Open Government Partnership
Thematic Leadership Monthly Call Summary
11 November 2020 | 07:00 – 8:30 EST

Attendees:
● Blair Glencorse, Accountability Lab (Civil Society Chair)
● Anabel Cruz, ICD Uruguay
● Helen Darbishire, Access Info Europe
● Stephanie Muchai, Hivos
● Zuzana Wienk, White Crow
● Government of Argentina: Carolina Cornejo, Nicole Grunbaum (Government Chair)
● Government of Indonesia: Erie Febriyanto
● Government of Romania: Larisa Panait
● Denisse Miranda [Support Unit]: Guest Speaker

Apologies:
● Robin Hodess, The B Team
● Oluseun Onigbinde, BudgIT
● Government of France
● Government of Kenya

I. Introduction
The Support Unit (SU) welcomed the new Thematic Leadership (TLS) Subcommittee Co-Chairs Blair Glencorse and the Government of Argentina, and new subcommittee members Robin Hodess, Stephanie Muchai, Oluseun Onigbinde, Anabel Cruz, the Government of Kenya, and the Government of France.

II. 2020 Trends & preview of 2021 work plan on focus themes
Reference material: 2021 Thematic Strategy Preview

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) presented early findings and trends from the 2019-2020 cycle of reports, including on the levels of public participation in the development of action plans and the areas that are being tackled through OGP commitments in different regions (see slides 5 - 9 here).

Based on these data-based trends, the SU provided a preview of the thematic strategy for 2021, building on the lessons learned over the past year and aligned with the objectives of the Three Year Plan that the Steering Committee endorsed in early 2020: advancing a greater number of ambitious commitments on key policy areas through OGP action plans, fostering co-creation of global norms through the spread of reforms across countries in key thematic areas, and leveraging OGP to advance concrete delivery of reforms from key global forums and agenda.
The presentation also included an overview of how the thematic strategy fits within the broader 2021 work plan for OGP, which will be shared with the Steering Committee for input in advance of the December 14-15 meeting, when the OGP work plan will be tabled for endorsement.

III. 2021 TLS work plan

*Reference material: TLS work plan draft*

The TLS Co-Chairs presented the 2021 TLS draft work plan highlighting three main areas of work to help TLS deliver its mandate, including thematic oversight on focus themes, informing strategic engagement in other global fora, and reviewing OGP’s thematic-related research.

TLS members were encouraged to consider how they can connect OGP with other global moments (G20, G7, UNGASS, etc) and use the TLS space to share their ongoing efforts to advance different themes in addition to the focus themes (anti-corruption, civic space and digital governance). Some of the themes shared by TLS members include gender and inclusion, open state, and civil society accountability as it relates to building a stronger civil society and civic space.

While there was agreement with the general direction of travel, TLS stressed the need to consider the unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic and consider possible scenarios if the crisis worsens, including the impact on the 100+ action plans and the different activities for 2021.

**Next steps:** The SU will incorporate the feedback from this session into the 2021 TLS work plan and consider the direction of travel of the work plan approved by the TLS.
Notes
Session 1:
  ● Blair:
    ○ none of the countries had reached ‘empower’ level on graph?
      ■ We see a lot of it with progression - many countries are on third & fourth action plan we see progression - first has growing pains, second has learning, third has sophistication and fine tuning // has a lot to do with how we decide what ‘empower’ means and is perhaps something to consider moving forward
    ○ Why do certain reforms become popular across certain regions
      ■ Regional approach, geographic expansion,
  ● Zuzana:
    ○ Would you rather see commitments more sustainable than smaller one-time reforms that don’t have profound impact?
    ○ Where we see investment of energy we also see results, worth stressing? Cultural vs transformative changes
      ■ Moving toward results rather than process (what looks good on paper) with refresh // if policy area (not commitment) is consistent in action plans, we see progression in how that creates cultural shifts
      ■ There are things that helps us scale, making sure we have the right partners, not necessarily the SU providing direct service to country stakeholders but that they have a role in leveraging the partners on the ground and who can be a resource
  ● Steph [written]:
    ○ Question linked to Blair’s line - any assessment of the impact of transformative commitments on the ground that we may have some information on? Is there any disparity with the transformative nature of the commitment and its impact?
      ■ Does not assess impact, we rely on A&I and early results stories, diving into
  ● Break the roles worked well, used gender inclusion and had a lot to do with brokering relationships and using the right people at the right moment,
  ● Caro:
    ○ how can we build strong processes to link to better results - how can we identify if this is really a global trends?
    ○ Another factor is transitions, when you have an action plan developed by the same administrations, you have lessons learned, but when you shift you can’t take stock of what did and didn’t work - are we looking into the trends?
  ● Anabel:
On the topic of civic space, will you have info on the relationships between how many commitments, and how they interact, and how the different plans work towards more civic space

- Once action plan is submitted, it’s the govt’s role - important for civil society to engage and observe, but we see it becoming an engagement that is limited to presenting

- Public participation is much better than 10 years ago, but still a long way to go,

- Civil society needs a counter in government, important for engagement

Robin [written]:
Great work, Denisse. I’d love for the IRM to tackle the elephant in the room — impact. I realize this is a long term proposition and will require care and thought, but let’s try, it will make the reports even more useful. Apologies as I have to leave early. Looking forward to our committee work!

Session 2

[written]

- Blair Glencorse to Everyone: (8:13 AM)
  - Building on Caro’s point- if COVID gets worse next year, what kind of scenario planning are we doing for next year? If the 100+ action plans can’t be delivered next year for example, how does that change the OGP@10 efforts? Do we need to plot different scenarios for the way forward?

- Tonu Basu to Everyone: (8:14 AM)
  - Noted on GBV Caro. Very relevant and we’re heard that across other regions. Had come up in discussions in the OR + OR webinars too. And engagement with SAIs also very relevant.

- Sharing next steps on OR + OR themes - gender (especially with a focus on GBV), digital governance (sharing progress made since the Berlin meeting), and also would like to see how we can look at OR + OR progress.

- Helen: in europe while there was not much momentum on transparency initially we are seeing more traction now. Also the pandemic has interestingly improved participation and engagement in the OGP process in Spain as we saw with the development of Spain’s new action plan.

- Steph to Everyone: (8:18 AM)
  - In consideration of the MoU’s or other working relationships OGP has with regional forums/bodies, does that form part of the engagements with global forums in the workplan? Or is it a case of more likely to get done if we focus on global forums that incorporate members of all the various regional forums rather than have two tiers of engagement?
  - On themes, I’d say financial transparency is the big one (economic packages, covid funds, procurement, IFF’s etc); likely covered under anti corruption
- Anabel: Would like to have more conversations with stakeholders to build stronger civil society organization and transparency and accountability of civil society organizations. Perhaps that is something to put on the agenda for the discussion next

- Zuzana -

Next steps:
- Pull together notes, next meeting, anything that we could support in the meantime?
- Late January for next call (aiming)
- Send additional information/documents on issues - tonu (will send in advance)