

(SPECIFIC DOMAIN → OTHER DOMAIN)

OPEN DATA ECOSYSTEM HELPS GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT

EVIDENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

changes within (here GOV) pushed us together w/ SOs to evidence-based feedback & engagement

OPEN DATA →

Common Learning

a shift from anti-corruption discourse to

OPEN DATA AND FISCAL TRANSPARENCY: HOW CAN WE UNLOCK THE BENEFITS?

LEARNINGS FROM PILOT PROJECTS IN INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

 LESSONS LEARNED PAPER



Summary

Every day, national, regional, and local governments spend vast sums of citizens' tax money. However, all too often, there is a lack of transparency around how these public funds are spent. In Indonesia and the Philippines, civil society groups have consistently clamoured for more accountability in public finances in areas such as procurement, education, and infrastructure. These organisations strongly believe in the positive effect that strengthening fiscal transparency can have on increased citizen participation, reduced corruption, and more open and participatory decision-making.

Working with civil society organisations in both countries¹, and with funding support from the Southeast Asia Technology and Transparency Initiative (SEATTI), the Web Foundation's Open Data Lab Jakarta (Jakarta Lab) set out to explore how open data might best be harnessed for fiscal transparency in the region. This paper summarises the approach we used, but more importantly, the lessons we learned.

We found that a crucial key to success was the active participation and dedication of project partners that had prior knowledge, skills, and experience in fiscal transparency. Investing in building their capacities to work with open data and convince governments to share information proved to be an effective solution.

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¹ The term 'project partners' will be herein used to refer to the four organisations the Open Data Lab Jakarta worked with to implement this project: E-Net Philippines, INCITEGov, Pattiro Surakarta and Perkumpulan IDEA.

1. Background

As founding members of the Open Government Partnership², Indonesia and the Philippines have been at the forefront of exploring new approaches to strengthening governance through increased transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement. In order to underpin and support governance reforms, both countries have made great strides in making government data open to the public. The launch of Indonesia's national open data portal³, which hosts datasets from national government ministries and local agencies, demonstrates the government's commitment to giving citizens access to the data affecting their daily lives. This is in line with President Joko Widodo's goals of better public services and heightened democratic participation through increased transparency and with an administration free of corruption.⁴ While the efforts of the Indonesian government to provide unrestricted access to government data are commendable, research has found that the low level of skills across sectors to utilise data effectively, especially among civil society groups⁵, hampers the use of government data that could result in concrete positive change.

Likewise, the creation of the national open data portal of the Philippines⁶, together with the recent launch of the government's open data implementation guidelines⁷ to empower citizens and sustain transparency through easily accessible government data, is an important step towards a more open, responsive, and accountable government. Similarly to Indonesia, these efforts are rooted in President Benigno Aquino III's anti-corruption campaign and public confidence restoration efforts.⁸ But mirroring the Indonesian experience, many local civil society organisations (CSOs) are still not aware of the open data concept, its potential benefits, and the existing tools to analyse, interpret, and disseminate data.⁹

In both countries, we discovered that despite the acknowledgement of governance issues, there was limited support to CSOs to enable them to harness the potential of the growing amounts of accessible data. Based on our research, we concluded that while data literacy training could build some of the much-needed capacity, a continuous long term engagement with customised approaches tailored to the specific needs of the target audiences is required to ensure that data access, along with capacity building, leads to tangible results and positive outcomes.

Like open data, fiscal transparency is also high on the agenda in both countries. Since 2011, local governments in the Philippines have been required to publish financial and procurement-related data

² Learn more about the Open Government Partnership at <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

³ Visit Indonesia's national data portal at <http://data.go.id/>

⁴ Source: <http://www.establishmentpost.com/jokowis-nine-priorities-agenda-nawa-cita/>

⁵ Source: <http://webfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/OGD-Indonesia-FINAL-for-publication.pdf>

⁶ Visit the Philippines' national open data portal at <http://data.gov.ph/>

⁷ Source: <http://data.gov.ph/news/guidelines-open-data-implementation-jmc-no-2015-01>

