

**Project Title:**  
**A Feminist Approach to Open Government**

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Prepared by Allison Merchant (OGP), submitted by Courtney Tolmie (R4D)  
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## Executive summary

The Feminist Open Government Initiative was an ambitious attempt to broaden the base of open government support by investing in cutting-edge research from partners in the global south and a coalition-building effort to rally reform champions behind a gender-centric approach to open government. The initiative comprises three core pillars of work conducted by Results for Development (R4D) and the Open Government Partnership (OGP), with support from IDRC:

1. Through both commissioned research and open calls, the building of an evidence base exploring how a gender-centric approach to open government can accelerate development outcomes, empower women and girls, and contribute to more inclusive OGP reform efforts and civic participation strategies; (R4D led)
2. The rallying of a coalition of global leaders and institutions behind this new gender-centric approach to open government, culminating in a major pledging moment at the 2019 Ottawa OGP summit (R4D and OGP); and
3. The production of a seminal “State of Open Government” report, including sections on gender and inclusion, that highlight progress across the Open Government Partnership to mainstream gender-sensitive reforms as well as other key facets of the open government agenda. (OGP led)

Project deliverables included:

- Conducting research that highlights good practice to ensure government processes are more gender responsive (1.1)
- Mobilizing OGP member countries and localities to develop and implement gender-responsive OGP commitments (1.2)
- Identifying constraints and suggest solutions towards fuller participation of women and girls in OGP processes. (1.3)

Over the course of the two year project, the Feminist Open Government Initiative (FOGO) drove considerable gender-informed action across the open government community. Through this project, FOGO oversaw 5 research projects covering 11 OGP governments, reviewed multiple OGP action plans with suggestions made for how to increase a gender perspective, forged new partnerships with key groups like Women Deliver and UNDP, launched a new campaign through Break the Roles, and grew a coalition of more than 20 governments and partners that have committed to drive this work forward. These efforts resulted in the most gender-forward OGP Summit to date in 2019, with a dedicated FOGO day focused on defining and advancing key themes for Feminist Open Government, 11 sessions with a gender-specific lens comprising 25% of the overall conference content, and a majority of speakers identifying as women. And importantly, as of March 2020, more than thirty percent of OGP members are implementing gender-specific or mainstreamed commitments or have committed to taking specific action to increase gender in their processes. Throughout, the Feminist Open Government Initiative has built a strong network of gender and open government partners with expertise across core and emerging thematic areas and secured high-level political commitments to continue this agenda into 2020 and beyond.

The Feminist Open Government-led efforts led to the following results:

- Gender became the fastest growing thematic area for OGP action plans in 2019, a clear shift in priority from the 2017 starting point.

- To date, 41 members have made 127 commitments that focus on gender or specifically mention women, girls, or LGBTQIA+ constituencies.
- 39% of members made a gender-related commitment in 2019-2021 action plans. This is an increase from 2018, where 34% of members made a gender-related commitment. Overall, this represents a 16% increase in gender commitments from the start of the program in 2018 to the conclusion 2019.
- Seven members — Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, the Philippines, Ecuador, Luxembourg, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria — all made gender-related commitments for the first time in 2019.
- In countries like Sierra Leone, Argentina, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Mexico, representatives from women's organizations participated in national steering committee leadership or in multi-stakeholder groups.

## The Research Problem

Open government is made up of a broad set of practices, processes, and reforms (often enabled and enhanced by technology); understanding how those practices and processes engage women and how women engage (or do not engage) in those practices and processes is an important first step to realizing greater equity and equality within open government. The Feminist Open Government Initiative explored two different but complementary lines of inquiry within this research agenda:

- **Mapping, unpacking, and exploring gender “edges” to existing open government and OGP processes.** In lay terms, we seek to understand, at both a national and subnational level, where potential gender-centric entry points exist into OGP (and broader open government) processes. This could include explorations of how previous National Action Plan (NAP) co-creation processes have (or have not) been gender-sensitive; whether implementation of NAP commitments can be improved through a more gender-sensitive approach; and whether/how the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) and other open government reporting data can be made more accessible to women for improved uptake and accountability.
- **Exploring key open government topic areas where a more gender-centric approach could drive improved policy/process outcomes as well as downstream development outcomes.** This could include research that posits ways in which gender-sensitive design and implementation could improve development outcomes related to access to information reforms; the rollout of open data, open contracting, and beneficial ownership standards and systems; and the opening up of land records and government spending data.

## Progress Towards Milestones

### 1.1 Conduct research that highlights good practice to ensure government processes are more gender responsive

Project milestones in this area included managing an open call for research, supporting and amplifying the first round of FOGO research conducted through the Open Data for Development network, as well as conducting and supporting internal OGP research and documentation.

