Driving Local Impact of the Global Goals
LEVERAGING THE DATA REVOLUTION
TO IDENTIFY LOCAL PRIORITIES AND NEEDS FOR THE SDGs

A tool for the Data4SDGs Toolbox

This tool is created by the <u>Open Institute</u>, a Kenyan based Organization that works with governments, civil society, private sector companies, media organisations and others to realize citizen driven open societies in Africa. It is developed based on experiences and learning from the Global Goals for Local Impact project through which we worked with a community in Lanet Umoja location to leverage the data revolution and technology to identify the needs of the community for better targeted action.

Background

The Sustainable Development Goals were agreed upon by government leaders in September 2015 to energise the world and to show direction for its priorities and actions for the next 15 years - to radically reduce poverty and inequality. These ambitious goals aim to end poverty, tackle inequality once and for all and find lasting solutions to the environmental challenges faced by the world.

As part of this effort, the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development has gained momentum as a means to improve the identification of the world's needs and to improve the targeting of the world's resources to achieve more development. Harnessing the data revolution is an crucial enabler for driving action to achieve the Global Goals by 2030, by supporting data-driven decision-making, evidence-based policies, and mutual accountability for development programs and investments - by government and other stakeholders.

It is generally agreed that much has been achieved globally in the efforts to eradicate poverty, in strengthening the inclusion of women, youth and people living with disabilities and in providing basic services such as water and sanitation, health facilities and access to markets. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell by half as a share of the total population in developing countries,from 43% to 21%—a reduction of almost 1 billion people.There have been significant reductions in the prevalence of HIV and other life threatening illnesses such as Malaria and Tuberculosis. Real concerted efforts have been seen to tackle lifestyle related conditions such as diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. 100 million people have been uplifted from slums to better living conditions globally.

One size does not fit all.

The global goals have been criticised by some as being vague - and yet by others as being overly specific in their targets. In a sense, both of these views are right. The universality of the SDGs means that they apply to all people - for example, the world aims to end poverty and hunger everywhere from the stereotypical remote parts of Somalia to the streets of San Francisco.

There has been growing acknowledgement that because of the gross inequalities between nations - and even between neighbouring communities within a nation, there is need to review how the challenges facing people around the world are better identified and then tackled. In specific terms, the Open Institute has held the position that the Global Goals are best achieved when citizens are directly involved in the development conversation at their level - as opposed to completely focusing on the national development towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In essence, we suggest that if a Goal is achieved at village level in every village in the country, it is more accurately captured as achieved then if it is monitored at national levels. In national level focused development, many villages remain invisible.

By acting to achieve (through efficient decision making) the SDGs and regularly monitoring progress at subnational level using data, the nebulous nature of development activities will be eliminated. Ultimately, relevant data that involves the local economy and society can be collected by the local administration and government and shared within that area.

The success of implementing the SDGs at subnational level is highly dependent on subnational administrators' and government officials' understanding of the SDGs and the Data Revolution. It also requires their skill and ability to harness their community's energy to identify their challenges with citizen generated and other data.

Why this tool?

This tool is designed to provide simple and practical guidelines for subnational government leaders and officials on how to leverage the data revolution to identify local priorities and needs - especially those that result in progress towards the SDGs. It will also provide practical considerations for multi-stakeholder approaches to developing data for SDGs as well as for iterating the data for SDGs and using them to stimulate decision-making, action and monitoring.

Through this tool, we hope to trigger considerations of what it will take for subnational government leaders and officials to leverage the data revolution for sustainable development.

What is the Data Revolution and why is it important to your community?

The 'data revolution' refers to the transformative actions needed to respond to the demands of a complex development agenda using data. It also refers to radical improvements to how data is produced, accessed and used. In many governments, data collection is done by an agency of the national government from a pre-designed sample of the population and is then analysed using complex scientific methods to yield national aggregate estimates. Data collection and analysis has been a highly specialised field that has excluded most citizens and government officials - some of whom are only able to consume reports at best.

The Data Revolution opens up the field and enables and encourages government officials of all levels of government as well as citizens to participate. The advances in technology have made it possible for ordinary citizens to work closely with their local administration and officials to collect and analyse data using paper or using modernised systems such as mobile phones. The revolution encourages the opening of the data for use by all persons - citizens, government officials and development partners alike.

At subnational level, the Data Revolution enables the community to identify and design targets and indicators that make sense specifically for their context. It provides a platform to track the progress that the community makes in achieving their goals. Most importantly, it ensures that everyone gains a voice on development matters. Everyone has the ability to examine the government's data as well as to generate citizen data that can be used to improve advocacy of their issues based on their realities.

Chief Francis Kariuki of Lanet Umoja, having successfully piloted this in his community, had this to say.
"I think the data revolution is going to rock the world of every community. By ensuring that everyone can collect, analyse and use the data from the community and from other sources, we are empowered to speak our minds and aid the process of development. If it wasn't for the Data Revolution being a reality in Lanet, I could never have been able to authoritatively say that every single household in my community has clean drinking water!"

Key steps to a successful Sub-national Data Revolution process - a general template

1. Prepare the ground

It is important that the ground is prepared for a good Local Data Revolution process. This partly involves establishing the policy anchors that support the work at subnational level. This policy anchor could be a nationally agreed policy that lends itself to community organising for data collection and use.

