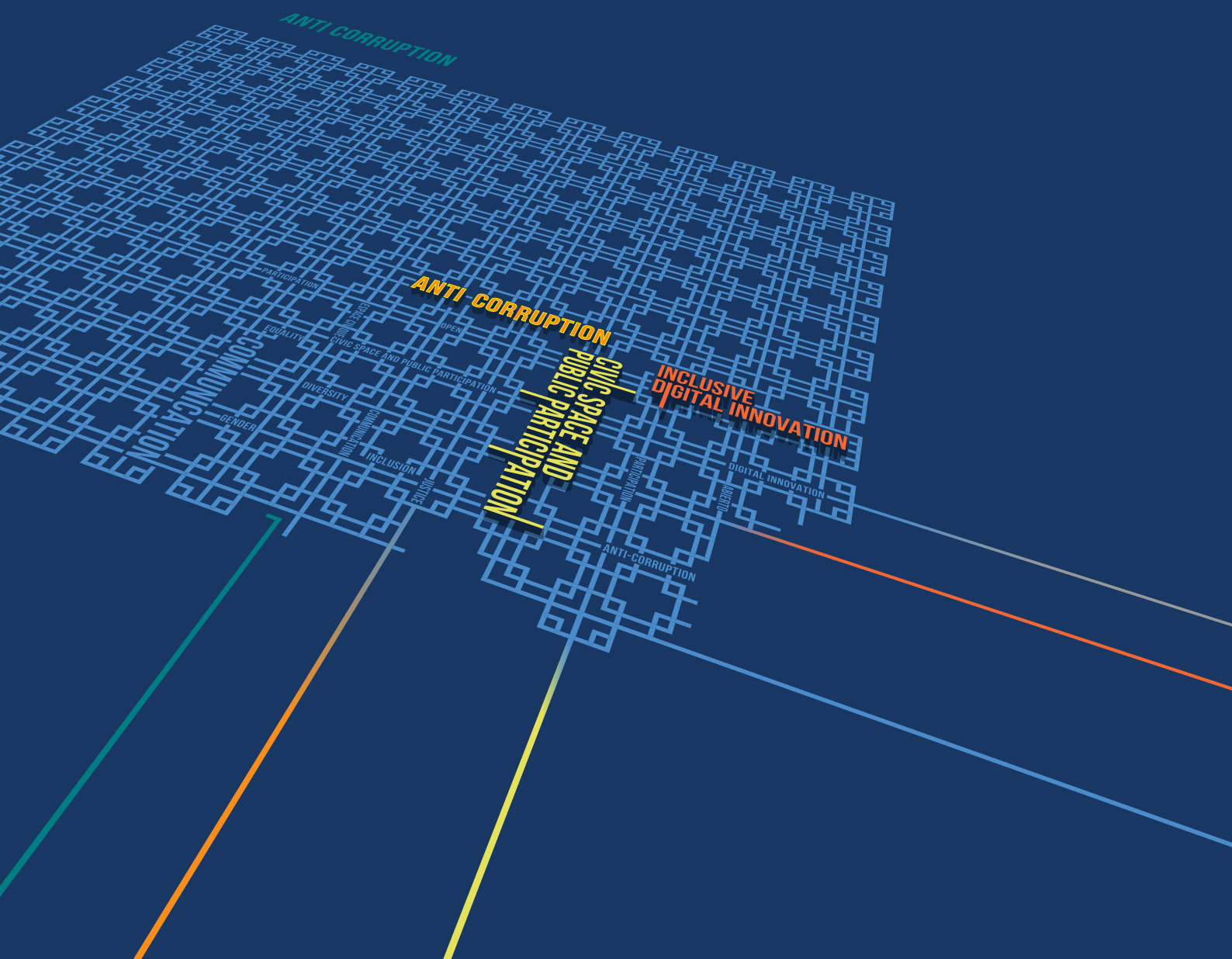


2021 OGP Global Summit Youth Summit

Youth Delegation Policy Recommendations



2021 OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT YOUTH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS CIVIC SPACE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MAIN FOCUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Civic Space and Public Participation

BACKGROUND / PROBLEM STATEMENT

Around the world, ensuring the participation of civil society and ordinary citizens in government processes is difficult, especially on topics and policies that are controversial and/or have considerable impact on the populace, their communities, and their environment.