### Open Call for Research

Results for Development awarded \$240,000 in research grants to five organizations to help close the knowledge gap around gender equality, women's participation, and open government. The research awardee organizations included: Africa Freedom of Information Centre, CARE International, Equal Measures 2030, Oxfam Tunisia, and Tecnicas Rudas. The grants, ranging between \$40,000–\$50,000, funded research projects across nine countries — focused on core and emerging open government thematic priorities, including natural resources governance, public procurement and fiscal transparency, local budgeting processes, and women's rights and gender engagement in OGP processes. Each project produced practical recommendations and tools to support open government actors as they consider gender and inclusion across open government co-creation and commitments. The call for proposals received more than 90 competitive proposals from a diverse collection of organizations and research institutions.

The final projects were chosen by a selection committee including governments, OGP support unit, IDRC, and civil society actors from around the world. The projects began in earnest in early 2019, and all researchers were invited to the OGP Global Summit in May 2019 to present on their research as part of Feminist Open Government Day as well as in main Summit sessions. This provided both a vital opportunity for researchers to share preliminary findings with OGP Summit participants as well as for researchers to receive feedback on their ongoing projects to ensure they aligned with OGP partner activities ahead, political challenges, and thematic priorities. While originally envisioned as a rapid research call, all of the research teams felt that the initial timeline was too tight to deliver the projects well by mid-2019. In consultation with IDRC, we extended the deadline to December 2019 to allow researchers additional time to work with Summit feedback, navigate national and religious holidays, and in one case, reflect on a country's final action plan as part of their research. Equal Measures 2030 was published in early 2020, but as a consequence of delays, the final edits and layout were still being made at the conclusion of this grant in March 2020.

At that time, the Coronavirus pandemic broke out, and both the OGP community and research teams were pulled into rapid response needs to address urgent COVID response and support. To provide the research the best chance at being read and used by OGP stakeholders, we opted to hold off on publishing and publicizing the research until July 2020. In the meantime, OGP leveraged this research and knowledge base to integrate findings into country recommendations, connect researchers and the organizations they worked with to national OGP processes to ensure there is continuity between newly activated thematic on women's rights organizations, and sought opportunities to highlight the researchers in webinars and share findings with partner starting work under the OGP Multi-donor Trust Fund. For example, there is a water community of practice that is exploring gender as one part of their broader funded work. While hosting a webinar on Gender, Water and Sanitation, the FOGO team shared Tecnicas Rudas' draft with permission, and the primary researcher on the project was invited to join the webinar to speak about the findings across Latin America and potential indicators for the community to consider in future action plans.

Below please find highlights from each research project:

- **Equal Measures 2030:** EM2030's research focused on understanding the intersections between the SDGs, open government, and gender advocacy through the perspective of girls and women's rights organizations in three OGP countries. The organization brought together their national partners in Colombia, Indonesia (KAPAL), and Kenya (GROOTS and FEMNET), along with OGP stakeholders in each country, for a series of focus groups and interviews. EM2030's research validated prior findings that much can be done to improve women's rights organizations

(WROs') involvement in OGP processes. Across the three country contexts that were evaluated, focus group participants identified barriers to inclusive cocreation, gender commitments in National Action Plans, and the full vision of gender-mainstreaming in open government processes—and began to iterate ideas for pathways around these barriers and areas for investment from OGP member states and the secretariat that could scale up efforts for inclusion. Insights from these countries at different stages of national action plan development highlight the value of knowledge-sharing across contexts about pathways for WROs' engagement, strategies for working in resource-poor environments, better value propositions from government to WROs' to encourage participation, and the need for flexible tools to assess where countries are in terms of gender inclusion and improve WROs' involvement.

