



Strengthening the evidence-base for open government in developing countries

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1st Interim Report

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Background

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global effort to make governments better. Citizens want more transparent, effective and accountable governments—with institutions that empower people and are responsive to their aspirations. OGP is an experiment in many aspects, but one born under a lucky star. The strong political backing, the support for invigorating citizen engagement, backed by the spread of technology and the general trend of transparency and accountability make this a key forum for a positive partnership on good governance. Building on this momentum, recently established working groups present a great opportunity to build the evidence base for the open government reforms and spur learning, cross-fertilization, innovation, and action in the open government around the world. In a partnership between OGP CSC and the Open Data Working Group, the objective of the project is to promote high standards for open data and open government commitments from government and civil society based on knowledge and tools that support developing countries to advance their actions. This project is strengthening the Open Government Partnership's open data working group as a platform for knowledge exchange on open data commitments among governments and civil society around the world. It is also supporting the Third International Open Data Conference (IODC) in Ottawa, disseminating research results among government, civil society and policy makers and co-establishing new agenda with international commitments.

The main objective of the project is to improve the quality and ambition of open data commitments, providing knowledge and tools that support developing countries to advance their open government reforms.

The OGP Open Data Working Group

The objectives of the working group are:

- Support governments in implementing their open data commitments and developing more ambitious action plans.
- Support CSOs in committed countries by strengthening their capacity to implement open data initiatives and encouraging collaboration between CSOs and governments.
- Provide a forum for peer-to-peer sharing and learning on open data policies and initiatives among members.
- Develop and promote a set of standards and guidelines relating to the publication and release of open data, including standards for licensing, metadata, file formats, comparability, and accessibility.
- Offer participants access to experiences, best practices, tools, and technical and legal expertise on open data issues.

- Help identify technical assistance and partnership opportunities on open data and on related issues (e.g. access to information, fiscal transparency, open data licences, etc.)
- Increase awareness of open government data issues across the OGP.

The WG released its <u>first work plan</u> in March 2014 and a revised version for 2015 is expected to be released shortly (see Annex for current draft).

Since the beginning, the group has organized its work in four work streams with the following objectives:

1. Principles

 A common set of open data principles to support the development and implementation of stronger open data commitments by OGP members.

2. Measurement – The Impact of Open Data

• To better understand the impact of open government data.

3. Standards

 Promote the use of open data standards to improve transparency, create social and economic value, and increase the interoperability of open data activities across multiple jurisdictions.

4. Capacity Building

 Expand the use accessible resources, tools, solutions, models, and lessons learned to support members to expand and improve government open data activities.

It's been expected since the beginning that the Principles stream will be also fed by the outputs produced by the other three streams, functioning, in fact, as an overarching stream for the group activity as a whole.

The WG membership has grown up to 200+ members from 25+ countries at the time of writing.

Major Activities in Year 1

Core Working Group Activities

The Web Foundation is the group co-chair representing the civil society. Its main goal is to make heard the voice of civil society and, specially, of those from the developing world. WF conducts its activities with a clear focus on strengthening the participatory and inclusive process that drives the group's activities.

As co-chairs and, in close collaboration with our counterpart, Treasury Board Services of the the Government of Canada, we have to take care of the well functioning of the group.

Both chairs and their teams designed the current shape of the group for increased participation, inclusiveness and impact. As such, we established a Steering Committee (SC)

where both governments and civil society are equally represented and where there is regional representativeness and we developed clear terms of reference for it.

Some SC members volunteered to co-lead the activities on the aforementioned work streams.

Co-chairs report to the OGP regularly on progress, represent the group in public and private fora, keep the SC and the whole group updated, convene SC and WG online and face-to-face meetings, maintain the terms of reference and SC and WG memberships, maintain the <u>public WG's website</u>, coordinate the work streams work and co-lead actual work stream activities. Co-chairs and their teams work closely with the OGP Support Unit.

The group has held a webinar and is planning its second one. The SC met face-to-face for the first time on the sides of the OGP Regional Meeting of the Americas in Costa Rica in November 2014 and is planning its second face-to-face meeting on the sides of the IODC in late May.

Work Stream Activities

Principles

The main activity is to develop a more robust and consistent Open Data Charter for OGP member nations to potentially use as a foundation for achieving stronger, and more measurable Open Data commitments in national action plans.