Efforts to involve civil society are often limited to close contacts of governments and their agencies. These efforts aspire for inclusivity, but that aspiration is mostly neglected as the involvement of indigenous peoples, grassroots voices, and other marginalized groups rarely materializes.

Our recommendations for creating more inclusive civic spaces and more engaged citizens revolve around securing citizens' access to information and say in decision-making, all while ensuring that no one gets left behind.

RECOMMENDATION 1 : Comprehensive Access to Government Information

Linguistic accessibility of government websites and online accounts

- **Solution:** Governments with freedom of information (FOI) laws should ensure information from government agencies is accessible in all major local languages. Civil society must work with governments to identify particular linguistic populations and areas that have traditionally lacked access and a voice within government processes. Expanding the linguistic accessibility of government information will grant more people direct access to public information.
- **Background:** Modern technology and informatization have accelerated the era in which public information is stored and managed as data. Efforts have been made to increase the transparency and accessibility of these data; however, there are barriers to citizens' full access to this information, such as the absence of translation into local languages. For citizens who speak local and/or minority languages to participate, governments must create an environment in which they can easily obtain and understand public information. We know this information to be crucial in obtaining citizens' interest and involvement in public processes.
- **Evidence:** Across Sub-Saharan Africa, Internet Society suggests that "national governments can fulfill a key role in stimulating local language content on the web, by leading by example and ensuring that content on government websites is also available in the recognized official local languages."

Many countries across Europe have legislated the use of one official or state language. This pursuit - without sufficient consultation with the speakers of minority languages and without thorough consideration of their rights and needs - often leads to the reinforcement of the dominant or majority population, curtailing the rights of persons belonging to linguistic minorities.

Failure to accommodate minority needs can lead to intergroup social tensions, if not outright conflicts. Moreover, expecting minorities to learn a language that is not native to them—and especially if it is linguistically distant—can have economic ramifications, including higher levels of poverty and lower levels of literacy. However, by recognizing minority languages, governments can build trust between members of different linguistic groups and the state

RECOMMENDATION 2 : Public Participation and Inclusion in Decision-making

Participation of marginalized groups and grassroots communities in decision-making processes

- **Solution:** Governments should ensure that marginalized groups (including indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and other groups) as well as grassroots voices have access to public participation in decision-making processes. Civil society must work with governments to identify particular demographic populations that have traditionally lacked access and a voice within government decision-making processes. Such efforts will build trust between marginalized communities and governments.
- **Background:** Despite efforts to make civic spaces more inclusive, marginalized groups are not that well-represented in the OGP-related discussions. Too often, the voices of marginalized communities are rarely taken into consideration through decision-making processes and are often neglected entirely in the development of public projects and policies. We believe that, in an open government, no one is left behind.
- **Evidence:** 15% of the world's population experience some form of disability; yet, people with disabilities lack proportional political representation. Just about 0.5% of all national parliamentarians are persons with disabilities, with women with disabilities holding only 0.1% of national parliament positions.

In Mexico, there are roughly 1,175,000 people with intellectual disabilities. While Mexico has no restrictions against people with intellectual disabilities voting or standing for election, they have had little to no visibility in politics.