- **CARE International:** CARE's action research asked if participatory and gendered political economy analysis can make open government processes more responsive to women. Using an in-depth approach in the Philippines, CARE engaged in three cluster consultations on the islands of Visayas, Mindanao, and Luzon. They offered preparatory workshops with WROs, travel support to enhance participation levels, and documented when and how gender and inclusion factored into the consultations themselves by tracking who spoke and what kind of interventions, and a final analysis of the submitted action plan to assess what gendered and WRO recommendations ultimately made it into the draft. CARE found that a number of factors drove WRO's to participate, but that early interventions were needed to engage these communities well in advance of a co-creation process for maximum impact. By the time the remote consultations occurred, it was more difficult to provide input and larger recommendations to shape the action plans. Additionally, to ensure more diverse and representative participation in consultation, outreach and financial support is needed to ensure gender groups have the resources to travel to participate if located outside of capital cities. While a condensed timeline, the Philippines did produce its first gender commitments as a consequence of these engagements, with a total of ten commitments explicitly mentioning women, girls, or gender as part of the commitment. Through these activities, CARE created a draft gender PEA analysis tool and consultative resources that OGP will continue to refine and incorporate into general co-creation materials.
- **Técnicas Rudas:** This research project tested the hypothesis that introducing gender indicators into the analysis of transparency around natural resource governance will reveal gaps and needs in open data and public policy that would otherwise not be detected. Técnicas Rudas conducted research workshops in Peru, Colombia and Mexico, with a more intensive engagement in Mexico who was co-creating at the time. Through the project, Técnicas Rudas was able to try and test indicator development in Peru and Colombia by looking at existing natural resource commitments and applying a gender lens to indicators to see what they'd reveal, in partnership with local gender-sensitive digital rights groups and land rights organizations. They used this action research to inform work with organizations like *Mujer y Medioambiente*, who produced crucial research on the differential impact of the mining industry and water politics on women in Mexico, and to propose gender indicators into Mexico's 4th National Action Plan.
- **Oxfam:** Oxfam Tunisia's project focused on supporting and documenting best practices in local budgeting, with an emphasis on engaging marginalized women in Kairouan, Tunisia in local open government practices. While different from the other projects in focusing on a local-level engagement, this project raised important questions and findings around how best to promote local budgeting—an area of growth for many OGP locals. Oxfam worked with the Center of Arab

Women for Training and Research to support a group of women working in agriculture in Maâmoura in defining and leading the research, in identifying and acquiring relevant skills, confidence and resources they need to influence budget processes safely and effectively. Through a series of co-created workshops, focus groups and capacity building activities, participants set out individual and collective needs, connected these to broader structural issues and identify strategic changes they want to see through open government reforms.

- **Africa Freedom of Information Centre:** AFIC conducted a three-country review of public procurement and open contracting plans, identifying opportunities to enhance women's participation in public contracting through open government reforms. AFIC conducted focus groups and workshops in Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, in partnership with members Article 19 East Africa in Kenya, Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation in Malawi and the Public and Private Development Centre in Nigeria. The study further reveals an absence of specific targeting of women, lack of desegregated data on women owned and led companies, no data on the proportion of men and women taking contracts, and lack of awareness of procurement and access to information laws by women. While generally women have been found to be at disadvantage in the three countries, those working in the informal sector were found to be at greater disadvantage. The study recommends amending respective national procurement laws to provide for open contracting, strengthening implementation of respective OGP commitments by promoting disclosure and women's participation in public contracting, and awareness building of OGP commitments and public procurement opportunities among women-led businesses. While it found that the Kenyan case is struggling with implementation, AFIC also recommend countries to emulate the Kenyan case to establish initiatives to advance the participation of women in public contracting with specific gender-focused commitments.

### **FOGO closed call amplification**

Another area of work under this milestone was supporting and amplifying the closed call research conducted through the Open Data for Development network. The FOGO team supported the design and implementation of the first Feminist Open Government research workshop on the sidelines of the OGP Global Summit in Tbilisi, facilitated by research editor Laura Neuman from the Carter Center, R4D's Nathaniel Heller, and IDRC's Katie Clancy. The Senior Gender Advisor met with researchers at that time to understand their research design and what was needed from OGP to ensure the success of their case studies. Over the course of the next year, R4D remained engaged in research calls and requests for information as the researchers concluded their projects. Following the publication at the beginning of 2019, the FOGO team sought opportunities to highlight findings and recommendations into Summit materials, sessions, and the Break the Roles campaign. The OD4D researchers were connected with the open call researchers at the Summit to share insights and identify ways to leverage but not duplicate research efforts where they were meant to reinforce or increase research findings.

### **OGP Research and Documentation**

A final stream of work under this milestone focused on conducting OGP internal research on action plans and processes to inform the creation of guidance documents, document best practices and commitment examples, and better mainstream gender and inclusion into other OGP publications, campaigns, and projects. Working across the Support Unit, the Senior Gender Advisor collected baseline data on commitments as well as cross-cutting thematic examples to ensure other OGP publications highlighted inclusive commitments, partners, and gender gaps in existing OGP work. Additionally,

gender reviews were made of ongoing efforts such as the State of Open Government report and open calls for projects under the OGP Multi-donor Trust Fund. Finally, the FOGO team participated in research discussions and workshops with IDRC, OGP, and partners to identify opportunities to expand upon and new areas of research needs to broaden the base of gender and inclusion across open government work.

## **1.2 Mobilize OGP member countries and localities to develop and implement gender-responsive OGP commitments**

From the early days of the Feminist Open Government Initiative, R4D and OGP pursued a project strategy that combined research, partner best practices, and campaigns with the goal of identifying entry points for commitments and driving concrete results in action plans.

Activities under this grant largely focused on two primary streams of work:

- First, developing guidance for OGP countries to consider concrete gender actions and providing technical support to partners; and
- Second, working closely with the OGP Global Summit team to feature opportunities to advance gender perspectives across the Summit.