The Charter will act as the basis for more ambitious open data commitments and enable more aggressive planning for OGP member nations. It is following the model of the G8 Open Data Charter, making amendments where necessary to clarify principles or to ensure that they are applicable and relevant across all OGP nations.

A technical support document and toolkit document that support the adoption and operationalization of the charter will be also developed.

A <u>draft of the charter</u> is already available and open to comments from the SC and a selected group of experts.

The drafting of the charter has attracted a lot of attention showing that, the work on globally accepted principles, seems to be a need acknowledged by the community, even beyond the OGP. The OGP Support Unit (OGP SU) has signaled to the WG co-chairs the need to observe the OGP articles of governance and policies and warned them that the way this work is evolving may mean it needs to be taken out of the OGP.

The co-chairs, acknowledging the situation and with the ambition to create those globally accepted principles and support them, have held discussions with the SU and organized a small private face-to-face meeting of SC members and interested parties was in Washington DC in mid February 2015 to further develop this idea.

After the meeting in DC, the chairs have agreed on the growing interest and are looking into ways to develop the charter further. It may still happen within the OGP but a new partnership to develop the charter outside the OGP (but linked to it) may emerge and it's under active consideration by the chairs and the small initial group. It is difficult to say at the moment of

writing how this will evolve over the next few months but the milestones of the IODC and the upcoming OGP Summit in Mexico will shed some light.

Measurement – The Impact of Open Data

The plan was to work with the different indexes to improve the way that the quantity and quality of government open data is measured and coordinate with researchers to develop metrics to measure the return on investment for open data activities.

The Web Foundation, in collaboration with The Govlab at NYU, convened a <u>workshop on common assessment methods for assessing open data</u> in May 2014 in NYC. As a result of such workshop a <u>draft Common Assessment Framework (CAF)</u> was released.

The framework consists of four components:

- Context/Environment The context within which open data is being provided. This
 might be the national context, as in the case of central Open Government Data, or
 might be the context in a particular sector. Important aspects of the environment to
 assess include the legal and regulatory environment; organisational context; political
 will and leadership; technical capacity; the wider social environment, in terms of civil
 society and political freedoms; and the commercial environment and capacity of firms
 to engage with open data.
- **Data** The nature and qualities of open datasets. This includes the legal, technical, practical and social openness of data, as well as issues of data relevance and quality. The framework also looks to identify core categories of data which might be evaluated in assessments.
- **Use** The context of use of the open dataset. This includes the category of users accessing (or providing) the dataset, the purposes for which the data will be used, and the activities being undertaken. This part of the framework addresses the who, what and why of open data programmes.
- **Impact** The benefits to be gained from using the open dataset. Potential benefits can be studied according to social, environmental, political/governance, and economic/commercial dimensions.

The Web Foundation is co-leading the work on this work stream along with the Data.gov team. Both work stream co-leads agreed on that pursuing the goals of the CAF and not to replicate work done to date but to embrace it.

Outside the WG, the Web Foundation has put into practice some of the learnings of building the CAF towards producing the <u>2nd Edition of the Open Data Barometer (ODB)</u>, which saw a very significant increase in interest and impact in research communities and the media globally .

Although progress has been scarce on this work stream within the group due to limited resources, namely on the Data.gov side, the traction of the ODB and a renewed commitment by the Data.gov team, should make this stream progress in Q2 and Q3/2015 when a revised version of the CAF is expected to be published, this time jointly by the group who met at the NYC workshop and the OGP ODWG.

¹ The Web Foundation will send a separate report on the ODB 2nd Edition as part of the reporting on another IDRC grant which partly funds the ODB development and production.

Standards

The focus of this stream is to promote openness and interoperability through establishing recommended standards for open data, along with guidance on implementation and promotion, promote use of baseline requirements which could be incorporated into IRM reporting on open data commitments, and to promote open data best practices that are recommended for implementation by OGP member countries, including, for example, provision of APIs and other interoperability services, and publication of open information explaining how data is produced and used by governments.

As a first step towards achieving its objective, the stream leads worked on a first deliverable: to complete an inventory of open data standards by type to develop a global view and to identify gaps and overlaps. A <u>first draft</u> has been recently released for comments.

