

Open Data Agenda-Setting for Africa 2015

Workshop Report



WORLD WIDE WEB
FOUNDATION



IDRC

CRDI



OpenData
for development

Open Data Agenda-Setting for Africa 2015

Workshop Report

27 March 2015,
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1. WORKSHOP BACKGROUND

Priorities, opportunities and challenges for securing developmental outcomes from open data driven approaches vary across continents. It is important for the agenda for research and development in each region to be set, owned and driven from within that region. With this aim, the Web Foundation convened a Regional Agenda Setting Workshop as part of the Data Revolution in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27 March 2015.

The circumstances for the Africa workshop were slightly different from the previous similar Asia regional workshop as it had a dual purpose: while also a Regional Agenda Setting Workshop, we were convened as one of 17 data communities contributing to a Africa Data Consensus for the High Level Conference on the Data Revolution (organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) and the wider Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda. This had two impacts on the day - firstly, the workshop format was somewhat constrained both by the aims and schedule of the HLC and secondly, workshop content was broader than a research workshop, also looking at innovation, capacity building and engagement. In particular, while outcome mapping was the guiding approach, a more detailed outcome mapping approach was challenging in the less than one day we had for the workshop (see below).

A total of 52 individuals attended the Regional Agenda Setting Workshop (as this was a parallel event to the other data communities, more participants dropped by during the day who we could not record). These comprised 35 male and 17 female participants from 16 countries across Africa as well as 3 pan-African institutions and 4 other countries outside the region (See Annex 1: Participants List). Participants were (as with the Asia workshop) carefully selected to ensure participation from government, international non-government organisations, CSOs, journalists, and researchers and academia; and as much of a balanced representation of male and female participants as possible. The equal representation of participation from all categories of the country clusters of the Open Data Barometer, was not as applicable in the case of Africa as Asia as most African countries are in the third capacity constrained categories, with the exception of Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia in the higher “emerging and advancing category” (participants from South Africa and Tunisia were invited although we were unable to source an attendee from Morocco).

The workshop provided an important opportunity to review the progress of open data adoption in Africa, create a new vision, initiate progress markers and new strategies for deepening and broadening the open data revolution in Africa.

2. FOCUS OF THE WORKSHOP

Guided by an Outcome Mapping approach, the workshop sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Refine the selection of sectors to engage in and key issues to be addressed for creating solid foundations for open data impacts in the region, and at a practical level in particular sectors and countries. In particular, tentative areas of discussion in the value of open data pre-workshop were:
 - public budgeting, procurement and contracting;
 - ownership and behavior of private companies and key natural resources (energy, oil, gas, land etc); public leadership integrity and performance (financial interests, campaign contributions, performance appraisals, records of debates etc);
 - and realisation of human and peoples' rights (census, women, health, education, inequalities, rights enjoyment or denial etc).
2. Shape the design of the ensuing Call for Papers, including sectors, countries and specific challenges, for a) sectoral scoping studies and b) action research projects to be conducted throughout the duration of the ODDC 3 project.
3. Build and foster relationships with strategic partners to expand and strengthen the network of organizations working on open data in the region.
4. Ensure that the agenda for open data research and development in the region is set, owned and driven from within that region.
5. Engage with stakeholders to act as mentors and advisors in the development and implementation of studies and action research projects conducted by partners and with the support from the Web Foundation.
6. Architect a “Labs” model in some form which would assist in designing, executing, monitoring and evaluating regional open data research.

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

17 presentations took place across seven panels during the day. This blog details the chronology of the day, as does the agenda in Annexe 2 below, however the following is a thematic summary of the day, partly articulated in the submission of the Open Data Community Input to Africa Data Consensus developed in the final session:

3.1 Vision for Open Data in the Region

The following vision was collaboratively crafted during the final session:

We recognise free access to, and reuse of data are of significant value to society and the economy. Data should be made open, only subject to applicable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, and security. Citizens across Africa should be able to access, understand and engage with open data. Data collected by African governments, belong to the people: it is a right to data.

3.2 Mission Statement of Open Data Africa community

The following mission statement was suggested during the final session:

To work across the continent of Africa ensuring accessible, free and timely open data (“data delayed is data denied”).

3.3 Key themes and deeper discussions

Key themes which emerged through the day were:

1. Ownership of data

There are three key stakeholders in open data: creators, collectors and users of data. Real revolution is in ownership when all three come together – it ultimately belongs to the people of that country. Ownership is demonstrated by use and use leads to value.