The first year of the project focused on understanding the baseline of current commitments, what guidance or support was needed for governments to start making stronger and more ambitious commitments, and to begin a dialogue with countries and civil society partners to realize those opportunities or mitigate constraints. The OGP Global Summit in Tbilisi served as a formal kick off to this work, with a side workshop to develop these priorities and a dedicated conference session on Feminist Open Government to introduce the project and aims to the broader global community. Through numerous consultations there, including with governments, incoming co-chairs Canada and Nathaniel Heller and strategic partners and champions like Helen Clark, R4D and OGP understood that developing and implementing gender-responsive OGP commitments would require sharing concrete examples of commitment opportunities, building political will among the OGP community, and strategic support.

Following the Summit, FOGO partners continued outreach to country and gender partners to better understand these opportunities and advance potential 2018 commitments. That fall, for example, multiple governments reached out to have their action plans reviewed to either strengthen their gender commitment or provide a gender mainstreaming approach. Those action plans include Canada, the United Kingdom, Kenya, and Kenya's Elgeyo Marakwet County local action plan.

With this in mind, in 2019, OGP launched its first integrated advocacy and mobilization campaign – Break the Roles -- backed by guidance developed in late 2018. Break the Roles encouraged open government actors to look beyond traditional roles and responsibilities and to be intentional, strategic, and ambitious in bringing women's voices into open government. Governments were asked to consider a gender action they could take to make co-creation more inclusive or ensure commitments better reflect the priorities of women, LGBTQI+ persons and other underrepresented communities. In February, the Open Government Partnership issued a personalized letter to each government point of contact from Sanjay Pradhan, OGP CEO. The letter asked that governments commit to taking a concrete action to advance women's participation in co-creation, gender-sensitive commitments, or commitments to close specific gender gaps. The note included a guidance document that provided additional context on gender-inclusive OGP actions, along with specific examples from within OGP or

relatable ideas from outside the partnership, that governments can take regardless of where they are in their co-creation cycle. Before finalizing this guidance, it was circulated for consultation with Government of Canada counterparts, OGP Support Unit, civil society partners like NRG1 and Open Heroines, and gender consultants from Smash Strategies. The letter was accompanied by a public blog post timed around International Women's Day that reiterated this ask as well as close collaboration with the OGP Support Unit's regional teams to follow up with country Points of Contact.

The guidance, *Actions for a More Gender Inclusive OGP*, was well-received by both governments and civil society partners, who welcomed the addition of specific OGP-relevant examples across thematic and regions. Following this guidance, the Senior Gender Advisor and Support Unit colleagues reached out to target countries to offer additional support. In the days immediately after the release of the guidance, for example, the Government of Italy contacted OGP to support a gender review of their action plan before it was released for consultations. The gender actions document was also shared as part of an Africa regional partners meeting shortly after release and provided a key opportunity to coordinate with civil society partners and funders who can help advance this work. Finally, it spurred further conversations with civil society partners about what additional model commitments could be offered within their specific thematic area of expertise, such as access to information, natural resources, and open parliaments. Considerable effort was spent, for example, with natural resource-focused partners to develop recommendations for gender updates to the EITI standards, which were ultimately accepted by their steering committee.

This guidance – and the additional materials it spurred – is emblematic of the kind of engagement the project team continued with national and local governments leading up to and following the OGP Global Summit in Canada to develop better gender commitments. Complementary to this, the Feminist Open Government team supported the Government of Canada effort to create a GBA+ guide for Open Government, which provided an additional lens for governments to use as they consider their actions, groups and more inclusive leadership of steering committees and multi-stakeholder forums.

The second cluster of activities center on developing the OGP Global Summit and using that venue to provide multiple opportunities for government actors and civil society experts to explore how they can use open government to advance gender-responsive commitments and women's participation in co-creation. The Feminist Open Government team worked closely with the OGP Summit committee and staff, as well as colleagues at the IDRC, Treasury Board, Global Affairs Canada, and Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) to design the Summit and side events. The Senior Gender Advisor played a key role in the creation of the Summit call for proposals, proactively circulated the opportunity to women and gender groups, and served as the lead of the full Inclusion track review process. In the Inclusion track alone, OGP received 32 proposals specifically for the "Driving gender equality in open government" sub-track, the largest group within the Inclusion track. Gender conversations were also integrated across other tracks and Inclusion sub-tracks.

All of the Feminist Open Government open call (round 2) researchers submitted proposals, and two were ultimately accepted for the main Summit alongside sessions from researchers from the closed call (round 1) research. The researchers were included as speakers or in sessions as part of the Feminist Open Government Day, a full-day side event in the lead up to the Summit. The Feminist Open Government Day was co-created with IDRC, TBS, and WAGE, with the goal of bringing together a multi-sector group to identify gains, opportunities, partnerships, and next steps for the agenda. More details on this effort can be found in section 1.3.