RECOMMENDATION 3 : Long-Term Inclusion in OGP Processes

Long-term system for involving a diverse collective of non-government groups and organizations in OGP processes

- **Solution:** Governments and non-government groups and organizations should co-create a system that guarantees the inclusion of youth, academics, grassroots organizations, marginalized groups, and other civil society actors beyond short-term consultations. Establishing such a system - a joint, long-term effort of both government and non-government advocates - would assure governments that they are not alone in pushing for the accomplishment of OGP commitments. Such a system would require strengthening civic space in countries with closed conditions, offering new dynamics and means for participation in countries with complex co-creation and compliance contexts, and developing inclusive, safe spaces for diverse civil society advocates beyond the 'usual suspects' in all settings.
- **Background:** While governments are currently the sole implementers and evaluators of OGP commitments, we maintain that sharing that burden with a diverse stakeholder group of non-government organizations and open government advocates is crucial to the success of those commitments.
- **Evidence:** According to CIVICUS Monitor in 2020, 87% of the world's population now live in countries rated as having 'closed', 'repressed,' or 'obstructed' civic space. Over a quarter of people live in countries with closed civic space, where state and non-state actors are routinely allowed to imprison, injure, and kill people for attempting to exercise their civic rights, such as the freedom of assembly, association, and expression.

The pandemic has had strong effects on the conditions of civil space and public participation around the world. The Rule of Law Index from the World Justice Project reported that, in 2020, countries experienced the largest declines in fundamental rights, constraints on government powers, and absence of corruption.

RECOMMENDATION 4 : Baseline Commitments for OGP Countries

OGP Action Plans include open budget, open contracting, and open data as standard commitments

- **Solution:** OGP should offer standard, yet customizable, draft commitments on the disclosure of government data (open data), transparency of government budgets (open budget), and accountability of public procurement (open contracting). These commitments will develop a populace that is more aware of how and where public money is spent as well as whether budgets reflect grassroots needs and demands.
- **Background:** People often feel that their governments greenlight unnecessary projects that waste tax dollars and watch as the projects they truly care about are delayed or never implemented. While some governments have used their OGP Action Plans to commit to these concepts, citizens from many parts of the world are still pushing for increased transparency in the use of public money and more input in the creation of government budgets. We believe that citizens should have a say on which public projects are funded and be able to monitor public funds to ensure the interests of the people are reflected in public budgeting.
- **Evidence:** In 2018, open data was the third most popular and open budget was the fourth most popular OGP commitment area.

Meanwhile, over 70 countries have included open contracting commitments in the past, most of which are focused on information disclosure.

CONCLUSION

Civic space and citizen participation are essential elements for strong democracies. To create open and inclusive government decision-making processes, governments must guarantee access to information, transparency of actions, and inclusion of marginalized groups and grassroots communities. To achieve this, governments should integrate civil society, share information that is useful for citizens, and include different voices and agendas.

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2021 OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT YOUTH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ANTI-CORRUPTION

MAIN FOCUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The '**OGP Anti-corruption Criterion**' contains three levels of recommendations that cover varying logics to countering corruption: better information, better institutions, and better civic participation.

- 1. Sharing Information (Basic):** Better information refers to actions that allow civil society and decision-makers to accurately assess problems and generate awareness on how the lack of integrity distorts policy-making and civil service performance.
- 2. Improving Foundation (Intermediate):** Better institutions refers to institutional reform measures that strengthen agencies charged with improving government integrity and effectiveness.
- 3. Developing Culture (Advanced):** Better civic participation refers to measures that create a culture of informed participation - especially in the public scrutiny of public policies.

BACKGROUND / PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the most deleterious effects of corruption is the erosion of citizen confidence in the functioning of public institutions. The multiplication effects of wrongdoing, fragile concept of integrity among public servants, and general public disdain negatively affect the morale of public servants and the strategies of civil society organizations.

Our proposal is organized into three, mutually-reinforcing actions: (i) the collection of data and publication of key indicators on public sector efforts to build a culture of integrity - as well as citizen perception of these efforts, followed by (ii) the use of this information by citizens, activists, and public agencies to improve their work, thereby ensuring (iii) the strengthening of an evidence-based culture of integrity in a public sector that holds underperforming agencies to account while also recognizing agencies that achieve more effective governance.