2. Political goodwill

A balance is needed between on the one hand, appealing to CSOs and “citizens” (the “rights-based approach”) and on the other hand, appealing to governments, without alienating them (efficiency

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

argument). Understanding in what ways African governments see value in open data is key in order to take into account government commitment. One approach may be to seek data which is less controversial first while recognizing the limitations of doing so.

3. The role of technology in open data in Africa

Open data is beyond portals, particularly in Africa. Open data should just leverage on technology to gain wider access and adoption e.g. taking advantage of mobile penetration in Africa to uncover a lot of information. Technology is only an enabler. As technology is being developed it is important to be clear on the targeted user (government, CSO/intermediary, citizens). Paramount questions to consider in this process include: Is technology taking into account the diverse users? How do we connect the demand and supply side?

4. Citizen engagement/participation is crucial in sustaining open data use

It was discussed that open data should include strong components of participatory engagement of citizens - e.g. working with communities to map open data, translation into the local languages, using voice, audio, community radio, wall paintings and so on. However, we should also be aware and analyze how intermediaries will channel this interaction and are likely to have their own agendas in doing so (see next).

5. Role of intermediaries

The capacity building for existing and new intermediaries to address access and reach especially for the grassroots citizens was discussed. It could start at a young age - for example, data literacy should be integrated in our education system. The majority of individuals do not specifically care about open data - open data is a means to addressing development issues. There is need to map and define these intermediaries and their different capabilities - CSO, data journalists and other media organizations, researchers and academics.

6. Context is key

Not donor-led but demand-led open data. Data literacy, political environment, assessing which kinds of open data are necessary - these are the key factors to consider.

7. Joined up data

We should also not restrict ourselves to government open data. Private sector (and civil society) also needs to be held accountable. Joined-up data and data flow are critical concepts.

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

Requests for more clarity on open data during the day included:

- What open data systems exist in Africa? A mapping intervention would help.
- What other structures or systems exist that can promote access to open data for a majority of the citizens?
- What are the driving forces for open data in Africa?
- What does it mean to be open data ready in African context? What is the (agreed) minimum expectation?
- How do we ensure that the supply-side and demand-side of data connect? Despite the traction gained from a data revolution in Africa, the challenge still remains how to marry supply and demand of open data.
- What is available and accessible to the citizens? Are citizens already accessing open data?
- Beyond open data portals – how do we effectively use appropriate technology for open data for citizens to engage with governments?
- How do we bring in people from remote areas without access to devices (resources) to amplify their voices in the policy making process.
- Freedom of information vs government buy-in/political buy-in. What is the importance of these kinds of legislations? In the context of Africa, what takes precedence when advocating for more open data?
- What is the argument to policy makers to invest scarce resources in open data?
- Who benefits most from open data? And who does not benefit?
- How do we integrate diverse sources of data into one source of data (crowd sources, official government data and big data)?
- How does open data inform public service delivery?
- How do people interact with open data? And what kind of stories are coming out of this?
- Where have businesses and startups used open data in Africa? [AfDB commissioned a study of economic benefits study of open data but this has not been published yet].

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

3.4 Boundary Partners and Milestones

Workshop participants identified at least four boundary partners to interact with directly to bring about changes in behaviour, systems, and practices:

- governments (at both national and sub-national levels)
- intermediaries (including CSOs, researchers, academic institutions, and media)
- the private sector (whose values and use of data may not necessarily result to directly notable public good)
- and citizens, the end beneficiaries of open data.



Government



Intermediaries



Private Sector



Citizens

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

3.5 Priority countries, sectors and issues

Countries

The restricted time allocation did not allow us to discuss priority countries in depth. However, as with Asia, there was an understanding that some countries would be in a position to advise others as open data leaders (e.g. Kenya and South Africa) and a regional open data mentorship/exchange scheme would be very valuable. The five main considerations which applied in the Asia workshop discussions would also be relevant here:

1. **Need** – Do citizens have access to government data? Are governments willing to but unable/ lack the capacity to proactively disclose data?
2. **Governance Context** – Does the country's current governance context allow initiatives related to open data? Does the current political and legal framework create an enabling environment for open data provision and use?
3. **Resources** – Is technology (Internet, computers, etc.) necessary for open data work available and stable? If not available or stable, are there alternatives and can these be harnessed for open data work?
4. **Objective** – What are the objectives of open data work? Does this match the need of countries and the resources available? What kind of work do we want to do (training, technical assistance)?
5. **Evidence** – Which countries have the opportunities to build evidence for the value of open data? Which countries can provide replicable and scalable models for open data work?

