



World Wide Web Foundation  
1110 Vermont Ave NW, Suite 500  
Washington DC 20005

# *Harnessing Open Data to Achieve Development Results in Asia and Africa*

IDRC Project Number 107574-005

## *2nd Interim Report*

March 2015-August 2015

Date:

28 September 2015

## **Synthesis**

This has been a productive and eventful second term of the *Harnessing Open Data to Achieve Development Results in Asia and Africa* project. Following on from the Regional Agenda Setting Workshop for Asia (Jakarta, February 2015), in these six months (March-August 2015) we:

- Convened a Regional Agenda Setting Workshop for Africa (Addis Ababa, March 2015)
- Defined our research agenda and selected key projects in Asia and Africa (more details below)

- Fully represented our research, policy and practice at the [International Open Data Conference](#), including co-convening the Open Data Research Symposium
- Recruited an Asia and Africa Regional Research Manager respectively
- Began an Outcome Mapping monitoring and evaluation strategy (kickoff in London, March 2015 and ongoing)
- Solicited feedback on our OD4D Africa research as a pre-event to the [Africa Open Data Conference](#)
- Are planning a similar feedback event for OD4D Asia research in October 2015
- Continued presenting and publicizing findings from ODDC 1 and 2.

On the downside, stress has been put on the project budget, mainly due to exchange rate losses and additional, originally unplanned activities (such as the AODC itself). This is affecting some of the planned work as we had to address this problem by reducing the originally planned research activities to keep the project within budget.

This report summarizes each of these, other supporting actions and outlines concerns, recommendations and the roadmap ahead.

## Contents

[Synthesis](#)

[Aims and objectives](#)

[Regional Agenda Setting Workshop for Africa](#)

[IODC and Open Data Research Symposium](#)

[Research Agendas for Asia and Africa](#)

[ODERI](#)

[Outcome Mapping Monitoring and Evaluation](#)

[OD4D Africa feedback session](#)

[Roadmap and recommendations](#)

## Aims and objectives

The overall objective of the ODDC research project [now formally part of [OD4D](#)] is to establish practical and actionable knowledge about effective strategies for employing open data as a means to achieve greater quality of openness in government, to support citizens' rights, and to promote more inclusive development in developing countries. Open data, it is argued, can support significant gains in transparency and accountability, innovation and economic growth, and enable more inclusive models of governance. This research is motivated by a recognition that a focus on access to open data has rapidly become a significant part of the policy landscape in governance discussions, yet little is understood about how open data can or will drive change in practice, nor about how open data interventions should be contextualised in light of different legal, political, economic and social contexts around the world. This appears to be particularly the case in developing countries, and therefore Asia and Africa.

Phase 3 of the ODDC research continues the four main research goals of the project:

- To explore how open data improve governance, support citizens' rights, and promote more inclusive development in developing countries;
- To support knowledge sharing, policy learning and evaluation based on, and feeding into, the developing research findings;
- To develop and test common methods for assessing the context, and the strengths and weaknesses, of open data initiatives over time;
- To identify how global standards, platforms and infrastructures for open data impact upon the use of open data in developing countries;

Two additional goals specific to this phase are:

- To support research-driven in-country capacity building around implementation and critical assessment of open data activities.
- To move from desk-based, academic research to more applied, action research (e.g. conducted by government employees, CSOs etc)

The activities below detail how the Web Foundation is operationalizing these goals.

*Note: the grant approval was received late by the Web Foundation, in late October rather than 1st September 2014 as per the Memorandum of Grant Conditions; this, combined with a change in Research Lead and recruitment of Regional Research Managers slightly delayed the timelines for activities.*

## Regional Agenda Setting Workshop for Africa

As a major means of determining the open data research agenda for Africa, and with lessons learned from the Asia workshop, we convened a Regional Agenda Setting Workshop for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27 March 2015, as a pre-event to the Data Revolution Conference, between 27-29 March 2015 (using #ODAfrica2015 on Twitter). The final workshop report can [be found here](#) (public access). A total of [52 recorded individuals attended](#) ([breakdown of attendance](#)). As the result of the workshop, our collaborative vision was defined as:

We recognise free access to, and reuse of data are of significant value to society and the economy; government 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.