To activate a positive cycle of integrity promotion within the public service, governments must develop tools that reduce the asymmetry of information available to the public and share which government agencies are striving to develop a culture of integrity and which are lagging behind. With better information, governments and civil society organizations can generate evidence that enables the formulation of more appropriate action plans.

As public attention on anti-corruption increases, the role, status, and capabilities of governmental agencies responsible for advancing public service integrity will be increasingly scrutinized. While popular support and informed civic involvement are necessary conditions for reform, a lack of appropriate institutional infrastructure translates into a lack of capability in resolving public grievances against government corruption. Therefore, an institutional framework is essential for stable and systematic integrity management. We propose mechanisms for staffing anti-corruption institutions with appropriate, integrity-driven personnel as well as creating spaces for civil society to oversee their actions.

To fight corruption in the long run, cultural change and transformation is key. Focusing solely on regulation and negative reinforcement will not sustainably eradicate corruption; instead, changing organizational culture itself naturally leads to collective responsibility shared within and between public organizations and society. To achieve such, joint anti-corruption partnership between governments and civil society is vital, since sustaining and initiating anti-corruption policies require accountability.

RECOMMENDATION 1 : Better Information

An index of integrity for public agencies

We propose the development of an index of integrity for public agencies, based on information collected by users of public services, civil servants, academics, and members of civil society organizations.

The collection, calculation, and publication of such an index will allow citizens and activists to develop "heat maps" of integrity within government so they can pressure agencies that do not improve or develop anti-corruption policies. This index will also provide citizens and activists with the ability to identify agencies that deserve recognition for developing and implementing successful integrity promotion practices.

The calculation of an integrity index for public agencies should include:

- 1. Anonymized data from users of public services, academics, activists, and civil servants** from surveys that ask respondents to express the frequency of unethical practices in their interactions with public agencies. If collected consistently over time, this information could generate a heat map of which government agencies tend to have most integrity management problems.
- 2. Data on the publication of information and responsiveness of government agencies** about their operations, such as the number of corruption complaints received and any resulting actions taken in response; the openness in receiving lobbyists and interest representatives; the average amount of time for responding to requests for public information; the frequency with which the transparency and open data portals are updated; etc.
- 3. Data on the input and conflicts of interests of engaged organizations.** Governments should request declarations of conflicts of interest to control possible conflicts of interest¹⁾. In some contexts, supposedly independent entities that depend on state subsidies to survive are invited by governments to participate in public consultation initiatives, where they do not point out possible errors and opportunities for improvement, but rather uncritically rubber stamp the proposed policies. The public should know how many of the engaged organizations in public consultations depend on state resources versus how many are financially and institutionally independent from the government.

Examples of the practical application of these recommendations:

Open Data of Government & Public Institutions:

- **South Korea:** All Public Information In-One is an internet platform that discloses the administration & management information of the public organizations. Clean Eye is a public disclosure system for the management / policy information of local public enterprises. Integrated Fund-raising Management System contains the fundraising information of ~10,000 non-profits and the donating information of ~250 donor organizations.
- **Italy:** The Ministry of Economic Development has an online transparency register that includes the agendas of meetings between stakeholders and the ministry. This register has created a digital platform that stakeholders themselves update when they have meetings with the ministry.

Domestic Integrity Assessment:

- **South Korea:** Integrity Assessments for public institutions in Korea is an Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission initiative both to evaluate the level and causes of corruption within public institutions and to determine policies to prevent corruption. The comprehensive index includes indicators on the integrity level of public institutions assessed by public service users, employees, and policy customers as well as statistics on corruption cases of each institution. Anti-Corruption Initiative Assessments evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of anti-corruption initiatives operated by public institutions, covering a wide range of anti-corruption initiatives and policies: (i) anti-corruption infrastructure, (ii) enhancement of transparency and credibility of policy, (iii) eradication of corruption-causing factors, (iv) development of a culture of integrity within the public sector, and (v) encouragement of anti-corruption activities and corruption reports.

