



## A Year in Review FROM CO-CREATION to REFORMS

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) is a key means by which all stakeholders can track OGP progress in participating countries. IRM held a webinar on the 5th of November 2020 sharing their latest findings from 42 assessment produced in 2020. The co-creation approaches to the action plan are moving positively, including increasing government response to the evaluation. However, the IRM find specific alerted trends such as lack of ambitious commitment, low policy objectives, and the low level of co-creation during implementation. Questions regarding on how to bridge the gap from co-creation to meaningful reform? And co-creation and implementation in COVID19 world was also the highlight of the discussion.

Triggering reflection and challenges in IRM, the first panellist, Juanita Olaya, International Expert Panel (IEP) at the Open Government Partnership (OGP), shares her hypothesis on the current issues and trends in the action plan. OGP is on a journey to ambitious reform on all area, and the other one is to encourage co-creation consistently. The government are struggling with a way to do co-creation as they are not used to it. But then as they do co-creation, the ambition falls down a bit. Moreover, some issues are hard to tackle in 1 period. While attaining both goals, it's still possible that openness and involvement of the design process are increasing. The current finding shows an increase in e-government. But the main concern is that what's good in the paper doesn't necessarily translate in reality. E-government is an essential mean and tool, but it is also crucial that good habit and good governance is progressively built for the long term. Good design is necessary, but not the key to an exemplary implementation. This is why we have IRM to see the bigger picture. There's an increase in ambition for beneficial ownership transparency. The truth will tell how strong the push back has been as many people benefit from the BO secrecy. Increasing demand for gender and inclusion also requires permanent effort not only to check the list. There are topics such these with international intention. OGP even a great way to connect to global intentions, there's a lot of support and tools. The challenge is when there are too many international intentions, people ask the real commitment. On her closing remarks, she highlighted trust and mutual respect and credibility in the context of COVID-19 more than ever become more important. The role of IRM brings credibility in evidence-based. Since March, the IRM reports have built-in questions on covid-19 responses, both in terms of impact on the co-creation process and on more comprehensive consultations and civil liberties questions in the pandemic situation.

Carolina Cornejo, Open Government Point of Contact Argentina, discussed the connection between co-creation and implementation. Based on Argentina's case, the core aspect is Multi-Stakeholder Forum or MSF. In creating commitment, focus areas need to prioritise quality over quantity. Secondly, a previous commitment can be a good lesson and benchmark to design better commitments. Identifying what has work in co-creation and what has failed in implementation without disregarding how the government work to avoid inefficiency. As one of the repeated failures is due to government transitions, the design also needs to consider which stakeholders sitting on the table, as actors have agendas. In mitigating the pandemic effect to the action plan, she stated that problems in implementation need to be addressed before the pandemic. At the beginning of the epidemic, the government and the public may not think that Open Government is a priority when we're in a health and economic crisis. But then people start to realise the importance of openness for information and data. Three takeaways in mitigating the effect of the pandemic are strong political commitment, dialogue to the public, and the extent to engage stakeholders with all leading agencies. Learning from COVID-19, we can be more inclusive when going online and co-creation through round tables can be done online. The importance is how commitments can change the government's attitude and habit in the long run.

David Goessmann, the Policy Analyst at OECD, took part in opportunity in meaningful reforms discussion. Making an example from MDTF report (<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/multi-donor-trust-fund-co-creation-awards-2-results-and-learning-report/>), he highlighted the deliberative processes where random people were chosen to solve public policy. Deliberation makes decision making more inclusive, not stating that it is a one size fits all method and it is not the solution of the challenges but just an idea to spark discussion. Additionally, he gave his thoughts on fixation on portals to push reforms. The problems for the commitment is systematic to change the whole government policy. Co-creation has led to commitments, but sometimes it is not related to the situation to benefit narrative. Moreover, all institution needs to play the part. Synergy with communities, stakeholders, and resources tools that can be used for all of us needs to be created to leverage OGP.

Doreen Grove, Head of Open Government, The Scottish Government, shared her view on the 50% lower participation in the implementation of OGP country members. In Scotland, the most vigorous action is to put the end goal as a priority. This way of ensuring the ends result will improve the outcome. Strong MSF with specialist made a difference. She mentioned that it is vital not to assume to have the right answer also what the population want. Scotland takes a particular stand in trusting the government as people to step up and recognize the information being put out and ask them to do must be genuine. One example given was the open suggestion from the public with 5,000 ideas on how lockdown affected them. This information leads to the concept of how to tackle COVID-19 and what are the priorities. The report also taught the government to be thoughtful in using data. Opening data and evidence is essential as people must trust the government.

On her closing remarks, she shared some recommendations for the upcoming years. One of the things to stress is to have concrete commitments. In tackling problems, the whole picture needs to be considered. Previous commitments and building from what we have done before, cocreation process can be something we learn from. Both strategic and practical set of examples, so make everything functional and useful.

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, and OGP's Civil Society Co-chair stated the high quality of the co-creation process would nurture respect and trust between CSO and government can result in high-quality, ambitious commitment. Taking an example of The Philippines, where they have anti-corruption line and portal for government, trust is being built progressively, and transformative commitments are on their way.

On response in the pandemic, OGP plays a role in maintaining openness in data and evidence. He then encouraged the government to listen to the public and to resist to cover up things so the problem can be fixed. The public is invested in the government response, so the government needs to make the conversation frequent and take citizen's feedback seriously. The existential question needs to be answered, such as inequalities, health and economic crisis. He highlighted his worry that we find ourselves exhausted. For 2021, it's a fantastic year to see the apparatus of absolute commitment, to be honest, and see the vehicle to reach the end goal.

Anouk de Soysa Senior Research Officer OGP's IRM, Asia-Pacific and Africa, followed up question on examples of commitments aiming to reform the culture of public service. Australia's 2018-2020 Action Plan had a 'moderately' ambitious commitment to improving public engagement skills in the public service. He proposed to develop and implement a Roadmap and Engagement Hub to engage in dialogue and deliberative processes within the Commonwealth public sector and facilitate public engagement in policy development and service delivery. It could be made stronger with an enforcement mechanism, and methods of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the full potential of the roadmap and hub are realized. Given the challenges presented by COVID-19, guidance on how a country take an OGP process online can be found here: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/taking-your-ogn-process-online-a-quick-reference-to-participation-and-co-creation-standards-to-keep-in-mind-for-online-processes/>

Joe Foti, Chief Research Officer of the Open Government Partnership, shared some lesson learned. One of the first lessons, it's not wrong to tie OGP to other international commitments such as SDG. Second, regarding the issues in the US, it's essential to bring in the chosen actors. He highlighted police issue in the US. In that context, the way this is faced is bringing different actors to identify data they want and don't want to release. Especially when you're in court, the best way is to find balance in them. Getting the right people in the room is key to a successful commitment. For instance, the police data initiative which was started in the Obama administration but not continued in the current administration. Now, they've established a new institution to handle this matter specifically. Bringing in specialist NGOs and CSOs is also a useful way to see things from a different perspective.