The key principles was seen as:

Open data should be accessible and free and timely (“data delayed is data denied”).

Priority issues discussed during the day included:

- Research into impact, action research, hybrid methods of open data (going beyond portals) and other methods
- That 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.
- An agreement that open data should be accessible and free and timely (“data delayed is data denied”)
- 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

In particular, we discussed the need for emphasis on:

- Geospatial data/georeferencing data

- Use of satellite data (e.g. agriculture, climate change – increase capacity of countries to use this data and open this up – most of these data is available (sold) outside the continent – we need to access freely within Africa)
- Open budget data
- Municipalities to be given opportunity to analyse and collect data to improve local urban governance
- Not just capacity building but also more “power” to NGOs
- Starting with the champions within governments
- Respecting privacy and sensitive datasets
- Knowledge and awareness around licensing
- Working on and making “operational data” open e.g. how many nurses per hospital
- Working more with governments, private sector and research institutes
- Ensuring more communication and coordination between all data communities
- Working more with the “excluded” so far
- Working with governments to offer our expertise on open data – an opportunity such as this to feed into the HLC was critical
- Understanding and facilitating between different types of govt data (e.g. parastatals)
- Driving the demand for data which should create ownership, use, add value to data
- Involving the media who will communicate to citizenry
- Championing capacity building
- Working with community radio stations which will be good tools for grassroots awareness and advocacy as well as other actors/hybrid methods for disseminating
- Engaging with technocrats in governments
- It doesn’t stop at “Africa”: contributing to international data communities
- Championing governments on timeliness of data released

These were then integrated to collaboratively produce [the open data community’s vision](#) to the HLC on the data revolution. A big win for the open data community is that [the final adopted Data Consensus](#) clearly states that official data should be open by default. As Jakarta was for the Asia research, the Addis kickoff was essential to formulating our Africa open data research strategy, particularly in the the sectors and opportunities identified (see below).

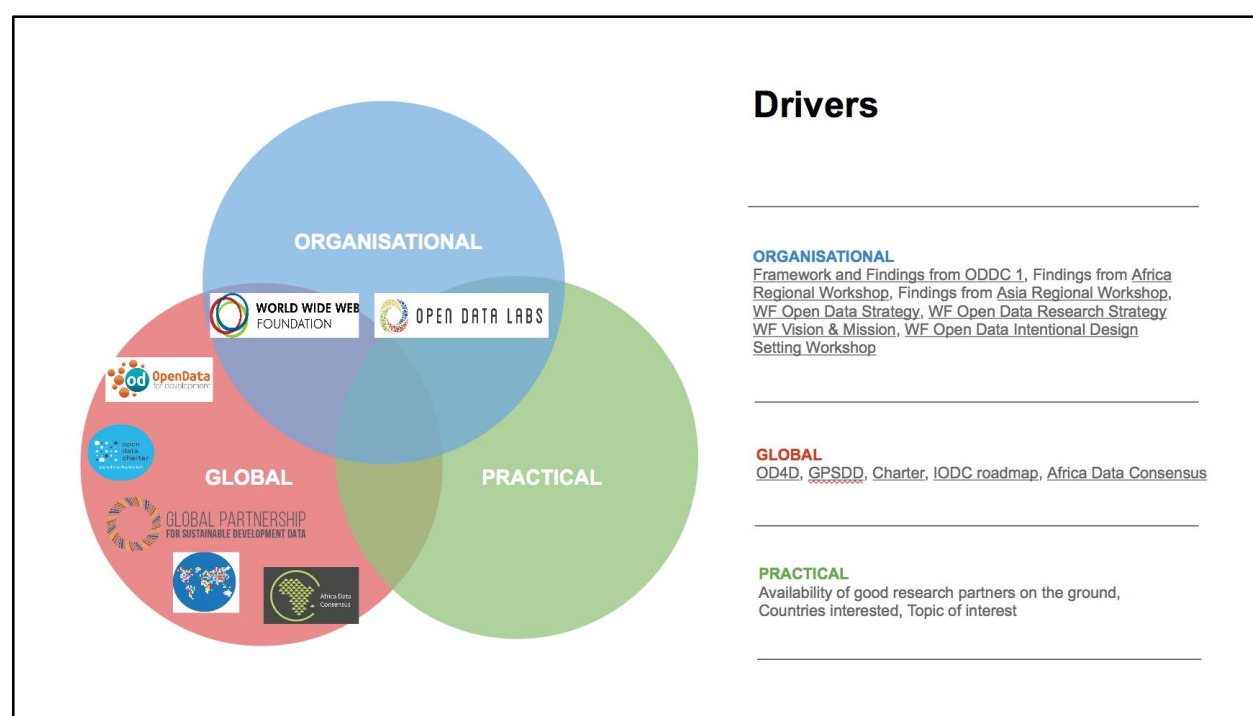
## IODC and Open Data Research Symposium