All combined, the Summit provided an unprecedented learning and collaboration space for government and civil society actors alike to consider how to better integrate gender into their action plans and open government practices. The 2019 OGP Global Summit featured an unprecedented number of sessions focused on gender commitments, gender equality efforts, and women's experiences in open government. There was a plenary session dedicated to gender, with calls to action and recommendations from across government and civil society. Beyond this, there were approximately 15 official sessions with an explicit focus on women, gender, and inclusion led by partners and governments. And the majority of Summit speakers identified as women, a first for OGP Summits. The week also featured: a full day dedicated to exploring opportunities to accelerate the uptake of gender actions across OGP as part of Feminist Open Government Day which brought more than 180 partners and reformers in attendance; a networking reception; the Open Heroines gender monologues at Civil Society Day; a GBA+ training as part of the government Points of Contact day; the official launch of the OGP Break the Roles campaign; and numerous side events.

Through these actions, there was a notable uptick in gender-informed and gender-focused commitments from the beginning of the project to the end. These combined efforts led to nearly 40 percent of OGP members having at least one gender commitment in 2019 action plans, surpassing the campaign goal of 30 percent. Multiple OGP members also took action to make their process more inclusive with dedicated outreach to gender groups to lead or participate in multi-stakeholder fora.

2019-2021 action plans included commitments on a wide range of policy areas, including both conventional OGP thematic areas like extractive industries and beneficial ownership, as well as strategic commitments to enhance women's voice and agency in government policies or close gender-specific gaps in justice. For example, commitments included:

- Collecting gender-disaggregated employment data in Argentina to better understand where and how women engage in the workforce
- Creating a cross-governmental women's empowerment plan in Afghanistan led by a new Presidential gender council
- Integrating gender into Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) & natural resource commitments in the Philippines and Nigeria
- Drafting a gender-integrated open parliament plan in Sierra Leone
- Designing a beneficial ownership registry with gender-specific ownership data in Italy
- Reducing gender-based violence against women and the LGBTQIA+ communities in Ecuador through the co-creation of a new gender-based violence national plan

For 2019-2021 action plans, we also saw new commitments bring a gender lens to core OGP themes and policy areas:

- Citizens shaping public services (nine commitments)
- Justice (seven commitments)
- Extractive Industries (three commitment)
- Environment and Climate (four commitments)
- Open contracting (four commitments)
- Beneficial ownership (four commitments)

### **1.3. Identify constraints and suggest solutions towards fuller participation of women and girls in OGP processes.**

Identifying and understanding the constraints to the fuller participation of women, girls, and gender groups in OGP processes was critical to the success of the Feminist Open Government Initiative over the past two years. Prior to FOGO, there was a demonstrated absence of value propositions targeted toward women, girls, and gender groups from the broader open government community, as well as a lack of robust baseline or even anecdotal information around women's engagement in open government co-creation, and the impact of a gender perspective within commitments. That is in part because the pool of commitments was relatively small, participation is decentralized, and impact is largely under-documented. Our analysis showed that, while gender is a prominent topic in the open governance community, only a fifth of OGP participants have made explicit gender commitments and very few had any documented participation by women's organizations or gender groups in processes. OGP processes are, by nature, nationally and locally owned and so data remains difficult to collect and assess on a regularized basis.

However, through a variety of consultations with both women's rights organizations and governments, research initiatives, coalition and partner engagements, R4D successfully identified many constraints to women's participation and potential solutions that were tested and iterated on over the course of the project. The first and second round FOGO research discussed in 1.1 was key to understanding gaps and testing solutions, especially among the applied research from CARE and Equal Measures 2030. As part of this, the Senior Gender Advisor accompanied Equal Measures 2030 on their research trip to Nairobi, Kenya, to participate in the focus group with GROOTS Kenya, women's rights organization representatives, and existing OGP multi-stakeholder forum members. Convenings like this were instrumental in not only informing the valuable research that was underway, but also in ensuring that feedback and opportunities identified could be shared with leaders like the Kenya OGP government point of contact in that same week and inform next steps on the government side.

Many activities were undertaken to help identify constraints and opportunities, but some of the main areas included:

**Break the Roles:** As part of the OGP campaign videos and materials, reformers and advocates shared their recommendations and value propositions for how governments and civil society could better engage and connect with gender communities.

**Feminist Open Government Day:** In advance of the OGP Global Summit, the FOGO team hosted an interactive side event to the OGP Global Summit in Ottawa as well as a reception to welcome gender advocates to the Summit. The day-long event brought together gender experts, governments, and open government actors to share the first round of FOGO research as well as preliminary findings on how gender is currently integrated into open government commitments, and to consider how to enhance women's participation in OGP processes. In the afternoon, there were eight partner-led break out discussions on a variety of themes including the gender pay gap, gender-based violence, and women's political leadership, where partners were asked to co-create a collaborative agenda of concrete actions that OGP governments, civil society and individuals can take to meaningfully advance inclusion within open government.