Sectors

Potential priority sectors discussed specifically in relation to the African context were:

- Environment and ecology (e.g. climate change using mashed up geo-spatial data)
- Extractive industries, particularly licensing and tax evasion
- Open parliamentary data
- Tax and budget reform
- Infrastructure – roads, rail, local urban infrastructure - and relevant budgeting transparency
- Health – operational health data (e.g. how many beds, staff in hospitals) and drug/equipment procurement transparency
- Agricultural data in tandem with environmental/supply chain data

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

Issues

Key issues discussed were:

- Geospatial data/georeferencing data
- Use of satellite data (agriculture, climate change - increase capacity of countries to use this data & open this up – most of these data is available (sold) outside the continent)
- Open budget data
- How municipalities can be given opportunity to analyse & collect data - local urban governance
- Awareness of government resistance to change, particularly around privacy & sensitive datasets
- Knowledge and awareness around licensing
- Working with research institutes on what data can be given to the public
- Interrogating “official” data with evidence-based data (e.g. how many actual teachers in schools/ nurses in hospitals)

Aims

These tentative countries, sectors and issues translate to concrete aims that:

- Governments show strong leadership and commitment to open data at all levels (national, sub-national)
 - » Countries adopt an “open-by-default” policy
 - » Number and quality of data sets disclosed to the public, at both national and sub-national levels
 - » Enactment of Right to Information (RTI) laws in all countries in the region and evidence they are being followed
 - » African countries show measurable progress in the Open Data Barometer rankings
- Countries develop and implement a standard for open data formulated through participatory and inclusive processes
 - » Number of countries participating in the development of an open data standard
 - » Number of countries adopting and implementing the standard
 - » Number of countries adhering to a common open data regional framework (including policies, guidelines, instruments, and tools)
 - » Open data becomes a benchmark for country performance

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

- Sectors and movements sustainably collaborate on open data initiatives
 - » Presence of a regional multi-sectoral platform for sharing and learning about open data
 - » Private sector and civil society organizations systematically engage to use, disseminate, and innovate using open data
 - » RTI and open data advocates work together to realize a right to data
- Citizens have increased capacity to use and benefit from open data either directly or more likely, through intermediaries
 - » Citizens and CSOs use open data for evidence-based decision-making
 - » Presence of grounded and understandable open data stories and narratives evidencing improvements in data use and benefit
 - » Concrete examples of how users (including citizens) benefit from open data either through improved transparency or more effective and efficient public service delivery.

3.6 Challenges for open data in Africa

There was frank recognition on the young open data environment in many countries in Africa. In particular, there were discussions on the challenges of:

1. Access

- Basic information to access (political and legal framework is still constraining)
- Data needed to actualize rights given in various legal frameworks e.g. the constitution and to create civic awareness
- Lack of affordable internet

2. Capacity

- As more people become receptive to have data, there is still a lack in the capacity to process (What kind of data are they looking for? Where do they go to access data? How do they make meaningful sense of data?)
- A huge deficit in literacy skills (levels of how to interpret data) inhibits citizen use of open data and citizen engagement.

3. KEY WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

3. Data availability & quality

- Data is often old and incomplete
- Weak statistical systems
- Data is scattered, fragmented in many formats and usually requires a level of expertise that majority of us do not have
- The data revolution should look at the whole lifecycle of data, from collection to use.
- A focus first on what data should be collected

4. Existing Culture

- Silo mentality in government
- Most of government do not even know what kind of data it has
- Lack of government buy-in. Need for a culture of opening up data in its most raw format

5. Lack of political goodwill

- Resistance from public officials even when policies are in place e.g. Uganda. Legislation is necessary but not necessarily followed - how can we ensure it is?

5. STRATEGY MAP AND NEXT STEPS

The participants identified the following action areas deriving from the vision and mission of open data in Africa:

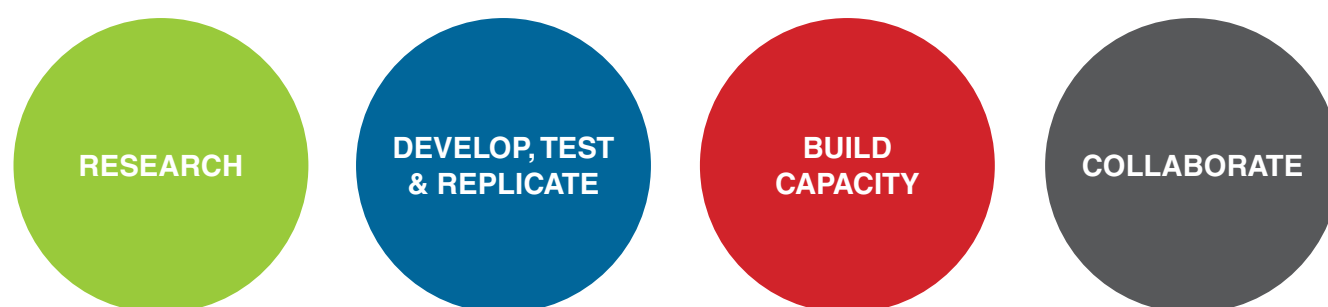
High-level political commitment to proactive disclosure of public sector data, particularly the data most critical to accountability

- Sustained investment in supporting and training a broad cross-section of civil society and entrepreneurs to understand and use data effectively
- Contextualizing open data tools and approaches to local needs, for example by making data visually accessible in countries with lower literacy levels.
- Support for sub-national data initiatives as a complement to national-level programmes
- Legal reform to ensure that guarantees of the right to information and the right to privacy underpin open data initiatives

The participants identified the following key strategies that need to be pursued to realize the vision:

- Conduct research to understand key problems and issues and inform open data initiatives.
- Develop and test replicable models for ensuring open data provision and use.
- Build the capacity of both governments and users to unlock the potential of open data, including access to technology and other resources.
- Implement collaborative projects among key stakeholders

Key strategies



5. STRATEGY MAP AND NEXT STEPS


Next steps, which will initiate outcome mapping progress markers, include:

- A formal and ongoing commitment to the Africa Data Consensus, including an implementation meeting likely in Nigeria (May 2015).
- A potential “regional” network of open data in Africa (including research). This was expressed as a need, but resources and commitment are necessary.
- A Web Foundation panel on open data in the Enhancing Accountability through Open Governance session at the Africa Open Governance Partnership (OGP) Regional Meeting in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in (May 2015).
- Launching the Web Foundation's Open Data Africa research strategy (June 2015) based on the outputs of the Regional Agenda Setting workshop. This strategy will be assessed from the outset by Pereira da Silva consultants, the independent outcome mapping evaluators for ODDC3.
- Introducing and inviting feedback on the Web Foundation's Open Data Africa research strategy at The Emerging Impact of Open Data Around the World session at the 3rd International Open Data Conference (May 2015).
- Web Foundation presence and participation at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (July 2015).
- Initial findings presented and inputs to the Open Government Partnership meeting (October 2015).

Annexes

1. List of Participants
2. Workshop Agenda

ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Surname	Organisation	Country	Sector
Jose	Alonso	World Wide Web Foundation	Spain	
Angela	Arnott	African Development Bank	Zimbabwe	
Savita	Bailur	World Wide Web Foundation	United Kingdom	
Peter	Ballantyne	International Livestock Research Institute	Ethiopia	
Reinier	Battenberg	Fruits of Thought	Uganda	
Bernadette	Benati	World Wide Web Foundation	United Kingdom	
Zacharia	Chiliswa	Jesuit Hakamani Centre	Kenya	
Emmy	Chirchir	Self	Kenya	
Alou	Dolo	Yelesman	Mali	
Carlota	Estalella	Africa Freedom of Information Centre	Uganda	
Adi	Eyal	Code for South Africa	South Africa	
Abay	Ezra	ISSD – Ethiopia	Ethiopia	
Nah Thomas	Fuashi	University of Dschang	Cameroon	
William	Gerry	Open Data Institute	United Kingdom	
Steve	Glovinsky	UNECA	Ethiopia	
Mounkalla	Goumandakoye	UNEP	Niger	
Mark	Graham	Oxford Internet Institute	United Kingdom	
Aman	Grewal	World Wide Web Foundation	United Kingdom	
Irungu	Houghton	Self	Kenya	
Al	Kags	OI Kenya	Kenya	
Beejaye	Kokil	African Development Bank	Mauritius	
Joris	Komen	NetDay	Namibia	
Tenti	Kruniawati	Jakarta Lab – World Wide Web Foundation (Indonesia)	Indonesia	
Bernadette	Lahai	Pan African Parliament	Pan-African	
Angelei	Lilan Ikal	Friends of Lake Turkana	Kenya	
Claudia	Lina Asimwe	SEATINI	Uganda	
Koua	Louis Kouakou	African Development Bank	Cote d'Ivoire	
Marc	Mgbe Iyawa	CENADI	Cameroon	
Burton	Mguni	Statistics Agency	Botswana	
Ojonwa	Miachi	Connected Development [CODE]	Nigeria	
Leonida (Leo)	Mukutu	iHUB	Kenya	
Jessica	Musila	Mzalendo	Kenya	
Savior	Mwambwa	Tax Justice Network – Africa	Pan-African	
Bitange	Ndemo	University of Nairobi	Kenya	
Ivo	Njosa	African Development Bank	Cote d'Ivoire	
Axolile	Notywala	Social Justice Coalition	South Africa	
Nnenna	Nwakanma	World Wide Web Foundation	Cote d'Ivoire	
Poncelet	O. Ileleji	The Gambia YMCAs Computer Training Centre & Digital Studio	Gambia	
Jacob	Otieno Odada	Pan African Parliament	Pan-African	
Mark	Peterson	USAID	USA	
Eko	Prasetyo	Jakarta Lab – World Wide Web Foundation (Indonesia)	Indonesia	
Jerry	Sam	Penplusbytes	Ghana	
Anna	Scott	Open Data Institute	United Kingdom	
Dahud	Shangodoyin	University of Botswana	Botswana	
Raed	Sharif	IDRC – Egypt	Egypt	
Daniel	Stern	Hive Colab	Uganda	
Abiyot	Tehone	MCIT	Ethiopia	
Alison	Tilley	Right2Know Campaign/Open Democracy Advice Center	South Africa	
Francois	Van Schalkwyk	ODDC/University of Cape Town	South Africa	
Mwangi	Waituru	Beyond 2015 Kenya	Kenya	
Daudi	Were	Ushahidi	Kenya	
Michelle	Willmers	ODDC/University of Cape Town	South Africa	

