

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL TOWARDS INCLUSIVE OPEN GOVERNMENT IN AFRICA

Mutuku, Leonida;Juma, Linet;

Nyaggah, Muchiri;

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Towards an Inclusive Open Government in Africa (TIOGA)

By:

Final technical report

Published by: LDRI

Date of submission:

IDRC Grant Number: 108868-004

IDRC Project Title: FEMINIST OPEN GOVERNMENT (FOGO) / TOWARDS IN CLUSIVE OPEN GOVERNMENT IN AFRICA

Country/Region: Africa

Full Name of Research Institution: Local Development Research Institute

Address of Research Institution: 2nd Floor, Block D, Navigators Place, Kindaruma Road, Nairobi, Kenya

Name(s) of Researcher/Members of Research Team:

Contact Information of Researcher/Research Team members:

Leonida Mutuku – leo@intelipro.co

Linnet Juma – linet@developlocal.org

This report is presented as received from project recipient(s). It has not been subjected to peer review or other review processes.

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Executive Summary

Towards Inclusive Open Government in Africa (TIOGA) is a project implemented through the Feminist Open Government (FOGO) Initiative, which focuses on empowering women and girls to leverage the existing OGP platform to support innovations that can lead to large scale positive change and support the enabling conditions for more female leaders in the multi-stakeholder space.

The general objective of the project is to connect local gender and governance organizations with their country or sub-national Open Government Partnership (OGP) communities to facilitate inclusion of commitments and approaches that support the African women's rights in OGP processes from co-creation of action plans, implementation and review. By connecting organisations working on the continent's gender equality agenda with the open government community, the project will help to expand civil society participation in national and sub-national OGP processes beyond the community that has been predominantly active.

TIOGA specifically studied the extent to which open government efforts have worked for women in Africa with an aim to make recommendations on how to strengthen them. Through TIOGA research study, LDRI provides insights for the community in OGP countries to use in crafting commitments for the next National Action Plans (NAPs).

Research problem

While women are the majority in Africa, they remain underrepresented in policy processes and leadership in both the public and private sector. For instance, only 5% of CEOs on the African continent are female with only 29% of senior managers being women. Additionally, according to the [Women Matter Report](#) by McKinsey across Africa, only 22% of cabinet members are women and only 25% of parliamentarians are women. This points to existing gender inequalities that still need to be addressed and one important tool to address this the OGP.

Focusing on Ghana and Kenya, this project explored the extent to which open government efforts, as they exist in the national action plans (NAPs) and OGP processes, serve to dismantle this equality-unfriendly architecture or strengthen the ability of women to exercise their agency. It also provides possible recommendations on how to strengthen the OGP to make in work for women in Africa.

Project objectives

The core focus of this project is to undertake a study on the extent to which open government efforts in previous/current NAPs and processes involve women and address issues affecting them. We mainly aimed to meet the following key objectives with our study:

1. Support the inclusion of gender responsive commitments in the next cycle of NAPs.
2. Mobilize gender equality advocates to participate in national and subnational level OGP processes.

In order to meet these objectives, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is considered meaningful and quality participation of women and marginalized groups in OGP processes?
2. What is considered inclusion of women and marginalized groups in OGP?
3. To what extent have past and current NAPs supported participation and inclusion of women?
4. What has been recorded progress, results and impact (of tools/plans to engage women), if any, based on these definitions?
5. Which specific NAP commitments in place can be improved to support the inclusion of gender equality in the next round of national action plans?
6. What new value can an inclusive open government partnership contribute to the achievement of SDG5, SDG16 and successful domestication of the Maputo Protocol?

The frame of reference for formulating the research questions above was on the basis of examining how inclusive participation in OGP is/can be enhanced or detracted by existing normative frameworks including the domestication of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), as well as SDG 5 of the 2030 Agenda.

Project methodology and activities

This research was conducted between August and December 2018 and used a mixed research methods approach. The focus of the study was on Kenya and Ghana, both of which have already implemented 2 OGP NAPs. Our research methodology followed two lines of inquiry:

1. Line of inquiry 1: Mapping, unpacking, and exploring gender “edges” to existing open government and OGP processes - particularly around meaningful, quality participation & inclusion in these processes - or lack thereof.