**Gender Coalition:** The OGP Gender Coalition (referenced in 1.2) was created in early 2019 to bring together around 20 members -- governments, OGP partners, researchers, and gender advocates -- to inform and guide OGP's gender work. Over the past year, this informal group provided strategic insights into FOGO documents under development, sample commitments and value propositions. While this

group was not as active as planned, there are significant plans to mobilize this community in 2020 under OGP's Three-Year Plan, which is all the more important as COVID reshapes the landscape for many.

**Open Government Week:** For the 2019 Open Gov Week, the Open Government Partnership asked governments and civil society to make a dedicated effort to include new voices in conversations, including women and gender communities. Nearly 30 percent of the 513 events in 52 countries focused on inclusion, and how to better engage women, youth, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized populations. These events – and many more on open contracting, civic space, and beneficial ownership – were amplified across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, reaching a potential audience of 60 million. The United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Argentina, Honduras, Nigeria, and the Philippines held Open Gov Week sessions on gender inequality in open government. Dozens of partners also joined in, including Transparency International, CoST, IDEA, UNDP, Open Heroines, Hivos, and Counterpart International.

**Women Deliver:** Early in the project, the FOGO team engaged with Women Deliver, a leading global advocate for the health, rights and wellbeing of girls and women with significant partnerships in OGP countries and cross-sections of OGP agendas. With R4D's arrangement, OGP formally signed on as an ally of the "Deliver for Good" campaign, providing OGP with entry points into dozens of women's rights and gender equality advocacy organizations worldwide. OGP proceeded to introduce themselves to these organizations, consulting them on potential areas of synergy within the women's rights agenda. Through these efforts, the Senior Gender Advisor pursued new opportunities to share open government entry points at global and country levels with a much broader gender community. OGP participated in events and roundtable convenings with Women Deliver on the sidelines of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and the High Level Political Forum. Finally, the Feminist Open Government Initiative was represented at Women Deliver's own conference just a week after the OGP Global Summit, participating in sessions as well as continuing collaboration discussion with representatives who attended both meetings from organizations like FEMNET and the National Democratic Institute.

**Open Heroines:** The informal network of women working in open government, open data, technology, and transparency organizations proved an invaluable resource to consult and provide feedback on process, commitments, and internal reforms. With R4D's support, OGP created a dedicated channel on Open Heroines to share updates and opportunities for engagement and sought opportunities for collaboration on the sidelines of events like IODC in Argentina. The FOGO team closely coordinated with Open Heroines in advance of the Summit to bring women from around the world to Ottawa and provide their insights, sourcing speakers through the network, as well as identifying and creating space for Open Heroines-led activities and sessions to ensure a strong representation of diverse women's voices. Finally, OGP joined the governing council for Open Heroines in 2020 and supported the design of internal strategy documents.

**Through these efforts, R4D identified some of the most pressing constraints to women and girls participating in open government initiatives, including:**

- Gender groups and women leaders are not proactively invited to participate in multi-stakeholder forums and are not aware of the potential value of engaging in open government processes;
- Open government outreach is often not framed in language or with value propositions that are relevant or motivating to women's organizations or gender groups. Similarly, governments and

more conventional open government partners need additional convincing of the benefit of broader engagement

- Few action plan processes leveraged gender advocates – in or outside of government -- to conduct a gender analysis of action plans to identify where women, men, girls, boys and other groups have different levels of access or potential benefit
- Similarly, no tailored tools existed to help reformers conduct a gender review or analysis of open government action plans or efforts.
- Few commitments have used open government to address a specific gap in women, girls, men, boys, and/or the LGBTQ+ community's services or policy needs. Where these did exist, gender or women's ministries were more likely to be included as implementing agencies, though not the primary responsible party or with funding to support implementation activities.
- Logistics play a significant role in women's ability to participate in regular open government meetings. Research from CARE and Equal Measures 2030, for example, noted that many women's rights organizations needed additional funding or subsidized travel to be able to attend in person meetings, as well as regular constraints like childcare coverage, location of meeting particularly if they were not capital-based, and limited planning time for last minute invitations to events or consultations.
- Increasingly, and as COVID-19 changes processes and the ability for in person meeting, online co-creation and consultation raises new constraints and opportunities for more inclusive co-creation. Limitations include the digital gender gap for women, elderly, and rural and disability communities, limited technology fluency, and potential harassment or gender-based violence in online fora.
- On a global level, OGP's institutional MOUs and partnerships are often in place with partners like Oxfam and UNDP who have significant gender expertise and partners, but prior to the project they did not regularly reference the intersection with their teams or partners tasked with leading gender work and so did not formally engage them in gender-mainstreaming across thematic areas.

