Emmy Chirchir

Open Government and Open Data
An examination of the implementation and impact of Open Government Data in developing countries using an example of the Kenya Open Data Initiative

Research Group
Kommunalpolitik

Executive Summary

The Internet and innovation around it has had an effect on society, lifestyles and even on politics, one of which is an increasing demand for open governments and open data. Currently, 41 countries worldwide have launched open government data (OGD) portals, including Kenya and Morocco as the only 2 African countries so far. OGD is seen as a solution for challenges of good governance, economic growth, social inclusion, innovation and participation (Gigler, B., Custer, S., & Rahemtulla, H, n.d.). For OGD to have a social, economic and even political impact not only should the data meet the criteria of being open (freely usable, re-usable and redistributable (Open Knowledge Foundation, 2013)) but the users must be able to access and effectively use this data. The data must be easily "discoverable" by the public and in formats that they can easily use. (Gigler et al, n.d.**).** Open Government and Open Data are also seen as instruments of participation with the potential to shape political experiences. (Wojcik in Kersting, 2012). However for the public to participate effectively, they must make the connection between the information available to them as data sets and their participation as 'insiders' rather than 'outsiders'. This research focuses on the implementation and the impact of Open Government Data (OGD) in developing countries using Kenya as an example. To anchor the central question of impact, this research will be guided by a mix of interviews and questionnaire and supported by a theoretical background.

The broad objective of this research is to establish how open is Open Government Data in developing countries using Kenya as a case-study example. In addition this research aims to:
1. To establish how OGD is being implemented in Kenya as a developing country.
2. To establish the users, their user habits and motivations of using OGD in comparison to the desired aims set out by KODI and open government principles.
4. To establish if OGD is directly linked to its intended impacts in the context of developing countries – increased social and economic value, transparency and participatory governance.
5. Finally based on the above findings, to suggest strategies that would maximize the strengths of open governments and open government data

State of the Research

Much of the literature linking public information, technology (Internet) and government often has a strong focus on the impacts of Internet on governance, democracy and participation and electronic-governance/electronic-governments (Lievrouw & Livingstone 2002; Coleman & Russ, 2010; Chadwick 2006; Colemanm, 2005; Dahlgren, 2005; Holmes, 2005). Although related, e-governance and OGD are two different concepts. Studies done have also dwelt on the use of Internet and its impacts on governance, democracy and participation. Research on the use and impact of OGD has since grown focusing on the technical aspects as well as on the social aspects of OGD (Rahemtulla, n.d.; Lathrop & Ruma, 2010; Davies, 2010; Hogge, 2010, Halonen, n.d.).

Research has also been based on case studies that examine OGD in developed countries, with a few studying its impact so far and even fewer with supporting empirical evidence. (Gigler, n.d.; Heussler, n.d.; Hogge, 2010). The literature reviewed indicates that open government data is not structured for the public to use and access this data. Davies (2010) suggests that most of the users of OGD in the UK are male (in the ratio1 to 6), better educated than the average population and working either in private SME firms (39%) or in the public sector. The study also identifies the OGD user to be focused on a digitized and efficient government. Literature reviewed also lays bare questions on OGD in developing countries by raising issues such as quality of data, gaps in ICT literacy, poor info-structure among others.

.

Research Questions

Taking Kenya as a case study, this research will guide the understanding of OGD in developing countries by asking the core question: How open is the Kenya Open Government Data Initiative? It will focus on how OGD was implemented and the impact in Kenya so far. By employing a mix of interviews and questionnaires, this research will be guided by questions such as:
1. What are the drivers and structures behind the initiative and does this vary from the definitions of open government, open data and open government data?
2. What is the impact of OGD on the users and can this be directly linked to the desired impacts of OGD such as participatory governance?

State of the Dissertation
The research started in May 2013. The main focus now is refine the research questions and research designs and also to review literature.

Literature

Bimber, B.A., (2003). Information and American democracy: Technology in the evolution of political power, Cambridge University Press.
Berners-Lee, T., (2009). Putting Government Data online - Design Issues. Available at: http://www.w3.org/DesignIssues/GovData.html (Accessed July 19, 2012).
Burkert, H., (2004). The Mechanics of Public Sector Information. In G. Aichholzer & H. Burkert, eds. Public sector information in the digital age: between markets, public management and citizens' rights. Edward Elgar Publishing.
Communication Commission of Kenya (n.d.). Quarterly Sector Analysis Report. 2nd Quarter October-December 2011/2012. Available at http://www.cck.go.ke/resc/downloads/SECTOR_STATISTICS_REPORT_Q2_2011-12.pdf . (Accessed 1 September 2012).
Davies, A. & Lithwick, D., (2010). Government 2.0 and Access to Information: 2 Recent Developments in Proactive Disclosure and Open Data in the United States and Other Countries (2010-15E), Library of Parliament, Canada. Available at: http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2010-15-e.htm#a4 (Accessed July 24, 2012).
Gigler, B., Custer, S., & Rahemtulla, H. (n.d.). Realizing the vision of open government data. Opportunities, challenges and pitfalls. Open development technology alliance.
Green, L. (2001). Communication, Technology and Society. London: Sage Publications.
Halonen A., (n.d.). Being Open About Data. Analysis of the UK open data policies and applicability. Finnish Institute in London under Creative Commons. Retrievedfrom:http://www.opendataforum.be/assets/4f7d492daa6d6338ab000027/being%20ope n%20about%20data.pdf (Accessed on August 3, 2012).
Heusser F.1. (n.d.). Understanding Open Government Data and addressing its impact. Retrieved from http://public.webfoundation.org (Accessed on August 13, 2012).
Opendefinition.org opengovdata.org, 2012. 8 principles of Open Government Data. Available at http://www.opengovdata.org/home/8principles. (Accessed on 7th August 2012).
Robinson, D. et al., (2008). Government data and the invisible hand. Yale Journal of Law and Technology, 11, 160.