event).

Amongst the travel, and our intensive efforts across our program areas, we’ve also taken advantage of the welcome trend towards more open donor strategies, providing commentary on revised strategies on transparency, accountability and fiscal governance published by DFID and the Open Society Foundations, as well as on the Hewlett Foundation’s draft learning strategy.

Last but not least, we’ve set in motion two streams of consultancy work, to improve our own effectiveness. First, with Adrio Bacchetta at Sandstone Consulting and Linda Keene Solomon, to focus our vision, clarify our value proposition, and sharpen up our offer of products and services. And second, with Eugene Flynn at 54 Degrees, to help us better communicate with potential partners, funders and advocacy targets. Oh, and in case you missed it, we published our Annual Report for 2017 in February.
What We've Been Doing

We’ve been working tirelessly over the first few months of 2018 to finalize the Africa Integrity Indicators data collection, and have published the provisional data. We’ve also reached out to governments and civil society organizations across Africa, to ask for feedback about the data and to learn whether and how the data is useful to them.

In March, as part of our project on how to mobilize citizen action against corruption, we led a learning workshop for Transparency International as part of our joint effort to better understand how to generate impact. The event focused on how domestic and external stakeholders can support meaningful and sustained citizen action against corruption. We are putting final touches on the full report from the project, and will publish in May.

We have also supported the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center to think through and design an anti-corruption innovation lab, TRIAL, which aims to develop and test new approaches to tackling corruption. And finally, we have explored with a number of partners whether and how they might take more adaptive approaches to their work on corruption. This has included engagement with the Center for International and Private Enterprise, collaboration with the Partnership for Transparency at the World Bank Civil Society Policy Forum, participation at the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s Governance Weekend, and attendance at the National Endowment for Democracy’s event on illicit flows, in Ghana.
What We've Learned

Our work builds on the insight that addressing complex problems requires stakeholders to try, learn and adapt their way towards solutions. We have, over the course of many months, been making this case to one of our key partners, suggesting that their approach to working with data might need to change. Despite some encouraging signs, it has proved more difficult than expected to persuade this partner that our joint work ought to evolve. We have learned that, in the future, we ought to be more thoughtful, up-front, about how much time to invest in trying to get partners onto the same page as us, and spend more time better understanding our partners’ positions and constraints.

Related Blogs

An Update on African Governance: the Africa Integrity Indicators 2018

Interesting Reads

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala: Fighting Corruption is Dangerous

University of Nottingham (Paul M. Heywood): Combating corruption in the twenty-first century: new approaches


Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt: How Democracies Die

Multi-Stakeholder Governance Initiatives

What We've Been Doing

We’ve been hard at work as part of the Transparency, Accountability, and Participation Learning Collaborative, a collaboration
involving Twaweza (Tanzania) and East Africa, Dejusticia (Colombia), CEGSS (Guatemala), which aims to strengthen the participants’ capacity, and that of the transparency and accountability field, to effectively learn and adapt. Following on from the project kick-off meeting in Colombia in February, we’re now in discussions with civil society partners in Kenya, Indonesia, and South Africa about how we can support their implementation of projects related to the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

We’ve also supported the Executive Session on the Politics of Extractive Industries, and worked with its members to more effectively integrate cycles of learning and adaptation into their MSGIs-related work, including in projects tied to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Last but not least we’ve been engaged in various things related to the OGP, from helping the OGP Support Unit think through how to support more effective peer learning in and across OGP countries, to putting together a proposal - along with Open North and the Open Data Charter - that centers on supporting data-driven learning in multi-stakeholder forums to improve the design and implementation of ambitious OGP commitments.

**What We've Learned**

We're a small team at Global Integrity. This means that we need to be strategic and selective about the organizations and individuals we try to engage. When we’re not - as was sometimes the case this past quarter - we end up spreading ourselves too thin, and spending valuable time and resources on engagements that aren’t of much strategic value, and which reduce our overall efficiency.

Moving forward, we will be more strategic, and focus our efforts on a few, strategically relevant partners (and potential partners), and partners who have already expressed interest in working with us. While remaining open to unexpected opportunities, we hope that greater selectivity will help us to make the most of our limited resources.

**Related Blogs**

**How to Make Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Work for Complex Change**
Interesting Reads

CARE (Gilbert Muyumbu): The DDD agenda: questions from a development practitioner from the South

CARE (Rebecca Haines): Four suggestions on how Doing Development Differently can better listen to and engage Southern civil society

Open Government Partnership (Laura Vossler and Joseph Foti): When More is More: Toward Higher Impact OGP Commitments

Open Fiscal Governance

What We've Been Doing

This quarter we have doubled down on our engagement with local stakeholders, in support of their efforts to address challenges relating to social policy, public works, corruption, and public procurement. This has enabled us to better understand their needs, and adjust our activities accordingly.