With these findings in mind, the FOGO project team started to develop guidance for OGP governments and civil society partners to support broadening the base of participation and influence of gender groups in OGP's work. This guidance was first shared and tested in the call to action in advance of the 2019 Summit and has now been built into OGP co-creation tools and documents, Break the Roles messaging, new COVID-related guidance on online co-creation, as well as integrated into government processes and some preliminary commitments. These solutions include:

- Expand governmental consultations to other ministries. For example, engage counterparts in gender and women's ministries to participate in OGP co-creation and implementation conversations. Governmental gender advisors in other ministries may also be valuable resources on key open government policy issues like digital government, public procurement, natural resources governance, or anti-corruption efforts.
- Proactively invite gender organizations and women's networks to participate in multi-stakeholder forums and consult with them on specific commitments that may affect and support their communities' priorities. In some cases, preparatory meetings are needed to introduce the open government process, develop joint priorities, and unpack technical language. Additionally, governments were encouraged to consult a diverse group of women and gender advocates across age, race, ethnicity, education, region, and experience. Other actions to make forums and consultations more inclusive may include taking into account hidden costs like

childcare, language, providing enough advance warning, as well as the time, day and location of the forum so that it is accessible for all.

- As governments or organizations host events on key open government subjects, they are encouraged to consider how to bring new voices into OGP outreach and partner engagement. For example, invite at least one new ministry or organization to join your Open Gov Week plans or to proactively engage communities who have not traditionally been involved in your consultations, such as gender organizations, rural communities or indigenous groups. As part of your outreach, consider a focus on women and gender groups who have a vested interest in these issues such as advocacy organizations focused on anti-corruption, health, justice, or the SDGs and offer a one-on-one meeting to introduce the shared value of their participation.

Ultimately, through this guidance and additional support, representatives from women's organizations participated in the leadership of the national steering committee or multi-stakeholder groups in countries including Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Argentina, Afghanistan, Philippines, Morocco, and Mexico.

## Synthesis of Research Results and Development Outcomes

The Feminist Open Government Initiative combined research, country guidance, strategic convening moments, and partnerships to drive gender action across the OGP partnership's work. This resulted in successfully building evidence and expectations for gendered insights in open government research, influencing OGP thematic priorities to build up gender as one of the fastest growing areas, promoting stronger and better-informed gender commitments across OGP governments, and building capacity among existing and new OGP partners to carry out this work. Ultimately, these combined efforts led to 40 percent of OGP members having at least one gender commitment in 2019 action plans, surpassing the Break the Roles campaign goal of 30 percent. Multiple OGP members also took action to make their process more inclusive with dedicated outreach to gender groups to lead or participate in multi-stakeholder fora.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019



- Thirty-one members submitted action plans with 289 commitments.
- The most popular commitment policy areas were Marginalized Communities, Justice, Gender.
- Gender and Beneficial Ownership are the fastest growing areas of focus for commitments out of 37 policy areas.
- 85% of 2019 action plans address key gaps identified in their governments at the national or local level.

**40%**

of OGP members had at least one gender commitment in 2019 action plans, surpassing the campaign goal of 30%

**7**

members made gender-related commitments for the first time in 2019.

The Feminist Open Government-led efforts led to the following results:

- Gender became the fastest growing thematic area for OGP action plans in 2019, a clear shift in priority from the 2017 starting point.
- To date, 41 members have made 127 commitments that focus on gender or specifically mention women, girls, or LGBTQ+ constituencies.
- 39% of members made a gender-related commitment in 2019-2021 action plans. This is an increase from 2018, where 34% of members made a gender-related commitment. Overall, this represents a 16% increase in gender commitments from the start of the program in 2018 to the conclusion.
- Seven members — Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, the Philippines, Ecuador, Luxembourg, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria — all made gender-related commitments for the first time in 2019.
- 45% of gender commitments have been labeled ambitious, which is similar to the OGP global average. Previously, gender commitments were among the least ambitious thematic commitments for OGP.

Outside of commitments, results included:

- In countries like Sierra Leone, Argentina, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Mexico, representatives from women's organizations participated in national steering committee leadership or in multi-stakeholder groups.
- Five independent research projects covering 11 OGP governments were completed.
- Nearly 30 percent of the 513 Open Gov Week events in 52 countries focused on inclusion, and how to better engage women, youth, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community and other

marginalized populations. The United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Argentina, Honduras, Nigeria, and the Philippines held Open Gov Week sessions on gender inequality in open government.

- More than 20 governments and partners came together to form the OGP Gender Coalition, which will guide and amplify gender and inclusion in OGP.
- OGP hosted the most gender-forward OGP Summit to date, with nearly 25% of Summit sessions focusing on gender and inclusion as well as a majority of speakers identifying as women.