⁸ Source: <http://www.pep.ph/news/44332/full-transcript-of-president-noynoy-aquino39s-fifth-state-of-the-nation-address>

⁹ See for example <http://www.opendataresearch.org/dl/symposium2015/odrs2015-paper15.pdf>

1. Background

online.¹⁰ However, the policy will only have a significant impact when there is uptake of the data, which requires sufficient understanding and skills to translate the complex data into easily understandable information. In Indonesia, there are new and existing efforts for a more open government, such as the building of city open data portals that house select datasets, and the Freedom of Information Act of 2008¹¹ that enables citizens to extract information through proper request channels. However, despite this progress, considerable challenges remain with regard to transparency in public finance, especially at the local level. With the passage of Indonesia's Village Law (UU Desa)¹², which has led to a substantial increase in the budget available to local governments, the need for effective oversight of the use of public funds at the local level is greater than ever.

Pictures 1 to 3. Hard at work—each organisation was faced with the challenge of identifying the enabling and hindering factors they faced for their projects. IDEA and Pattiro in discussion with mentor Lukman Hakim; E-Net Philippines' Addie Unsi talking about their factors, and a wall display of the findings, all during the final workshop held in Manila last June 2015.



¹⁰ Source: <http://www.opendataresearch.org/project/2013/step>

¹¹ Source: <http://www.right2info.org/resources/publications/laws-1/Indonesia-Public-Information-Disclosure-Act-2008.doc/view>

¹² Source: <http://pnpm-support.org/news/implementation-village-law-and-sustainability-pnpm-rural>

2. What did we want to achieve?

With this project, we aimed to empower civil society groups to use open data to improve fiscal government transparency at local levels in select areas in Indonesia and the Philippines. To achieve this, we worked together with CSOs that already had experiences tackling fiscal issues, and added to their range of skills by training and enabling them to make more effective use of publicly available budget and spending data to monitor government use of public funds. Local interventions were then conceived as pilot projects.

By the end of the project, we hoped that partners would be able to independently locate and access data needed to support their work, understand how to effectively and sustainably harness the potentials of open data and integrate it in their future work, and act as champions of open data amongst other CSOs in their respective countries.

Figure 1. A visual representation of Indonesia, with the OD4Transparency project locations marked.



Box 1. OD4Transparency project partners (continued in the next page).

INDONESIA

Perkumpulan IDEA is actively involved in budget transparency work. The CSO translates local government budget data into formats understandable to citizens. Based in Yogyakarta, it focuses on public education on government budgets and advocates for reforms in public fiscal management.

Pattiro Surakarta is engaged in research, information management, training and publishing, and the development of local community participation. They also work on budget advocacy, public services, and provide assistance to marginalised communities, supporting transparency and good governance at the local level.

2. What did we want to achieve?

Figure 2. A visual representation of the Philippines¹³, with the OD4Transparency project locations marked.



PHILIPPINES

INCITEGov works on governance reforms in the Philippines by focusing on three pillars - democratic politics, good governance, and development outcomes. It conducts research, policy analysis, capacity building, and policy advocacy to advance democratic reforms in the country.

E-NET Philippines is a network of CSOs in the Philippines working for education reforms in order to ensure that quality education becomes a basic human right for all. Its main activities are focused on education financing, strengthening of alternative learning systems, and civil society partnership with governments to achieve better education outcomes.