It is expected its final deliverable will be a document outlining baseline standards and best practices for open data, along with guidance for adoption and implementation.

The stream leads are also in active discussion with the merging joined-up data alliance to sync efforts.

Capacity Building

This stream was intended to conduct directed peer review and coaching of OGP member nations Open Data action plan commitments as requested by nations, particularly for Cohorts 2 and 4, and to work with other groups and initiatives to build an inventory of Open data resources (including policies, practices and learning activities) and identify gaps.

Its activity has been totally focused on the former. As such, the group has already reviewed and provide recommendations to the governments of six countries: Croatia, Ireland, New Zealand, Peru, Romania, and Sierra Leone.

The group engaged in discussions with all the points of contact of those countries and the OGP SU to publish <u>those recommendations</u> openly and, after some negotiations, they are now available.

The group has been acting in a reactive way so far. A request from an OGP government point of contact usually comes to the group via the OGP SU, the stream leads lay out a plan for responding, draft comments, query the SC for more comments and then respond to the point of contact and the SU.

As most recommendations are very similar, it is expected this workstream will significantly feed into the Principles one for a more proactive approach (in fact, this has already started to happpen) so the group can point points of contact to the principles the group believes should be present in good quality open data commitments in action plans.

OD4D Fund

As part of its ongoing commitment to support governments in implementing their open data commitments and developing more ambitious action plans, this project allowed to create a new funding initiative entitled Open Data for Development (OD4D) Fund.

Under this new initiative, the Working Group has initially provided \$100,000 in funding to support a number of short-term, intensive research projects exploring the technical and practical implications of open data.

The OD4D Fund was established to support projects that will demonstrate the importance of open data for developing countries, and we hope it will help to set out best practices for creating ambitious, effective open data programs in countries around the world.

An open <u>Call for Proposals</u> was released in October 2014. Proposals had to make a case for how the research would serve to deepen or inform work outlined in the 2014-2015 OGP Open Data Work Plan.

The working group received over 80 applications, representing a total funding ask of close to \$1 million. Applications were screened to ensure that they met the criteria expressed in the Call for Proposals. Those proposals that met the criteria were then reviewed in detail and circulated to the working group's Steering Committee. A few proposals were received from groups associated with Steering Committee members. Those members with conflicts of interest were excluded from the evaluation process. The Steering Committee met at the OGP Regional Meeting for the Americas in San Jose, Costa Rica (November 17-19) where it decided on the successful proposals for this round of grants, namely:

Open North Inc. (Canada): "Recommended standards and best practices for open data"

This project supports the work of the Standards stream of the OGP Open Data Working Group, in particular its deliverable to produce a document outlining baseline standards and best practices for open data, by taking into account the differences and disparities between jurisdictions – especially in the Global South – through interviews with data publishers from developing countries and through more in-depth research into existing standards' adoption and implementation by OGP countries. The results will be published as a white paper.

Mitrovic Development & Research Institute (South Africa): "Building open data capacity through e-skills acquisition

Opening government data to the public to be used for socio-economic development is at the core of Open Government Data (OGD). It is widely reported that opening government data can have vast potential benefits such as transparency of government affairs, efficiency of government and its agencies and innovation through services that deliver social and commercial value. As nowadays OGD are delivered and accessed by the use of contemporary information and communication technologies (ICT), notably the Internet, the providers of OGD (e.g. governments and agencies) and users (e.g. citizens) must possess certain skills in order to provide and use OGD efficiently and effectively. These skills are often referred to as 'e-skills'. However, it is widely reported that considerable shortages of e-skills in developing countries inhibits citizen participation in so called information society and knowledge economies and as a result hinders effective service delivery by government officials. This will further impact the provision and usage of OGD. Hence, this proposed study will explore the required e-skills needed for both the provision and usage of OGD in the context of developing countries. This will be done through the use of a multiple case

study methodology involving two developing countries: South Africa and Namibia. It is envisaged that the results of this study may also be applicable to other developing countries.

Step Up Consulting (The Philippines): "Enhancing citizen engagement with open government data"

This research project will deal this primary research question - How can engagement of civil society organizations with open government data be instigated or enhanced?