On overall reflection, one key to the success of the project was the close working relationship with the Open Government Partnership to whom the Senior Gender Advisor was essentially seconded during the project. Additionally, leveraging a Summit year in which Canada was the co-chair was invaluable in creating political will, space, and urgency for the open government community to take up this agenda in a meaningful way. While the overall numbers are very encouraging, FOGO partners acknowledge that creating strong gender-informed commitments and processes requires not only technical support and research insights, but also significant shifts in norms and behaviors. As a consequence, the next government co-chairs – South Korea and Argentina – and their civil society partners have agreed to keep inclusion as co-chair priorities so that this agenda has time to take root as a core value and expectation within open government work.

Another benefit of the design of the Initiative was the sheer magnitude and integrated nature of the work, with multiple approaches to understanding and developing gender-informed thematic cross-cutting areas through research, partners, technical support, and campaigns. This multi-faceted approach meant that governments and civil society partners were largely able to find an angle to the research and open government gender actions that felt authentic and in support of their own country or thematic priorities. Admittedly, this was also a challenging point to the design, as this broad and integrated approach did make the project a bit unwieldy as there were so many internal and external stakeholders engaged in pieces of the research, country, or partner engagement. Overall, this project design led to both delivering on the intended project deliverables as well as uncovering some new and exciting thematic entry points like the global gender gap and extractives industry that may not have otherwise come into focus in a proposal stage.

## Project outputs

- Information sharing and dissemination: Actions for a More Inclusive OGP, Gender at OGP Fact Sheet, Gender at the OGP Summit.
- Knowledge creation: Why Gender, Why Now, Harnessing the Power of Women and Girls, Advocacy to Action: OGP Supports 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, Unlocking Gender Data: Ensuring the Future Is Open for All, Further, Farther, Faster. Equal Measures 2030 Full Report and Top Insights. Open call research forthcoming.
- Capacity-building: Applying a Feminist Approach to Open Government Webinar, brown bags at UNDP & GAC, OGP Global Summit consultations and support to proposers, outreach and consultation with Feminist Open Government Open Call potential applicants, Feminist Open Government Day research and best practice exchanges.
- Institutional reinforcement and sustainability: UNDP & OGP MOU, EITI Standards Update, Women Deliver Ally, Open Gov Week.

- Increased research or administrative skills of researchers: Built researcher knowledge of OGP processes and opportunities for gender-related interventions through sharing materials for desk research, connecting to OGP stakeholders for interviews, research and reviews of drafts.

## Problems and challenges

One challenge faced by this project was a slower than anticipated start-up phase needed at the outset of the project. In what ended up being a zero phase, Results for Development needed additional time to hire a Senior Gender Advisor and onboard this new staff member to effectively manage the project. Given this slower start as well as the considerable interest in continuing the Feminist Open Government work well after the OGP Summit through the completion of 2019 action plans into 2020, Results for Development requested a no cost extension to this project. Similarly, the second round of research overseen by R4D was intended as rapid research projects. However, given the nature of the research and need for baseline understanding for this new thematic area, along with learnings from the OGP Summit, more time was needed by all researchers to complete their projects. Ideally, research partners would have published their research prior to the conclusion of this project, but FOGO partners are confident the longer timeline will result in greater uptake in the end.

While the OGP Global Summit did provide unparalleled opportunities to drive action and uptake of gender research recommendations and guidance, it did provide a challenge in that it was a relatively short timeframe between the start of this project and issuing a call to action to governments to take gender action by the Summit date. Additionally, it required a significant amount of the Senior Gender Advisor's time as well as OGP staff and partner bandwidth in the months of planning and execution of the week-long event. Ultimately, it did provide a catalyzing moment on gender for the OGP community and was well worth the effort, but it would have been ideal to build this work into the proposal more formally to better reflect all streams of work that led to the project results.

## Administrative Reflections and Recommendations

Administratively, this grant was unique in that it was housed by Results for Development and implemented in partnership with OGP and IDRC. This innovative approach made for a truly collaborative experience across FOGO partners, and did incentive cross-organizational learning and support. While organized this way for good reason, it was not without its challenges. In the future, we may recommend that the lead implementing partner – in this case OGP – hold primary responsibility for the staff and reporting requirements for simpler grant management and administrative support.

As originally proposed, this project had an ambitious but manageable scope of work and budget. With the additional opportunities provided by the OGP Global Summit, the Break the Roles campaign, and to a lesser degree global gender convenings like Women Deliver and CSW, the scope of the project did increase considerably over the two-year project. Having additional time through the no-cost extension provided critical time for R4D to take advantage of these vital opportunities while completing the deliverables under the original project plan.