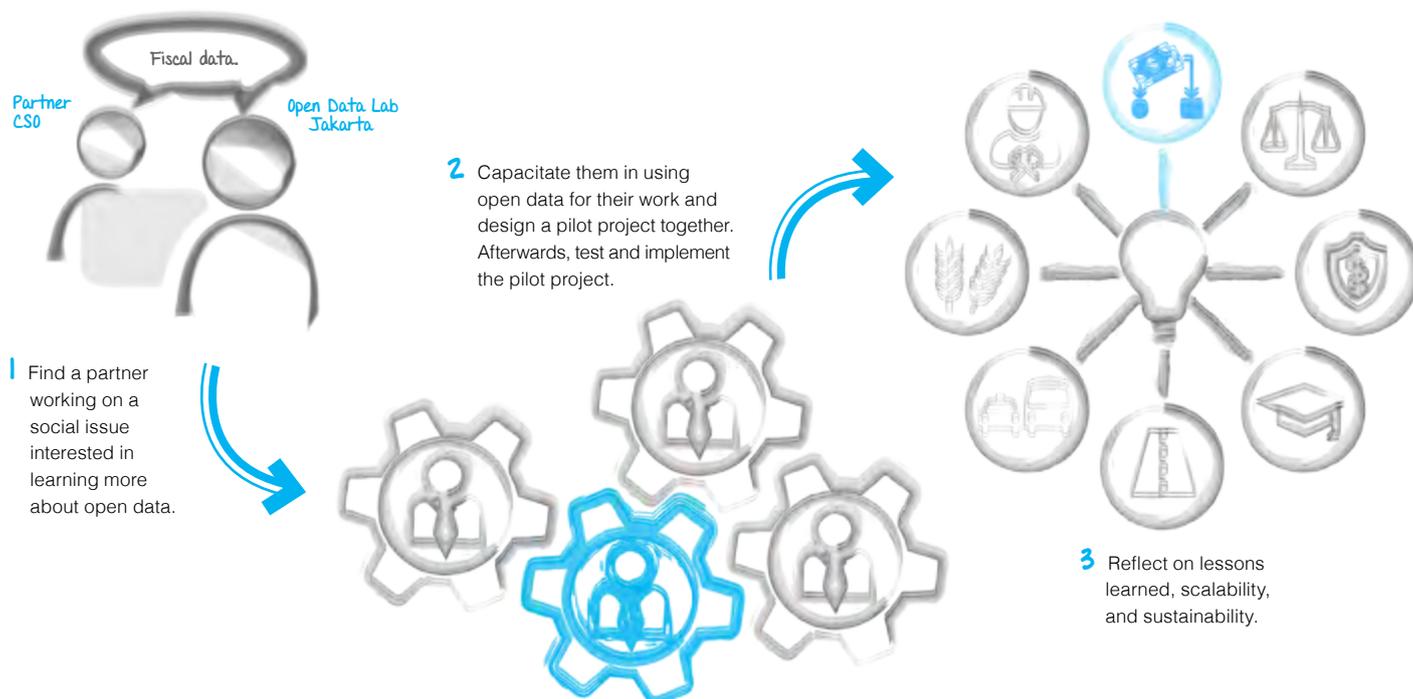
¹³ Source: Map of Philippines - Single Color by FreeVectorMaps.com. Please note that the maps and markers may not be an exact image of the countries.

3. What did we do? And what did we find?

We designed a project that would strengthen the capacity of CSOs to use open data to promote fiscal transparency. In this project, we directly worked with CSOs, without necessarily interacting with government as is the case in many of our other innovation projects, such as the initiatives in Banda Aceh¹⁴ and Jakarta.¹⁵

The project was divided into three phases: Convening and Planning, Pilot Interventions, and Reflections.

Figure 3. The project phases for OD4Transparency: Convening and planning, pilot interventions, and reflections.



PHASE ONE: CONVENING AND PLANNING

The first phase of the project consisted of identifying project partners in both Indonesia and the Philippines, and bringing them together in a workshop where they shared their current organisational practices to campaign for and promote fiscal transparency. The workshop also included trainings to build the open data capacities of participants. With the help of three expert mentors¹⁶, we conducted a training to introduce the concept of open data and to give an overview of the tools and approaches practitioners can use to access, analyse, and interpret data. Following this exchange of knowledge, and using their newly gained skills and understanding, the project partners defined pilot projects which would use open data to advance fiscal transparency.

¹⁴ Read more about this at <http://labs.webfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lessons-Learned-FOIODAceh.pdf>

¹⁵ Read more about this at <http://labs.webfoundation.org/projects-2/jodi/>

¹⁶ Michael Gurstein of Center for Community Informatics Research, Development, and Training, Don Parafina of Affiliated Network on Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific, and Lukman Hakim, then of Seknas Fitra.

3. What did we do? And what did we find?

PHASE TWO: PILOT INTERVENTIONS

With the pilot intervention designs developed in Phase One, and after further building on the skills and capacities acquired through the training, project partners implemented their individual projects. Guided by the local and international mentors, each organisation tackled particular financial transparency issues with open data, listed on the following pages.