Our participation at IODC has been documented [elsewhere](#), but overall it was a comprehensive Web Foundation contribution with a total number of ten staff from the Open Data team speaking at ten panels. One key pre-event was also the co-organization (together with ILDA and Practical Participation) of the Open Data Research Symposium which had a total of over 150 participants and 36 accepted papers and was in many cases, an output for research from ODDC 1 (many ODDC 1 partners were able to attend thanks to IDRC funding). Selected papers from the Symposium will also be published in the Journal of Community Informatics in March 2016, following peer review. One critique from the Symposium/IODC

(from feedback) was that there was insufficient interaction between the two - research symposium and main conference - for example a session at IODC on translating research to policy. We look forward to convening a second research symposium at IODC 2016.

## Research Agendas for Asia and Africa

A key outcome of both the Asia and Africa workshops was a clearer focus on the research agenda, defined from the regions themselves. This was coupled with recruitment of Asia and Africa Regional Research Managers, Michael Cañares and Francois van Schalkwyk respectively, previous grantees and mentors from ODDC 1 and 2 identified for both excellent research and management skills. Although their formal recruitment was slightly delayed with IODC in the interim, both their attendance at IODC greatly helped advance [the Web Foundation research strategy](#), ODDC 3 strategy (part of which is summarised in diagrams below) and more focussed [Asia](#) and [Africa](#) strategies. One decision taken was to work with identified sub-grantees/partners in each case rather than an open call as we felt we had a better idea of both focus and partners. The drivers for the research agenda emerged as follows:



#### OD4D

OD4D's principles:

- Research and learning
- Empowerment of leadership from developing countries
- Efficiency
- Openness

#### INTERNATIONAL OPEN DATA CONFERENCE (IODC) ROADMAP

- International Open Data Charter
- Standards
- Skills
- Innovation
- Measurement

#### INTERNATIONAL OPEN DATA CHARTER

- Open by default
- Timely and comprehensive
- Accessible and usable
- Comparable and interoperable
- Improved governance and citizen engagement
- Inclusive development and innovation



#### GPSDD

- Improve the Effective Use of Data
- Fill Key Data Gaps
- Expand Data Literacy and Capacity
- Increase Openness and leverage of Existing Data
- Mobilize Political Will and Resources

#### AFRICA DATA CONSENSUS

- Securing political commitment
- Building the evidence base
- Embedding the data revolution in Africa
- Financing and sustainability
- Building capacities and skills
- Building partnerships and synergies

## Africa and Asia Research Cases



Building open data research and education capacity.



Accessing open health data.



Sustaining open data startups.



Exposing illicit financial flows in the extractives industry.



Creating sub-national open data networks to improve water quality.



Embedding trust in agricultural value chains.



Achieving fiscal transparency through open data.



Enabling the last mile of open data.



Addressing urban challenges through open data.

## Africa Research Cases

	Topic	Partner	Country
Africa	Accessing open health data	University of Dar es Salaam	Tanzania
Africa	Sustaining open data startups	University of Ilorin and <a href="#">BudgIT</a>	Nigeria
Africa	Exposing illicit financial flows in the extractives industry	African Network of Centres for Investigative Reporting (lead with other organizations)	Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe
Africa	Building trust in agricultural value chains	African Minds	Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda
Africa	Creating sub-national open data networks to improve water quality	PDG	South Africa
Africa	Use of open data by journalists	iHub	Kenya

## Asia Research Cases

	Topic	Partner	Country
Asia	Achieving fiscal transparency through open data.	The Gender Project, India Center for Regional and Local Governance, Philippines	India, Philippines
Asia	Enabling the last mile of open data.	Young Innovations Nepal, Sinar Project Malaysia	Nepal, Malaysia
Asia	Addressing urban challenges through open data.	Open Data Lab Jakarta, Center for Innovation Policy in Governance <a href="#">Indonesia</a> , City of Jakarta	Indonesia

We are in the process of refining the theory of change for this phase of research.