In Mexico, working alongside GESOC and the National Institute for Access to Information, we have provided in-person and online support to local partners in five states as they seek to access and use data about public resource spending in relation to specific sectoral problems. Our approach begins with local challenges selected by our partners - governments, civil society organizations and access to information commissions - and aims to facilitate dialogue and build the capacity that is need to drive progress towards more open fiscal governance and improved development results.

We’ve also worked to strengthen open contracting in various places. In New York we partnered with the Open Contracting Partnership and Reboot. We challenged citizens and government representatives to use procurement data to improve the participation of minority and women owned businesses in city procurement (see this post too). In Africa, we are working with the The Africa Freedom of Information Center (AFIC) and the Open Contracting Partnership to support the emerging African Open Contracting Working Group (see this piece from AFIC on the Ugandan model of open contracting).

Finally, we’ve been advocating for improved use of open data for anti-corruption. This has included participating in discussions informing the Summit of the Organization of American States (see here for Jorge’s webinar on open data and anti-corruption, and here a declaration put together by our friends at ILDA, which we co-signed in advance of the Summit) and writing a chapter for the State of Open Data report that will inform dialogue at the International
Open Data Conference in Argentina this September.

**What We've Learned**

We have been engaging with local partners in Mexico, facilitating dialogue and helping them to better understand the challenges they face, and the opportunities available for improving the use of public resources. Yet the capacities of partners, the scope for dialogue and other aspects of the political landscape, vary from state to state. We are accounting for these differences, and adjusting our methods accordingly in order to more effectively increase the impact of our partners.

As a result of this we are diversifying the ways in which we communicate with our local partners and facilitate dialogue and collaboration amongst them. For instance, by facilitating working groups in some states while using different channels to communicate with civil society and governments in others. We also revised the documents and materials we are producing so these can be more practical and helpful for local stakeholders as they navigate the complex challenges they face.

**Related Blogs**

**Using Open Contracting Data to Boost Competitiveness and Inclusion: A New York City Treasure Hunt**

**Open Budgets: Backsliding and the Use of Budget Data**

**Interesting Reads**


**Open Contracting Partnership** (Katherine Wikrent): [A 5th dimension: Why we decided to add internal efficiency as a new use case](#)

**Transparency and Accountability Initiative** (David Sasaki): [Participatory Budgeting: Step to Building Active Citizenship or a Distraction from Democratic Backsliding?](#)
What We've Been Doing

In recent months the Open Gov Hub has been busy with new and ongoing work. We’ve been piloting new ways to engage international government delegations and other external partners, adding new members, and further improving the support we provide for our members’ learning and collaboration. To accommodate the persistent high demand for Hub membership, we’ve embarked on a space-sharing partnership with our friends and office neighbors at Global Giving.

We organized over 40 activities in the first quarter of the year to promote learning, collaboration and innovation across different groups for open governance (check out the Hub blog for highlights). We also recently concluded a rebranding process with a communications consultant to help us better understand our audiences, tailor our programs and refresh our brand.

What We've Learned

As a result of researching our different audiences, we discovered that the Open Gov Hub, at its core, is a meeting place - both a physical and virtual hub for a tremendous variety of diverse people, organizations, ideas and resources to connect. We now constantly ask ourselves how can we be the best possible meeting place to help advance more open, accountable, responsive and citizen-driven governance around the world. And because we lie at the crossroads and intersection of so many different actors, the Hub team is increasingly engaging with more external partners - from international and local governments to universities and anti-corruption advocacy networks. Our increased external partner engagements is a good sign of our growth and fulfilling our role as facilitator of connections. Yet at the same time, we are striving to keep in mind that we are a small team with limited capacity and therefore would benefit from more narrowly defining and prioritizing specific external partners to engage with and influence.

Related Blogs

Open Gov Hub Pilots First OpenGov Study Visit for International Delegation

How Can Supreme Audit Institutions Help Curtail Corruption?
Defending Democracy: Populism and Corruption

Democracy Defenders in Dialogue: Launch Event

Interesting Reads

The Economist (BAGEHOT): Some thoughts on the open v closed divide

European Commission: Final report of the High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation

Tech Crunch (Natasha Lomas): WTF is GDPR?