

Report to the Hewlett Foundation, July 2020 to July 2021

Introduction

As we pass the half-way point in the current round of our core funding from the Hewlett Foundation, the team is working better than ever, and is navigating the continued challenges presented by COVID-19 well. With new hires for key roles, exciting projects and partnerships supported by an enhanced communications function, a theory of change and action that provides a strong foundation for our organizational learning, and the near-term prospect of significant improvements in our capacity and systems for managing our financial and human resources to maximum effect, we are looking to the future with confidence.

Projects

Over the last twelve months we have made good progress implementing existing projects and initiating new ones. Our projects can be grouped into five overlapping clusters, as follows.

Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With [listening to our partners' needs](#) as our first step, we invested our resources into facilitating a series of [#Account4COVID conversations](#) amongst accountability-focused civil society organizations in Africa, developing a [COVID-19, fiscal governance and anti-corruption database](#), and - with Results for Development - [reviewing and assessing](#) a number of initiatives that were launched to track the use of resources intended to address COVID-19.

Beyond these initiatives, we were excited to join with Budget and Connected Development to play the role of learning partner in the [COVID-19 Transparency, Accountability and Participation](#) (CTAP) project, an initiative that aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations across seven African countries to track the use of financial resources made available to address COVID-19. We also sought to catalyze a discussion about the role that [models](#) can play in informing adaptive responses to complex challenges such as COVID-19, and governance, although we have not as yet had the capacity to build on the positive responses we received to that proposal.

Governance, corruption and kleptocracy. Our work here includes our long-standing [Africa Integrity Indicators](#) project which we are in the process of transitioning to an African organization; the [Global Integrity Anti-Corruption Evidence](#) program (GI-ACE) which is now at the stage of synthesizing the findings about the various pathways to impact that its constituent projects have explored; and, a second round of support for the [Coalition Against Kleptocracy in Central Africa](#) which includes the addition of a fifth country (Angola), adapted plans for outreach to women and youth and greater use of video. It also includes some emerging work with the Leveraging Transparency to Reduce Corruption program as regards [implementation gaps](#) in Colombia and Nigeria, and support for the external evaluation of projects funded by the Global Partnership for Social Accountability in Jordan, Mongolia and Tajikistan.

Complementing our management of the GI-ACE program, we have organized well-received events on a wide range of issues, including the emergence of [new approaches to anti-corruption](#), [mainstreaming gender in anti-corruption](#), the [role that London plays in enabling kleptocracy](#), and corruption and law enforcement in Nigeria and Malawi. We also co-hosted the [annual conference](#) of the Interdisciplinary Corruption Research Network in June 2021 and organized a [roundtable discussion](#) on the nexus between academia and policy. In addition, working with Steven Gawthorpe, we developed a [digital library](#) based on Matthew Stephenson's comprehensive anti-corruption bibliography. These and other activities have demonstrated the important role that Global Integrity can play in convening conversations which have the potential to inform the evolution of the anti-corruption agenda. Most recently, informed by our work on anti-corruption, we have begun to explore with colleagues at SOAS-ACE an approach to understanding and addressing governance challenges that combines their focus on power and incentives, with Global Integrity's focus on leveraging learning to support systems change.

Open data to enhance accountability and reduce corruption. This cluster of projects includes our [Open Data for Anti-Corruption](#) project with partners in Latin America and Africa which focuses on supporting the design and effective implementation of OGP commitments and which has already supported a [promising reform](#) in Colombia. It also includes our work with the Transparency and Accountability Initiative (TAI) in Colombia and Nigeria which is intended to inform future investments in data for accountability - see our [Data Use in Context](#) report. Building on our work in these countries, we supported the efforts of the International Finance Corporation and TAI to [solicit proposals](#) from Colombian organizations seeking to use data about mining royalties to enhance accountability, and have now partnered with Cloneshouse, a Nigerian MEL consultancy, to assess the effectiveness of Luminata's investments in financial transparency in Nigeria. Informed by our work on the use of open data to address particular problems, in July 2020 we provided [detailed suggestions](#) to inform the data-focused World Development Report for 2021.