Picture 4. IDEA consulting with one of the mentors on how best to approach their project and develop a work plan, during the initial workshop held in September 2014.



Box 2. OD4Transparency project outcomes.

INDONESIA

Perkumpulan IDEA engages in budget advocacy activities in the city of Yogyakarta by educating people about how the city government uses taxpayers' money to provide economic, social, and cultural services to citizens. In the past, it took them six to eight weeks to convert thick budget books to a format that they are able to summarise, visualise, and present through printed media, such as posters and newspapers. We wanted to help IDEA cut this time down, and find more efficient ways to communicate. As a first step in seeking to reduce the data processing time, IDEA asked the city government for budget data in machine-readable format. This request was denied because the government officials feared that this would compromise the integrity of the budget data, but government did agree to provide electronic copies, albeit in PDF format.

3. What did we do? And what did we find?

Next, we worked with IDEA in scraping data from the PDF files to convert them to CSV (an open, easily reusable and analysable format). We also guided IDEA in developing their “Open Data APBD¹⁷” website so that it would be easier for the public to access budgetary information online. To make budget information more interesting, IDEA visualised the budget data and disseminated it through offline (e.g. newspaper) and online formats (e.g. website, Facebook, and Twitter).

As a result, IDEA was able to reach more than 7,500 city residents in Yogyakarta, ten times more than what they were able to reach through their previous budget advocacy activities. In addition, they were able to train 104 men and women in how to use open data to monitor city budgets.

IDEA is now in the process of formalising a partnership with the regional tax office and the financial management office of Yogyakarta to ensure proactive publication of the city budget and linking the city government website to IDEA's new Open Data APBD portal. The organisation is also strengthening its efforts to increase the use of budget information by citizens and citizen groups, more particularly in the advocacy for better allocation of budget resources to fulfil socio-economic rights.

Pictures 5 and 6. The thick books are the published budget and spending data of Yogyakarta city from 2012 to 2014, which was visualised by IDEA into a newspaper format so that citizens could better understand where their taxes went.



¹⁷ APBD means anggaran pendapatan dan belanja daerah (city budget and expenditure)

3. What did we do? And what did we find?

Picture 7. Dyah Ayu from Pattiro introducing their organisation, project proposal, goals, and intended approach during the initial workshop.



PATTIRO Surakarta is an organisation working on budget advocacy, public services, and assistance to marginalised communities in Surakarta (also known as Solo), a city in Central Java. In this project, they aimed to explain to the local community how special ‘village development funds’ are spent. Village development funds are direct transfers from the national government to the villages for the latter to use the funds for poverty eradication, health, education, infrastructure, and supporting agricultural programs.

To determine how they would engage citizens in the issue, Pattiro first conducted a survey among stakeholders in the villages that are involved in local public infrastructure management. This included members of the construction execution committee, family welfare guidance, monitoring and evaluation professionals, village community empowerment institutions, and village facilitators, from three pilot villages. **A major finding of this research was that, though citizens know the existence of the village development fund, an overwhelming majority felt that relevant data is hard to access and find.** Pattiro helped acquaint local CSOs with the importance of open data and proactive disclosure, and how open data can potentially make the city government more transparent and accountable, especially in providing information about the amount, purpose, and utilisation of the village development fund.

To create buy-in and support from the city government, Pattiro invited around 90 government officials from different agencies and spoke to them about the importance of proactive disclosure of government data. Several of the agencies they engaged with saw the value of proactive disclosure but were still reluctant to share data in suitable formats. Pattiro advocated for the release of infrastructure datasets in a machine-readable format, but did not succeed. The Public Works Agency referred their request to the inspectorate and legal department of Surakarta,

3. What did we do? And what did we find?

resulting in a long waiting period before a decision was made on the matter. The city planning division, on the other hand, was reluctant to share more datasets than what were already provided. While the project failed to generate commitment from within government, it increased awareness of both civil servants and citizens that open data offers an opportunity for better data sharing and use. Pattiro will continue to advocate on the issue with government leaders in Surakarta.