To answer this question, the following secondary research questions will be explored:

- 1. What do CSOs know about open government data? What do they know about government data that their local governments are publishing in the web?
- 2. What do CSOs have in terms of skills that would enable them to engage meaningfully with open government data?
- 3. How best can capacity building be delivered to civil society organizations to ensure that they learn to access and use open government data to improve governance?

The research project will be implemented in two provinces in the Central Visayas – Bohol and Negros Oriental and will take the form of an action research which will make use of a research-based capacity building program to learn about the strengths and limits of approaches in enhancing citizen engagement with open government data at the local level.

Mark Frank (United Kingdom): "User centred methods for measuring the value of open data"

Current metrics of the value of open data typically use a "top-down" approach based around standards and principles which are assumed to be relevant. While they provide a valuable perspective and are relatively easy to implement, these top down approaches are unlikely to address the user's most pressing concerns. We propose to research methods for developing metrics that are grounded in user's operational needs in specific contexts - thus measuring more directly the impact and value of open data in that context. We will do this by working closely with organisations concerned with housing issues taking advantage of the data provided as part of the Nesta/ODI Open Data Housing Challenge. Through interviews and workshops we will identify specific problems that confront those organisations which might be alleviated through open data; those open datasets that can help them with those problems; and the key characteristics that those data sets must have to be useful to them. This should then allow us to identify metrics for data sets in that context and a describe method for arriving at those metrics. The first stage will take place in the UK to take advantage of existing contacts and the relatively mature open data environment. The second stage will take place in India (where we also have contacts) to provide a comparison with a very different environment. The aim is to publish a paper documenting both the metrics we have developed and the methods we used to arrive at them with a view to creating an asset that can be reused and developed by open data organisations round the world.

Sunlight Foundation (United States): "The social impact of open data in the global south"

The Sunlight Foundation is aiming to research the social impact of open data in the Global South. As a continuation of our relevant work in U.S. municipalities, our proposed research will seek to provide evidence on how open data helps: to increase transparency and accountability; to identify new efficiencies within governments; to evaluate and improve local service quality; and to increase public participation. By collecting country and local level case stories from these regions and conducting a few in-depth interviews, we will focus our research on finding what correlation exists (if any) between specific aspects of open data (e.g. the culture of "open by default", the release of high-value datasets, or increased public consultations) and the social impact of open data. Our conclusions will be summarized in a final research paper, with concrete recommendations for improved policy advocacy on open data.

The researchers are currently in the last stages of the process and it is expected all projects will be finished by end of April 2015. We expect they will presented at the IODC.

IODC

International Open Data Conference 2015

As part of the ongoing effort to organize the International Open Data Conference 2015 taking place in May 2015, the Web Foundation has played an active role in helping to coordinate the construction of the programme for this event.

Specific activities that have taken place during this period include:

- Coordination of the logo design, 'save the date' website, and the conference website. This involved hiring a designer to create the initial logo for the event; creating a Wordpress-based website and a webform to capture information on interested participants; setting up a Wordpress-based website for the conference; assisting in the writing of the terms of reference for a designer; screening of the design group; and assisting directly in its design and management of the conference website.
- Creating a document structure for sharing information around the event through google docs, a project management tool, and various mailing lists that have been created for the event committees, as well as a technical system for gathering event and pre-event registrations.
- Coordinating pre-event efforts with communities including the Open Contracting Partnership, ODI (Leaders Summit), GODAN, Open Parliaments, UNOCHA (HDX/HXL), Aspiration (UNConference), Research Symposium, among others. Specific efforts

included creating and managing working groups (unconference), and coordinating efforts related to meeting spaces and pre-conference registration and travel support.

Assisting in the creation and design of the IODC 2105 programme. This was done
through all week meetings at IDRC, coordinating with the programme and steering
committee members to get their input, and creating a review process with the
steering committee to engage the programme committee in the proposal review
process.

Challenges to Date

Commitments of SC members and slow progress

When the WG launched a call for expressions of interest to the whole group for Steering Committee members, the chairs received several responses. For some regions, the chairs had to take a hard decision about the person to appoint.

Activities involving the SC and meetings are conducted regularly but there are several members who usually don't attend and some who have never attended. It looks like the excitement of joining met with daily job reality somehow.