1) This does not mean that participating organizations should be obligated to declare their sources of funding fully. Rather, there should be a process for organizations to indicate if they benefit from the resources of the state that calls on them for consultation. NGOs should not have to declare if they are being funded by a foreign government, as this practice has been used to intimidate and suppress CSOs.

RECOMMENDATION 2 : Better Institutions

Multi-stakeholder councils/boards

Recruitment and selection mechanisms for public professionals within anti-corruption bodies

Institutions are made of people, and ensuring that agencies perform their work effectively requires the right conditions and incentives to attract and select good employees as well as the establishment of clear paths for developing their careers meritocratically.

Our proposal for building better institutions that are responsible for fighting corruption has two tracks:

1. Multi-stakeholder councils/boards that oversee, evaluate, and suggest improvements for anti-corruption agencies.

This body must be made up of people from inside and outside the public sector (such as members of academia, civil society organizations, private sector, international organizations, etc.) who suggest course corrections when agencies are not performing well enough.

These bodies should oversee

- Integrity education and anti-corruption awareness
- Report and counseling system(s)
- Whistleblowers system(s)
- Civil monitoring panel(s) and public participation platform(s)

2. Recruitment and selection mechanisms for public professionals within anti-corruption bodies that ensure hiring processes are conducted in a transparent, open manner and test for integrity and compliance behaviours.

Examples of the practical application of these recommendations:

- **Georgia:** In 2006, Tbilisi State University restructured its administrative staff and dismissed all its academic staff due to rampant, systematic corruption.
- **South Korea:** The Public Finance Return Act, which penalizes the falsification of public finances via sanctions and fines, enhances the transparency and credibility of public finance and government subsidies. The Anti-Corruption Training Institute (ACTI) aims to change public officials' attitudes towards corruption and integrity while improving ethical standards. While their standard training programs raise individual's sensitivity towards integrity and improve the integrity levels of organizations, ACTI also organizes training programs for students to disseminate a culture of integrity throughout society.

RECOMMENDATION 3 : Better Civic Participation

Anti-corruption monitoring panel

Generational diversity goals for citizen consultation spaces

Youth empowerment instruments

Fighting corruption in a comprehensive way demands investment in mechanisms that foster a culture of informed citizen participation in public affairs beyond isolated or episodic participation. A culture of informed social participation is key to consolidating a foundation of integrity in the public sector. As such, we recognize the need for the development of young leaders who can promote cultures of ethics and anti-corruption in the long term. We know that young people involved in public affairs can serve as agents of change and of open government.

To change the culture of participation in the public sector and to promote public awareness of the importance of active civic participation, we propose:

- 1. Anti-corruption monitoring (ombudsman) panel** that generates and publishes data on civil society's perspectives on corruption as well as the general public's view of the corruption they experience in daily lives.
- 2. Generational diversity goals for citizen consultation spaces** to encourage governments to adopt measures that increase the participation of young leaders in participation processes.
- 3. Youth empowerment instruments**, such as fellowship programs, training courses, and communities of practice.

Examples of the practical application of these recommendations:

- **South Korea:** The People's Idea Box is an online platform for policy proposals from the public, with many discussions originating from the Box actually being reflected in the national agenda.

CONCLUSION

At the most basic level, governments should develop information infrastructure from which they should derive evidence-based anti-corruption measures. The frequent, consistent, and standardized collection of relevant corruption-related indicators produces the accumulation of evidence required for successfully designing institutional adjustments that address government corruption. However, having information is not enough. It is essential that public agencies in charge of fighting corruption are able to use this information with civil society closely monitoring them.

At an intermediate level, governments should strengthen their anti-corruption institutions through the monitoring and evaluation of the suggested measures. As an example, pairing public service recruitment processes - such as refining hiring criteria and establishing transparent procedures - with a central body that acts as an anti-corruption control tower would both bolster anti-corruption efforts and enhance public support and awareness.