Picture 8 to 10. E-Net and INCITEGov members being trained in data scraping and analysis; Materials developed by E-Net as part of their pilot project and the SEF Open Data Toolkit displayed in the final workshop; INCITEGov developing their initial workplan for their project.



3. What did we do? And what did we find?

PHILIPPINES

INCITEGov focused on how CSOs can better engage in public procurement activities of local governments. While the Procurement Law of the Philippines mandates CSOs to observe public contracting processes, civil society participation is usually low - especially at the local level. In partnership with the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), INCITEGov piloted capacity development sessions on citizen engagement in the procurement process by using the Agency Procurement Compliance Performance Indicator (APCPI) tool as an entry point. This tool, developed by GPPB but hardly implemented at the local level, measures openness, transparency, and accountability in the procurement process. INCITEGov conducted learning sessions with 53 representatives from CSOs in La Trinidad, Benguet for them to understand procurement processes better and learn about the different data available within government that would help them monitor procurement performance.

CSOs then asked for procurement data from government and used the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement Service portal to access procurement data. **In consultative workshops with government, they asked and obtained data on tenders and awards, as well as contracts. They used the data to score the local government in procurement compliance. This initial engagement laid the foundation for increased participation of CSOs in achieving more transparent procurement at the local level.** INCITEGov is currently documenting its practice and drafting a guide on how citizen groups can monitor procurement of governments at the local level, and how local actors can conduct evidence-based advocacy in procurement reform. This documentation will be published as a chapter in a book on procurement reform.

E-Net Philippines advocates for better use of the Special Education Fund (SEF). These funds are administered by Local School Boards (LSB), of which 40% of the members are from civil society. The SEF can be used to meet the supplementary needs of the public school system. Funds are equivalent to 1% of the assessed value of every real property and collected together with property taxes paid to the local government.

Through this project, E-Net sparked the development of a process where LSBs can monitor the budgeting and utilisation of the SEF, using open data made available through the Full Disclosure Policy Portal (FDPP). The FDPP is a government portal where local government units are mandated to upload plans, budgets, financial reports, and other related financial documents in machine-readable format. Their pilot project took place in two sites in Northern Mindanao, namely Kidapawan and Alamada.

Before this project, monitoring of the SEF in the pilot sites was very low due to lack of awareness and information on the role of LSBs and the lack of data available to be used in monitoring the use of the funds. Currently, local government units are required to post SEF utilisation reports

3. What did we do? And what did we find?

in the FDPP and civil society members can access this to monitor spending. **With increased awareness on these topics, more than 100 CSO members of the school boards from the two municipalities are now in a better position to monitor utilisation and ask local governments questions regarding how the funds are used to improve education outcomes at the local level.** With access to data and knowledge to analyse it, they feel empowered to engage with government in discussing their demands for better education spending. To document lessons learned from this process, E-Net is currently preparing an Open Data and SEF Toolkit that LSBs can use in ensuring the transparent utilisation of the education budget.

The awareness on open data also translated into actionable points when an E-Net workshop participant approached the Local Government Unit (LGU) as well as the Department of Education, and made use of the SEF data to access financial support for the ustadz (Islamic Teachers). As a result of the positive experience in accessing data and using this for advocacy, this participant went on to teaching this group of teachers how to access the SEF. They formed the North Cotabato Federation of Madrasa Community Ustadz in July 2015 as a result, after which they requested for salaries of their ustadz to be funded by the SEF. Two of the eight requests are now earmarked for funding. This lobbying extended to another win, which is the access to the budget for uniforms of said teachers. They are hopeful that their initiative will have a multiplier effect and can empower more ustadz to demand for more budget allocation from the SEF.

PHASE 3: ANALYSIS AND PROJECT REFLECTIONS

Following Phase Two, a second workshop was organised wherein the project partners showcased and discussed the results of their pilot projects. Each organisation, together with the mentors and team members of the Jakarta Lab, was given the opportunity to systematically assess the findings, reflect on the outcomes, and facilitate an in-depth analysis of enabling and hindering factors found in the initiatives. A comparative analysis of the projects based on their different local contexts also allowed participants to identify common pitfalls in regard to the use of open data for promoting fiscal transparency.