-  International agency
-  Government
-  Civic society organisation
-  Research and training institution
-  Lab
-  Other

ANNEX 2. AGENDA

Time	Session	Speaker
8.00 - 8.45	Participants secure badges at UN security desk	Accreditation
9:00 - 9:30	Session 1: Kick off session	Secretariat communicates HLC Objectives
9:45 - 10:00	Session 2: Opening remarks: Setting the Context, What's at Stake, What's Possible? Welcome Workshop context (aims, objectives & format) Spontaneous collective tweet-throw "Where can open data make the difference" using #ODAfrica2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nnenna Nwakanma (Africa Regional Coordinator, World Wide Web Foundation) Irungu Houghton (Facilitator) All
10:00 - 11:00	Session 3: Governance, development and open data Facilitator: Irungu Houghton This session will discuss key data and particularly open data needs in the following amongst others: transforming governments, corporates, rights and public Services, leadership. There will then be a discussion on the value of open data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savior Mwambwa (Policy and Advocacy Manager, Tax Justice Network – Africa) Ikal Ang'elei (Director, Friends of Lake Turkana) Ben Taylor (Open Development Consultant, Twaweza) Jessica Musila (Executive Director, Mzalendo) Leo Mutuku (Data Science Lead, iHub) All
11:00 - 11:30	Break	
11:30 - 13:00	Session 4: How to build open data capacity and research? Facilitator: Jose M. Alonso This is a discussion on existing open data capacity and research in Africa, and how this can be built, what the challenges are, and how they may be addressed (e.g. are there new & emerging avenues?).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alou Dolo (Analyste Programmeur, Yeleman) Daniel Stern (Director Mobile Monday Uganda) Raed M. Sharif (Senior Program Officer, Information and Networks Program, IDRC) Savita Bailur (Open Data Research Lead, World Wide Web Foundation) supported by Open Data in Developing Countries researchers All
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 - 15:30	Session 5: Open data policy and investment Facilitator: Irungu Houghton What are the key policy and investment needs? What are the obstacles? Who do we need to work with to achieve greater investment in open data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daudi Were (Director, Ushahidi) TBC Ivo Njosa (Open Data Portal Expert, African Development Bank) Justin Arenstein (Open Data Advocate, Code for Africa) All
15:30 - 16:15	Session 6: Messaging for the High Level Conference Facilitator: Irungu Houghton We discuss the continental and international HLC policy debate. Plenary conversation based on key reflections and lessons from the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Nnenna Nwakanma (Africa Regional Coordinator World Wide Web Foundation) All
16:15 - 16:30	Session 8: Closing Session: Workshop Synthesis Facilitator: Irungu Houghton Feedback on day Summary and evaluation of the day, World Wide Web Foundation commitments, and closing remarks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Jose M. Alonso (Programme Manager, Open Data World Wide Web Foundation)