The civic participation, especially of young people, within government processes, is foundational to the development of a culture of openness and transparency. Such participation is only possible if people are able to share their perspective, needs, and demands at the time of decision-making. Digital platforms can underpin civic participation by providing a means to access information and monitoring anti-corruption actions as well as facilitating public engagement in the proposed measures. The creation of avenues for empowerment within participation spaces will strengthen decision-making and government integrity.

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2021 OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT YOUTH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUSIVE DIGITAL INNOVATION

MAIN FOCUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusive Digitization Policy

BACKGROUND / PROBLEM STATEMENT

Digital information systems are not often designed to be inclusive, accessible, or open. As a result, they do not match democratic values and leave millions of people behind.

Governments need to adapt these systems so they center citizens' interests. These policy recommendations aim to guide governments in their first steps towards the systemic change of their digital information systems.

Governments should increase public access to government services online, develop affordable infrastructures for online access, and expand digital literacy.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Create a single, mobile-compatible online platform where all government information can be accessed

The public should have access to data and information anywhere, anytime. We recommend creating a single platform that offers information in top local languages and in plain language that the average person can understand.

Considerations:

- Affordability, infrastructure, and hardware limitations and inequities plague the digital world just as they have done in the past. Vulnerable groups often have less access to technology and the internet compared to the well-abled and economically empowered populations. Therefore, governments should consider how to equalize digital access for vulnerable groups, such as women and people living with disabilities, that may struggle to afford technology and internet access.

Other related areas: Civic Space and Public Participation

RECOMMENDATION 2

Provide digital access and digital literacy training to marginalized groups so they can successfully utilize technology, digital services, and data

For governments to implement fully inclusive digital policies, the needs and requests of marginalized groups, such as women and people with disabilities, must be given more prominence. Rather than pre-position these groups as passive receivers of services and information, governments should provide avenues for them to become active participants and contributors.

Much of marginalization can be attributed to poverty, a main barrier to both digital access and digital literacy. In turn, the inability to afford internet and internet-enabled devices and the lack of proper digital literacy leaves people behind, reinforcing their marginalization. If marginalized groups cannot get online and/or don't know how to use online systems, they are much less likely to be able to contribute.

Therefore, governments must ensure that digital infrastructure becomes more affordable and accessible. Possible approaches for improving access and affordability include creating public-private partnerships, establishing price ceilings, offering public internet, funding equipment and access for students, and developing digital literacy programs for all ages.

Considerations:

- Digital literacy programmes must relate to people's actual lives for them to truly make use of it.

Other related areas: Civic Space and Public Participation

RECOMMENDATION 3

Increase public awareness of open data and seek civic engagement

Open data allows government agencies and civil society organizations to ignite innovation and inclusive solutions developed “by” citizens rather than “for” them. However, the data itself can often be problematic. If the credibility of and biases in data are not questioned, open data can do more harm than good, especially for those who are already marginalized in society. As a part of their open data initiatives, governments should provide information on (i) who was involved in creating or processing data, (ii) how data was reviewed and analyzed, and (iii) how the data has affected targeted communities.

Once awareness of the benefits and harms open data can cause is established, it becomes a better tool for promoting civic engagement and can be put to use in a way that benefits society.

Considerations:

- There must be mutual trust and partnership with civic society organizations.
- The right to access public data and information is a prerequisite for this recommendation to be actualized.
- Citizens are often more interested in the impact or use of data rather than the data by itself. Governments should reframe their engagements from simply publishing public data and waiting for it to be used to actively engaging citizens and civic society organizations around impact and use cases.

Other related areas: Civic Space and Public Participation, Anti-Corruption

CONCLUSION

Based upon the suggested recommendations, we believe that governments can expect the following outcomes:

- Enhanced accessibility to public information and data, ensuring accountability, transparency, and openness in governance;
- Increased civic participation and public engagement with government services and open data;
- Useful evidence-based insights that inform methods for tackling the digital divide and alleviating inequities;
- Empowered underserved communities, including but not limiting to youth; and
- Stronger partnerships and collaborations with civil society organizations.

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