4. What did we learn?

Open data can be an effective tool to help CSOs improve fiscal transparency.

Open data benefits organisations working in fiscal transparency in many ways. With this project, local organisations like IDEA were able to reduce processing time in preparing budget data for analysis and dissemination, making information presentation, outreach and advocacy more efficient and responsive.

In the case of E-Net, using open education data and training other CSOs increased the number of organisations advocating for better education spending, widening E-Net's networks and influence. It also led to more community involvement in how resources were allocated.

Picture 11. E-Net introducing open data to a wider group of educators through their established network. Through this project, they were able to get more community involvement in pushing for better education.



Open data has the potential to strengthen partnerships between CSOs and local government for greater transparency and public accountability.

While the project partners had worked with local governments before, a new dimension in the area of disclosure and transparency emerged as a result of the project. For example, Pattiro Surakarta was able to influence local stakeholders to see that there is value in making government data publicly available. Aside from the local governments on the village level (Tipes, Pajang, and Serengan), there were several

4. What did we learn?

government branches, including the transportation, information, and communication agencies, who became interested in publishing their data. While they were not successful in their initial attempt, they have pursued this discussion with the interested departments and started to build partnerships for proactive disclosure of government data.

In the case of INCITEGov, the use of procurement monitoring indicators enabled the CSOs to understand public procurement and how they can use open data to monitor government compliance with procurement rules and regulations. This is important because under the Philippine law, CSOs should be actively involved in procurement processes especially in the opening of public tender documents. Moreover, they also had a stronger realisation that as civil society groups, they could and should hold their local government accountable for contracting processes. This increased their interest and motivation to participate alongside the government in the Bids and Awards Committee, a formal body that ensures transparency in government procurement.

Open data can facilitate processes that increase citizen awareness and participation regarding public fiscal transparency issues.

An important result of the pilot projects was the increased awareness and participation of citizens regarding public fiscal transparency issues in the respective cities and municipalities. For example, when IDEA conducted a survey to test their intervention's effectiveness, the majority of respondents stated their satisfaction and even renewed optimism given new channels like the Open Data APBD website¹⁸, which made it easier for citizens to access budget data and consume information on government-funded programs in Yogyakarta. This led to increased understanding and knowledge of the budgeted and actual expenditures of the city, and to greater interest in public involvement to help distribute funds to relevant areas that might be lacking or not as easily seen by the government.

In the city of Kidapawan where E-Net implemented the Open Data and SEF toolkit, parents and teachers, who represent their organisations in the LSB, realised the importance of monitoring how the SEF is budgeted and utilised. Realising that the fund is allocated by law to help improve education outcomes, they began to question, using the data they were able to access, why the fund is used for certain purposes which do not directly or indirectly contribute to better education results of their children. **Without access to data and without knowledge of relevant laws, citizens will not be able to identify and assess critical public fiscal transparency issues.**

¹⁸ Source: <http://idea.arcapada.info/>

5. What are our key take-aways?

The implementation of open data projects by our partners in Indonesia and the Philippines demonstrated great potential, but also highlighted significant challenges. First, the projects highlighted the need to raise awareness and build the capacity of intermediaries, in this case CSOs, regarding the relationship between the right to information, open data, and public fiscal transparency laws, processes, and systems, in order for them to meaningfully engage with local governments to help achieve more accountable governance. In many cases, CSOs were not aware of their rights to access data under FOI laws, and in others where data is proactively disclosed, CSOs are not aware that such data exists. The project also highlighted the importance of understanding local context better, so that open data initiatives can be best designed and implemented to suit local needs. For example, **in places with low internet penetration and where citizens still rely on traditional printed newspapers as their most trusted source of information, data visualisations coupled with explanatory articles would create equal if not more impact than online portals.** More of our lessons learned are discussed below¹⁹, which we hope will be useful in informing future projects of a similar nature both within the region and beyond.

Lesson

1

Government officials often see the opening of data as too much of a risk. Convincing government to proactively disclose data needs to be properly facilitated, to allow constructive engagement between government and civil society.