2. Line of inquiry 2: Exploring key open government topical areas where a more gender-centric approach to open government processes could drive improved policy/process outcomes as well as downstream development outcomes. To adequately address our lines of inquiry, we used a mixed-methods research approach whose activities are described below.

Project activities

LDRI conducted the main activities of this research study on the extent to which OGP processes are and/or have been gender responsive both in Kenya and Ghana between October 2018 and February 2019.

The research activities included the following components:

1. Conducting key informant in-depth Interviews with participants who are or have been part of OGP processes as well as individuals from gender equality and women’s rights organizations all of whom we identified through snowball sampling.
2. An additional participatory research approach in Kenya since the Local Development Research Institute (LDRI) which conducted the research has been and is still actively involved in OGP processes in Kenya. The participatory research exercise provided an opportunity to create synergies between the OGP community and organizations focused on women’s rights and gender equality in its larger efforts to reduce

inequality while at the same time, monitoring how this engagement influenced OGP processes.

The following is a description of the project activities carried out during this period the this we used the following research approaches:

- **A literature review** of existing OGP documents

We reviewed previous and current literature on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) processes in Kenya and Ghana. This included an assessment of previous and current National Action Plans (NAPs), published Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) reports as well as self-assessment reports (the self assessment report was only available in the case of Ghana). This activity was key in identifying ways in which previous OGP processes have meaningfully involved women in the past or included commitments that specifically target towards impacting women or minority groups.

- **Primary Data Collection**

We conducted primary data collection in the form of Focus Group discussions and Key informant in-depth interviews (IDIs) with players within the open government community and with gender equality and women's rights organizations in both Kenya and Ghana. Through these activities, held in the form of stakeholder consultations, we aimed to establish the extent to which women and minority groups meaningfully participated in the co-creation of the previous and current NAPs and OGP processes from co-creation to evaluation. Participants for both the FGDs and the IDIs were identified from existing lists of individuals and organizations formally engaged in the OGP process in their countries - either as members of the respective steering committees or referrals from the steering committees to participants of previous OGP activities. Additionally, we identified Women's Rights organizations through personal networks and snowball sampling methodology to interview as key informants.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Ghana was held on the 15th of November, 2018. It brought together 5 participants who were members of the National OGP steering committee, a representatives from youth groups, persons with disabilities and women's rights organizations and provided an opportunity for participants to explore what inclusion meant to them and whether or not previous OGP processes were inclusive and provided recommendations for more inclusion of women and minority groups going forward.

Two IDIs were also conducted with individuals from organizations implementing governance interventions and focusing on women's rights in Ghana.

The FGD in Kenya was held on the 28th of November 2018 and it brought together 4 participants from women's rights and governance organizations and individuals who have been part of previous and current OGP processes. It provided a platform to reflect of previous and current OGP processes and to explore ways that it could be made more gender responsive and inclusive of women, girls and minority groups going forward.

Additionally, 5 interviews were conducted with individuals from women's rights organizations, organizations implementing governance interventions across the country and individuals that are part of Kenya's OGP steering committee and have participated in current and previous OGP processes.

- Analysis of findings.

The analysis of the NAPs, Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) reports, self-assessment reports, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) transcripts was done using a thematic analysis. The documents retrieved were critiqued and analysed on the basis of how the OGP activities described address Article 2 (elimination of all forms of discrimination) and, Article 13 (social and economic rights of women in Africa) of the Maputo protocol. Similarly, the literature review was analysed in reference to indicators and targets set for SDGs 5 and 15 as well as other national development priorities. Through this analysis we sought to

understand whether open government contributed towards achievement of existing national priorities to promote gender rights.

Most of the questions in the interview and FGD guide were open ended and were thus open to very diverse answers from the respondents. As such, the transcripts were analysed by extracting themes and their relationships based on a coding system on the transcripts where similar words, phrases and ideas were grouped together to identify trends in the respondents' answers.