The chairs thought that a group as big as this would need a core group (the SC) who would be the main one moving things forward. Unfortunately these disengaged members of the SC are making the whole SC to move forward more slowly due to the even more limited resources behind its activities. On the other hand, some members have taken it seriously and are, in addition, driving workstream work.

The chairs have recently amended the terms of reference, introducing the concept of "good standing" members so there is more dynamism in the group and disengaged members can be replaced by new members who would allocate more time to the WG's tasks.

Additional Unexpected Work: the Open Data Charter Partnership?

As mentioned above, the way the work streams were designed put the Principles workstream as an overarching one, it's main deliverable being the International Open Data Charter. This Charter is attracting increasing interest, even beyond the OGP itself and it may lead to a new partnership, alliance or similar independent but linked to the OGP. A significant amount of work has been put towards building consensus around the Charter. The face-to-face in Washington DC in February 2015 included non-OGP ODWG members. The Chairs and their teams with the help of some of the SC members and some of the most interested stakeholders in seeing the Charter succeeding (including multilaterals such as the World Bank and donors such as Omidyar Network) have worked together towards shaping the future of the Charter in scenarios including such as outside the boundaries of the OGP, drafting potential governance models, discussing a potential critical path to success, etc.

This shows the WG cares about advancing open data not only within the OGP but globally, but meant and is meaning additional work.

Quality of OD4D Fund Deliverables and Round 2 Plans

Selecting the proposals to award during this phase was difficult given the number we received and the quality of several of them vs the limited funding resources. Although there was SC agreement on awarding the ones that were finally selected, both chairs have discussed several times to what extent the research commissioned during Phase 1 will be useful for the group to achieve its goals.

We are still in the middle of the process as we don't expect all research projects to end until late April but, given interactions with sub-grantees, we feel that we could have gotten more targeted research projects. This may have been a question of starting with an open call in the first place.

Our current plan is not to release a second open call but instead conduct more targeted and specific research. At the time of writing, given the increasing relationship between the IODC roadmap and the ODWG group, we plan to request very narrowly focused project targeted at advancing the roadmap post conference based on the conference outcomes as much in line with future WG work.

Annex: Draft Updated Work Plan as of Jan 26, 2015

Principles

Deliverable	Stat us	Notes	Revised deadlin e
Develop OGP Open Data Charter (based on main text of the G8 Open Data Charter) (Q3 / 2014)	In pro gres s	A draft has been developed, and consultation with key stakeholders is ongoing.	Q2 / 2015
Develop a technical support document to support the adoption and implementation of the Charter among OGP nations (Q3 / 2014)	In pro gres s	Work has begun on a draft Technical Annex. Consultation will be needed on this document as well.	Q4 / 2015
Publish the OGP Open Data Charter and Technical Support Document (Q4 / 2014)	Not start ed	Charter document will be published on OD WG website in February. Technical Annex document will follow later in the year.	Q3 / 2015
Engage with G20 representatives to explore opportunities for non-OGP member countries to endorse and implement OGP Open Data Charter and Technical Support Document (Q4 / 2014)	In pro gres s	Meeting in Washington at end of February 2015 with key partners in G20 and others. Conversations begun with OGP to discuss process for possible official endorsement.	Q4 / 2015 (and ongoing)
Develop and publish OGP Open Data Toolkit - a living document outlining tools, policies, legal frameworks, organizations, and institutions that support countries in the	In pro gres s	This deliverable will become key deliverable for all WG streams by end of 2015.	Q4 / 2015

implementation of open data		
commitments (Q2 / 2015)		

Measurement of Impact

Deliverable	Stat us	Notes	Revised deadlin e
Complete document review of current and planned research activities related to the measurement of the impact of open data (Q3 / 2014)	Star ted	As part of the common assessment framework and the Open Data Barometer, the Web Foundation has conducted such review partially.	Q1/201 5
Develop a list of benefit categories for Open Data (e.g. greater transparency, social improvements, environmental benefits, economic benefits, improved government efficiency, etc.) and the specific aspects of Open Data that impact them (e.g. culture of "open by default", release of high-value datasets, increased public consultations) (Q3 / 2014)	Not start ed		Q1/201 5
Consult with subject matter experts to develop common criteria, metrics, and methodologies to measure the return on investment (ROI) for open data activities (Q4 / 2014)	Ong oing	This is an ongoing process. We have been in contact with the organizations working on measurement of impact of open data and more/closer contacts will resume in Feb 2015 to both get feedback and	Q2/201 5