Service delivery, accountability and corruption. Our primary project in this area, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, involves piloting a [participatory systems thinking approach to strengthen health systems](#) in two or three countries in East and Southern Africa, supporting civil society partners as they move round cycles of collaborative mapping, planning and acting to address particular service delivery challenges. In early 2021, we were pleased to make it through to "Year Zero" of the proposal process for a project with Education Out Loud, where we hope to play the role of learning partner in an alliance led by Southern African partners including PSAM, in which cycles of collaborative mapping, planning and acting will take center stage. Most recently, we were selected by OSF's health and education teams to lead a knowledge-exchange and peer learning initiative - [Building Bridges for Stronger Systems](#) - amongst OSF grantees funded to work on corruption and public service delivery in West Africa, Kenya, Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

Last but not least, the ***Open Gov Hub*** has transitioned to providing remote support for its members, as well as moving in April 2021 to a [new office space](#) in downtown Washington D.C. which provides 35 collaboration spaces, tech-equipped meeting rooms, and daily opportunities to collaborate with other teams even while working remotely (additional video [here](#)). We are actively recruiting new members to supplement the existing members who have stayed with us through the

pandemic, and are looking forward to welcoming members old and new to the Open Gov Hub in the fall. Our Global Affiliate Hubs program - funded through general operating support - continued to facilitate collaborative learning amongst the [13 affiliate Open Gov Hubs](#), including through the first virtual retreat for the members of this network. The Open Gov Hub, working closely with our communications team, also played an important role in convening conversations around the US elections, and - particularly through the [Outside/In](#) series of blog posts - sharing international perspectives on challenges in the US, including those relating to racial injustice.

Beyond the communications support we provided to projects, over the course of the last 12 months we also revamped the [Global Integrity Insider](#) and the [GI-ACE newsletter](#), making information more easily accessible and including more engaging multimedia content. We also started an [Instagram account](#) which has had consistent traffic and growth. The open rate for the Global Integrity Insider has increased steadily since 2020, with 2021 editions ranging from 22%-34%. The GI-ACE newsletter open rate remains high maintaining an average of 45% since late 2020.

Feedback, strategy and learning

In 2018 and 2019, our MEL system - based on outcome mapping - took a systematic approach to capturing partners' feedback in order to inform our approach to partnership and our strategy more broadly. In 2020, our strategy refresh process included explicit [reflection on our organizational successes and challenges](#), with this reflection informed by conversations with partners. At the start of the pandemic, we made a concerted effort [to understand](#) our partners' priorities to inform the things we did. And, in preparing this interim report, project leads were asked to provide information about the feedback they had received from partners and their reflections on that feedback.

The headlines from this reflection relate to the role we play in supporting implementing partners around the world. Overall, our partners appreciate the support we provide, the way in which we listen to their needs and tailor our support to meet those needs rather than pushing them in specific directions, the coaching we offer about using evidence to operate adaptively, the thematic expertise that we bring to the table, and the connections we help them to make to other issues and organizations. The challenges that we face and the questions that come up relate to the different modes of partnership and the power dynamics, incentives and ways of working that they entail, and, more broadly, to the question of how we - as a largely northern intermediary - can be most effective in shifting the power and supporting locally-led approaches.

In practice, this is about the nature of the relationships we have with our partners: how we negotiate these partnerships and our respective roles on an ongoing basis, and do that in ways that strengthen the capacity of our partners to increasingly take the lead. This varies from project to project, and from partner to partner, with the nature of the partnership shaped by a number of factors including our respective organizational capacities and resources, our respective levels of expertise as regards the issues and the geographies concerned, and the history of our relationship. This seems like a sensible way to approach partnerships, but leveraging the diversity of our experience and the evidence it generates, to derive some principles to guide our decisions about how to partner, would be very helpful.

As we move forward, we are determined to draw on the range of our experience, listening closely and systematically to our partners, to elicit feedback, and support learning, about our partnership models, our operating model, and our strategy. In recent months we have made some useful progress, mapping and analyzing the variety of our partnership approaches. The next step, now that we have addressed some of our capacity challenges, will be to establish better processes for systematically collecting feedback from our partners about their experience of working with us, and using that feedback to inform what we do and how we do it.