Findings

For Kenya, previous OGP processes did not deliberately make an effort to include women and girls and one of the reasons sighted was the lack of a conceptualization of a value proposition for women and girls. However, for NAP III which is currently being implemented there has been a conscious effort to include more women and girls, women's rights and gender equality organizations in the co-creation process which indicates progress. The study also shone light on what participants felt meaningful participation of women and girls meant and which would be useful if applied to the OGP. These included: participation throughout the OGP process from co-creation to evaluation, bringing in women and girls beyond just the capital city, informed participation and going beyond just the number of women participating to actually having issues directly affecting women and girls included in NAPs.

Similarly for Ghana, in the past and even with NAP III which is currently being implemented, there was no conscious effort to include women and girls in OGP processes. Inclusion is conceptualized more as bringing together private sector, civil society, independent commissions of state and political parties and local stakeholders such as chiefs and other traditional rulers from different geographical zones. The public however, is still viewed as a homogenous block. One of the major issues identified by participants as stifling the inclusion of women and girls, is the lack of a dedicated budget line for the OGP making it difficult to engage women and girls.

Project outputs and dissemination

A variety of approaches were used to disseminate findings from this research:

Research outputs

- Towards an Inclusive Open Government in Africa study

This paper outlines the findings of the study on how gender responsive OGP processes are or have been in the past in Kenya and Ghana and provides recommendations on how to make them more gender responsive going forward. A final report was submitted for dissemination and will be combined in a book as a collection of essays on Feminist Open Government. The report and the book are expected to be launched in May in Ottawa at the OGP summit.

- Research Data Sharing Platform

This portal was developed to share the qualitative research data from the project to enable LDRI teams extending the research work to access the transcripts, analyses and other related content in a structured way. The platform makes it possible to re-analyze the research data to explore possible new insights from the same data or analyze it in context of new research from other projects. It's available at <https://researchdata.developlocal.org>

Media and communications outputs

- YouTube Series on engendered open government in Africa

We published a series of 16 video interviews with different stakeholders exploring the inclusion of women and girls in OGP processes in Kenya. These interviews are shared periodically with social media audiences to support the discoverability and dissemination of the findings of the research.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHivkWRJTr3mxjYQjmKMD4uZwTaVM5aXp>

Lessons learned

For this project, the team consisted of a research lead and a research assistant who coordinated all research activities and reviewed progress at different stages of the study. The lessons learned include:

- Planning the FGD and interviews in Ghana without a reliable contracted focal point proved to be a challenge. Having to rely on email and phone call reminders made it difficult to secure participants for the study. Having a local point of contact would be useful for follow ups with potential participants.
- Last minute cancellations for the FGD in Kenya by participants due to work commitments also made the numbers low at the Kenyan consultation. It may be useful to explore more appropriate timings and days of the week to maximize participation or multiple sessions.

Overall assessment and recommendations

Our study concludes that during the course of participation of Kenya and Ghana in the OGP process, there had been no initial deliberate efforts to include women and minority groups in the OGP processes or create commitments that directly impact women. In Kenya, where the newly launched 3rd NAP and OGP process has included organisations working on gender equality and women's rights and the NAP contains a commitment very specific to supporting women through the OGP process, it is still too early to study realized impact and how effective the approach taken to inclusivity is.

On the basis of these findings, it is our recommendation to extend this research study if we are to fully meet the objectives of the Feminist Open Government Initiative, that is, to empowering women and girls to leverage the existing OGP platform to support innovations that can lead to large scale positive change and female leadership. It is important to monitor and document, once advocacy efforts have been made, to what extent an inclusive OGP

platform has impact on African communities on the ground. An extended study also provides an opportunity for inquiry into the most effective approaches to ensuring that the principle of inclusion is systemized into the OGP process. Finally, an extended study will also allow us to study different African countries at different levels of maturity in OGP and support their efforts to be more inclusive.

We also note that the concept of Feminist Open Government has been contentious given current misconstruction of feminism in popular culture. Several of our research respondents seemed more responsive to the term 'Inclusion' in Open Government. This requires some consideration especially as we move into the dissemination phase of the FOGO Research work in Africa.