Several of our project partners encountered considerable reluctance and apprehension from officials to provide requested data, even in situations where a legal framework was in place governing data access. Concerns were based on fears that the data could potentially be used to attack the government for any perceived errors or failings, administrative inadequacies, or disagreement with the workarounds in processes. **Yet, open data is not merely about “anti-corruption” or saying “gotcha”, rather, it is about helping to build effective, transparent, and responsive governmental systems.** The pilot projects showed the necessity of making it clear from the beginning of the interventions that the overall and long-running intention is to develop permanent systems to prevent and curb corruption rather than to develop specific cases against individuals.

¹⁹ The process of generating lessons learned was participatory, involving all mentors and project partners. This was a facilitated process that spanned six months coordinated by Michael Gurstein.

5. What are our key take-aways?

Lesson

2

Administrative processes or legal frameworks are important to ensure the implementation and continuity of open data initiatives.

It was clear from the experience of our project partners that merely gaining access to data was insufficient and of little value in the long term. Instead, a more effective and lasting solution would be to design and implement administrative processes and legal frameworks supporting open data practices, that allow room for not only access, but also analysis, utilisation, interpretation, and dissemination of data or data findings.

There is a widespread misconception in government circles and even civic groups that open data is specifically concerned with “advocacy” for data disclosure, perhaps because many advocacy organisations have long been involved in exerting pressure on governments to gain access to data. **However, as part of the process of working with governments, we found it necessary to point out that open data was about building appropriate governmental and administrative structures and policy frameworks whose functions go far beyond proactive disclosure, but also ensuring that citizens are able to access, analyse, utilise, and interpret data.** For example, while partners of INCITEGov were able to get procurement-related data to assist them in the analysis of procurement compliance, this was made possible because INCITEGov has a working partnership with local governments. Without this relationship, requesting and actually accessing data would have been difficult especially as the Philippines does not have a right to information law.

Pictures 12 and 13. INCITEGov's Nino Versoza explaining their project focusing on procurement and the support given by the Benguet local government, and government officials from Surakarta participating in Pattiro's open data focus group discussion.



5. What are our key take-aways?

Lesson

3

Focusing on intermediaries that have deep substantive knowledge and experience in the sectors they are tackling is an effective way of ensuring sustained open financial data use.

We found that it was effective to provide open data skills and knowledge to CSOs who were already proficient in their causes. The project is grounded in this strategy of first selecting groups with deep experience and broad credibility in specific areas of interest concerning transparency, and afterwards training them in open data skills and techniques. For example, the introduction of open data concepts strengthened the ability of E-Net Philippines to advocate for better utilisation of the SEF.

The alternative, which would have been to select groups with open data experience and knowledge and then train them in sector specific areas (such as budget and spending, education, or health), will require a different set of interventions, largely related to making these organisations understand the context and nature of the data that they are working on.

Additionally, we found that there appears to be a long term benefit to linking cross-sectoral non-government organisations through open data initiatives so they do not remain siloed.

In the case of IDEA, they worked with other local organisations from Yogyakarta which assisted IDEA in developing the open data portal, as well as in educating the public about the benefits of using data. These partnerships helped organisations working in other sectors not familiar with budget transparency to analyse how government is also investing in technology development or knowledge creation.

Collaboration among different stakeholders is important in the fiscal transparency space, because allocation of public resources will speak of government priorities and reveal significant tradeoffs across sectors.

5. What are our key take-aways?

Lesson

4

Once an organisation is equipped with the skills and experiences to utilise open data in one sector, they can use that same knowledge and apply it to other sectors and advocacies.

An interesting lesson we learned was that **once a CSO was trained in open data – that they are able to access, analyse, and utilise it comfortably – transferring or applying the same knowledge, skills, and experiences to other projects or sectors became easily doable.** This happened for example with INCITEGov’s partners, who, after attending the training, realised that they can use the skills learned in open data for the core advocacy of their respective organisations in culture, women empowerment, and children’s rights. Looking at procurement data and those datasets that were made available through the Full Disclosure Policy portal, they were able to realise that analysing the datasets would enable them to understand how their local government is investing its resources to promote culture, empower women, or protect children’s rights. The significance of this finding impacts the building of long term strategies for implanting open data orientations into themes or areas where they might currently be lacking. For example, by designing open data trainings and frameworks around one specific issue but which could still be applied broadly, and teaching this to civic groups that have activities in multiple sectors, we are able to increase the chances of these organisations adapting open data for their broader work over time.