		acquire buy-in for common methods to be used.	
Consult with WG members on the development of materials outlining the measurable benefits of Open Data (Q4 / 2014)	Not start ed	Given delays on the other deliverables	Q2/201 5
Publish materials on ROI for Open Data (Q2 / 2015)	Not start ed	Given delays on the other deliverables	Q3/201 5
Leverage published materials to encourage the implementation Open Data initiatives across OGP member countries and other countries.(Q1-Q2 / 2015)	TBD	We will circulate the materials among the broader WG to get feedback and, hopefully, buy-in.	
Look for technical and partnership opportunities, as well as international Open Government / Open Data events, to raise awareness of ROI for Open Data and encourage the implementation of Open Data initiatives in OGP member countries. (Q3-Q4 / 2015)	TBD	Ongoing activity; we expect it to become more specific once we have the other deliverables.	

Standards

Deliverable	Stat us	Notes	Revised deadlin e
Complete inventory of open data standards by type (e.g. metadata standards, standards for number and type of datasets published,	Co mpl ete	We will share a report, data tables, and the software written to collect the data. We made about 30 connections with government and civil	Jan 28

interoperability standards, etc.) using, among other methods, case studies of data standards in WG member countries, to develop a global view and to identify gaps and overlaps (Q4 / 2014)		society in OGP countries to clarify the data. Stakeholders are OGP members interested in open data. The co-leads and other staff met roughly every two weeks.	
Identify recommended standards for open data, drawing on interoperability requirements and best practices identified in WG member countries (Q1 / 2015)	In pro gres s	Will be completed as part of OD4D grant.	
Consult with WG members on identified baseline standards and best practices for open data (Q2 / 2015)	Not start ed	Will start once 2 nd deliverable is complete.	
Publish an OGP document outlining baseline standard and recommended best practices for open data, along with guidance for adoption and implementation (Q3 / 2015)	Not start ed	Will start once 3 rd deliverable is complete.	

Capacity Building

Deliverable	Status	Notes	Revised deadlin e
Provide on-demand consultation to support development of National Action Plan Open Data commitments, through direct requests and through	Achiev ed/ contin uous	The group participated in 7 peer review in 2014 for: Canada, Croatia, Ireland, New Zealand, Peru and Romania	

OGP regional meetings (Q3 / 2014 – ongoing)			
Identify challenges and existing capacities regarding open data implementation (Q3 / 2014 – Q1 / 2015)	Achiev ed	Following the Data Squad project, Mexico developed an initial table with an analysis of the county's main challenges regarding open data. Participants agreed in developing a questionnaire to identify challenges in the member countries of the ODWG	Questio nnaire will be sent in Q1 2015 as planned
Work with organizations and initiatives (e.g. Partnership on Open Data and Open Data in Developing Countries initiative, Partnership on Open Data) to build an inventory of Open data resources (including policies, practices and learning activities) and identify gaps (Q3 / 2014 – Q2 / 2015)	Develo pment phase	The work stream will request a section in the ODWG website to link relevant resources and put together an initial list for publication. The questionnaire to identify the challenges in the member countries of the ODWG will also include a specific question regarding recommendations on which resources to include.	Q2 2015
Identify policies and tools that make it easier for developing countries to implement open data and to link it to beneficial outcomes identified as part of the WG's Measurement work stream (2015)	Achiev ed/ contin uous	Mexico developed the 'Data Squad' Project to accelerate the implementation of open data policies. The case study done by the ODI and Codeando México can be found here: http://theodi.org/case-studies/mexico-case-study-using-data-squads-to-jump-start-government-open-data-publishing As part of the work in ConDatos, Mexico developed a collaborative agenda which is open for comments in http://condatos.org/agenda/e	Some tools will be availabl e for Q2 2015 as planned; Other tools will be availabl e in Q3 and Q4 2015.

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Leverage OGP Support Unit peer learning opportunities, including regional OGP conferences and webinars, to provide education and training opportunities to government representatives working on the implementation of open data initiatives (2015)	Achiev ed/ contin uous	During ConDatos 2014, Mexico developed specific projects for Open Data education, including (http://condatos.org/):