Informed in part by feedback from our partners, we published a [refreshed strategy](#) in April 2020. Nevertheless, in the latter part of 2020 we continued to encounter challenges in ensuring alignment between some of our projects and our overall strategy, and with extracting as much value as we might from cross-project learning. Through persistence, creativity and effective teamwork we were able to take advantage of the learning opportunities that these situations provided to drive important progress, both in terms of individual projects and the continued evolution of our organizational-level theory of change.

The latest iteration of our theory of change and action makes our focus on leveraging the power of learning to support the emergence of the integrated and adaptive systems that are needed to address complex challenges more explicit. This framing provides the balance of guidance and flexibility that our projects require, a stronger basis for cross-project learning, and a more coherent narrative about [What We Do and Why We Do It](#). We also feel that the latest iteration of our thinking - including our focus on the relationships and processes that make systems more than the sum of their parts, that strengthen their [integrity](#), and that shape their evolution and effectiveness - has the potential to inform the wider governance and development agenda in important ways.

This evolution of our thinking has already begun to pay dividends in terms of cross-project and organizational learning, providing a common point of reference and a shared vocabulary for collaborative learning across our work. Progress on revamping our own approach to organizational learning has been slower than we had hoped as staff resources have been diverted to provide support on particular projects. We have made progress however, for instance with thinking through key learning questions at project and organizational levels. Over the coming months we plan to give additional time to the organizational learning that is the basis for our own evolution and effectiveness, with partners' feedback a hugely important input into those learning processes.

Resources, management and governance

Global Integrity faced a challenging twelve months financially, with the COVID-19 pandemic threatening the financial sustainability of the Open Gov Hub and, as a result, Global Integrity. Thus far, we have been able to handle those challenges, although we are set to incur significant losses that we will need to cover. Uncertainty around UK Government funding for GI-ACE also loomed large for several months, although we were pleased to avoid the cuts that other programs have suffered.

We have been glad to increase the diversity of our funding over the last year, with new grants received from the Global Partnership for Social Accountability, OSF's Health and Education

programs, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Skoll and Conrad Hilton Foundations, and the Leveraging Transparency to Reduce Corruption Program, with funding from the Mastercard Foundation and - perhaps - Education Out Loud, also in prospect. This diversification of funders is an important step forward as we prepare for the end of core funding from OSF and the Hewlett Foundation over the course of the next twelve months.

The team has handled the shift to remote working over the course of the pandemic, and the Executive Director's move to the UK, very well. However, the additional demands that the pandemic has placed on staff members has exacerbated capacity challenges, impacted the well-being of a number of staff members, and hindered our organizational effectiveness. The departure of a number of colleagues has raised further short-term challenges, but we have been pleased to strengthen the team with excellent hires made in relation to listening and learning (Raquel Rubio), Communications (Ambika Samarthya-Howard and Veronica Dickson La Rotta), and, most recently, Finance and Operations (Andrew Haupt). Additional hires are planned for the Open Gov Hub team, the Finance and Ops team, and to provide additional project management support. We are confident that these hires, and in particular the strengthening of our finance and operations function, will contribute to a step change in our capacity and effectiveness.

In terms of governance, the board has continued to play an effective role, and was particularly active in ensuring that we systematically considered the risks and options we faced, and continue to face, concerning the Open Gov Hub element of our finances. To ensure the longer term effectiveness of the board, we are currently recruiting new board members. We are focused on ensuring that these hires further strengthen the diversity of the board and enhance the support that the board is able to provide for financial oversight, legal advice, fundraising and communications.

Looking ahead

We are looking to the future with confidence. We face significant challenges, including as regards the Open Gov Hub's finances and the end of core funding. However, with a stronger team, exciting projects and partnerships, and significant improvements in our capacity to manage resources effectively and to leverage data and learning to support our organizational effectiveness, we are in a good position. We are excited to build on our experience and sharpen our value proposition; playing the role of learning partner for strongly southern consortia addressing complex challenges, doing that in ways that support and strengthen local leadership, and using the evidence and insights generated to inform the evolution of the governance and anti-corruption agendas.

30 July 2021