Open data work also stimulated CSOs to become more technologically literate and develop partnerships between CSOs and the tech community. For example, one CSO noted that their involvement in the project had the result of prompting them to become more technologically literate and aware, which allowed them to develop new partnerships with tech-oriented groups. This was seen as a significant and positive development by the CSOs, as it gave them the added value of being able to influence other organisations and further build their networks and relationships for present and future work.

To give a concrete example, both of the changes happened with Perkumpulan IDEA. First, they were able to use their open data skills learned through this project in crafting a funding proposal that would potentially use open data in the monitoring of the Village Development Fund. Second, seeing the need to use a portal to house the budget data that they scraped and visualised, they partnered with a tech organisation to design and launch the portal, and used Facebook and Twitter to broadcast budget-related information and engage with citizens in meaningful discussions.

5. What are our key take-aways?

Lesson

5

Open data inspired evidence-based advocacy. It became a new and effective supplement to existing rights, legal, and policy-based advocacy processes, and increased the credibility of civic groups among citizens and governments.

A large number of the CSOs from the sectors in which the projects were conducted were working from subjective positions supporting their overall advocacy activities. Open data had the effect of shifting the public perception of (and to a degree the reality of) these organisations towards “data” or “evidence”-based positions which led to an increased credibility for them and for their positions. Feeling empowered by this, the organisations became more inclined to work with, add, and use open data in their future activities.

Picture 14. IDEA's Tenti Kurniawati explaining the budget and spending data of Yogyakarta from 2012 to 2014 in the public event in Manila, using their printed newspaper visualisation of it.



6. Areas for Future Research

The OD4Transparency project was not designed to provide universal fiscal transparency approaches and solutions to our project partners or their target areas. Rather, we saw it as an opportunity to develop, test, and refine sustainable approaches in spite of the limitations of the pilot projects, such as the short implementation period, fixed funds, and constrained scaling opportunities.

We have identified two priority areas for further research.

- First, the initiatives explored in these pilot projects are about planning and budgeting, procurement monitoring, and budget utilisation - individual and isolated approaches that do not necessarily cover the whole public finance chain. **There is a need to test whether focusing on just one aspect of a local government's public financial management system will affect the financial transparency practices of the whole organisation.**
- Second, while the projects were instrumental in initiating the process of proactive disclosure of financial data, **a looming question is whether the new practice will be sustained by governments given its initial reluctance, especially in the context of Indonesia, where proactive disclosure of data by local government agencies is not a common practice.** The intermediaries in this project were able to take advantage of the data they were able to access, but if governments decide not to continue with publishing data, then this poses a great challenge to these organisations. Research on how practices in the proactive disclosure of information can be institutionalised in sub-national contexts is therefore important.

For more information on this project, visit our website at labs.webfoundation.org or get in touch with us directly at info@labs.webfoundation.org. Other resources, such as our How-to Guide for this project and presentations talking about this project are also available in the resources section of our website.

About the World Wide Web Foundation

The World Wide Web Foundation was established in 2009 by Web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee to advance the open Web as a public good and a basic right. We're building a future in which the Web empowers everyone, everywhere, to take part in building a fairer world.

Part of our vision is that data - the lifeblood of digital societies - should be used for the public good. We're working to open up data so that everyone can understand and use it to tackle the problems that matter to them.

About the Open Data Lab Jakarta

Established in 2014, the Web Foundation's Open Data Lab Jakarta is working with communities and governments across South East Asia to find innovative ways to use data to solve civic challenges. Our goal is to empower people to make data work for them.

The Jakarta Lab is the first in a planned series of Labs in developing countries, with a Lab in Africa on the horizon.

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While our successes are shared with our colleagues and collaborators, any inaccuracies or errors in this paper are ours alone.

Open Data Lab Jakarta

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