**ODERI**



The Open Data Education and Research Institute is a project building on work by two research partners in Phase 1 - [Jesuit Hakimani Centre](#) in Kenya and [De La Salle University](#) in the Philippines. As their findings showed low understanding and use of open data in CSOs and local government respectively, their initial proposal was to provide training courses to these stakeholders (as well as journalists in the case of Kenya) as well as building university curricula for understanding open data to enhance open data research capability in developing countries. However, the initial proposals were considered too weak and, in consultations with the project officer, we assigned a mentor and option to re-submit a stronger proposal by 1 May 2015. This was accepted and the project is now under way with an initial stakeholder analysis stage of what kind of open data awareness exists and relevant training is necessary. A kick-off workshop between the two partners was held in August 2015 in the Philippines. In September 2015, [Zac Chiliswa](#), the project manager at Jesuit Hakimani Centre announced his sabbatical to pursue postgraduate studies in the UK, and the project manager at Jesuit Hakimani is now [Victor Okonga](#).

## Outcome Mapping Monitoring and Evaluation

The Web Foundation was keen to embed outcome mapping as a monitoring and evaluation tool from the very beginning of this phase of research. While both Regional Workshops were designed using outcome mapping, Pereira da Silva consultants have been hired as overall OM evaluators for ODDC Phase 3 (having previously evaluated Phase 1) and a kick-off intentional design meeting took place on 12th and 13th March 2015 in London. [Details of the outcome mapping workshop](#) and [agenda](#) are here. The consultants have been constantly kept up to date with regular team calls. By October 2015 they will begin evaluation of selected projects in Asia and Africa. In addition, the Research Lead is exchanging outcome mapping lessons learned with the Open Data Institute and Sunlight Foundation towards a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of outcome mapping as an evaluation method.

## OD4D Africa feedback session

This was convened as a pre-event as part of [an OD4D consultations day](#) at the [Africa Open Data Conference](#) in Dar es Salaam, 2nd-5th September. Although this technically falls into the next six-monthly report, we review it here as it is recent. The session invited over twenty stakeholders from the tech, civil society, donor, research and supranational agencies to provide feedback and constructive criticism on the proposed African OD4D research projects (broadly on illicit financial flows in the extractives industry, value chains in agriculture, open data and urban water quality/provision, open health data and economic sustainability of open data innovation). The participants provided valuable inputs that have been incorporated into the final research project proposals. These inputs have resulted in stronger project proposals and a clearer conceptual framework. An additional, and equally valuable, outcome of this session was the connections facilitated between the project partners and the participants, and the access to new networks that these participants enabled and that were explored in discussions in the days

following the session. These networks are critical to the successful implementation, delivery and impact of the research projects.

## Roadmap and recommendations

The immediate roadmap is to “lock down” the research plans for Asia and Africa and sign contracts with research partners in both Asia and Africa (by end of September). The research will be inline with both the organizational and global open data initiatives (see images above).

At present we have a few specific conceptualizations as well as recommendations to IDRC:

1. Continued thinking (on part of WF) for how to tie the Open Data Barometer with the OD4D research as this has raised significant interest in both Asia and Africa.
2. Further thinking on understanding the impact of ODDC research, specifically ODDC 1, which would help enhance impact of ODDC 3.
3. Clarification on OD4D platforms and channels, branding and ODDC 3 within this (to be discussed with WF Communications Team and IDRC) as well as the future of the Open Data Research Network and value of this to OD4D.
4. Note - we have already incurred significant exchange rate loss and overall funding for research is likely to continue to be further be affected if the exchange rate losses keep on increasing.

Feedback on the extent to which our current project state is in line with expectations, and continued opportunities to interact with other projects in the I&N portfolio, would be valuable as we plan for the future.