In addition, the local government official may review the following general checklist and put in place measures to provide a conducive environment for the process, including:

1. Develop strong communication channels with immediate colleagues and community leaders
2. Develop a culture of holding community meetings to discuss community issues where the community gradually lose their "shyness" and become comfortable to speak with the local government officials.
3. Develop a strong relationship with seniors and other government officials
4. Review what experiences if any the community has had collecting data from any sources and the community's perceptions of those experiences.

An example from the Lanet Umoja location experience is that the government of Kenya had in place the "Nyumba Kumi" (10 houses) initiative that required sub-national administrators to collect data that would improve security and development.

2. Organise the community

Identify and organise community opinion leaders and volunteers who would be willing to serve the community by working with the local government officials to work on a subnational data initiative. Building a relationship with them - one of trust and commitment will go a long way to aiding an efficient process. This also means organising other stakeholders' involvement e.g. local religious groups, local non-profit organisations and local politicians. They will be useful in increasing the community's participation in the process.

3. Build capacity

Have conversations and engage with the community members regarding issues that are relevant to them as well as:

- Provide training on the SDGs - what they are, why they are in place, what they mean for my community, what are the targets and indicators.
- Provide training on Data - what is it, how it is useful to the community, how it is collected and analysed.
- Provide training on using smartphones as a tool for data collection
- Provide training on various data collection tools - Paper Surveys, Mobile Phone Applications
- Have conversations and identify the most relevant SDGs for the community. Review the targets and indicators in the context of the community.

In our experience, the biggest conversations may tend to revolve around motivations. *"So what if we collect data, what shall we do when we have it? How do we use it to improve our lives?"*

4. Collect Data

Develop a survey based on the goals and indicators that the community reviewed. There are numerous ways to collect the data. These include:

- Paper surveys that the community members in all the households fill
- Mobile phone survey apps (where smart mobile phones are available). These include [ODK Collect (Open Data Kit)](#) and [Sabasi (developed by the Open Institute and available on GitHub)](#)

The important thing with regard to the data collection is to try and make sure that the data is collected from everyone concerned (every household). In the case of paper surveys, it is valuable to ensure that the data is digitised into an excel sheet to aid in better analysis.

In the Kenyan experience, youth and community leaders from the community volunteered to work with the administration to digitize the data and to go to each household and collect it.

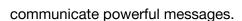## 5. Receive feedback on the Data collection Process

The community must feel comfortable with the process of data collection. Often there is a need to revisit the survey or application design to simplify the process further. The simpler the process the more comfortable the communities are in collecting the data. The process of iterating the data collection process is infinitely important because as a leader, this is where you appreciate more the cultural and social inhibitions of the community members.

In the Lanet Community for example, any questions that show financial ability were often met with resistance from the community - they felt that the government should not ask them or know how much they earn and spend. The fear was that the information could easily be used by the Kenya Revenue Authority to adversely impact their lives.

6. Analyse with the people

Community data is considerably easy to analyse because it tends to concern every member - or at least a majority of the households. Gleaning the narratives that arise out of the data and discussing it together enables the community to appreciate the situation the data is addressing even more and ensures that they can begin to structure advocacy talking points and appreciate their challenges and needs. Analysis must also be done using methods that are easy for the administration to communicate to the

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community and for the community to understand. Often time simple infographics derived from the data are able to communicate powerful messages.

In the Lanet Umoja experience, posters like the one on the left were produced and presented by the local administration to the people and conversations were held about what this means for their priorities in different areas.

7. Build linkages for development

Based on the narratives, it is recognised that most local government officials do not have the resources to implement development activities for the people. However, the data can be used to build linkages with other relevant government departments, development partners and even the community themselves.

In the Lanet Umoja experience, the community agreed that they had the ability to volunteer to fix the local primary school. They engaged a non-profit focused on water to provide clean water filters for every home. For long term solutions they have been meeting with the national and subnational governments to advocate for their needs. All of these initiatives arose from the mobilisation of the local administrator, Chief Francis Kariuki.

Challenges & Risks

● **Limitations of the official's position:** Government officials working at subnational level often have to deftly navigate the local political interests (especially given their mobilisation power) and the government protocol in place. One way that a local government official could manage this risk is by ensuring that all political and government stakeholders feel involved and feel like they have access to the community.

- **Community buy-in can be tenuous:** In Community efforts, there are many kinds of personalities that all come into play. The process of getting and keeping buy-in is a constant effort on the part of the subnational government official or leader. In addition, there can be interference from other leaders who may have different agenda. Community members may face fatigue. Buy-in is often driven by the motivation behind the process and what direct benefit the community will get as a result of it.
- **Community fatigue:** The timeliness of the project is crucial to maintaining community interest. If the project takes too long or loses momentum at any point, the community participation goes down significantly. If there is repetition of data collection within a short interval, the community loses interest.

SUBNATIONAL TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR USE AND ADAPTATION

TOOL NAME	PURPOSE	GITHUB URL
Sabasi	Sabasi Application is a data collection tool developed by the Open Institute. This project is still in its initial stages. In future, this application is intended to simplify the collection of data using mobile smart phones and improve availability of data especially in Africa.	**https://github.com/OpenInstitute/Sabasi**
Community Dashboard	The purpose of this dashboard was to digitally display community generated data for use by public administrators at local level and their stakeholders	**https://github.com/OpenInstitute/Community-Dashboard**

The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) have partnered to support innovative approaches to ensure evidence-based decision-making for programs and policies that address HIV/AIDS, global health, gender equality and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. In April 2015, the $21.8 million "Data Collaboratives for Local Impact" (DCLI) program was launched and the first projects are underway in Tanzania. These projects are funded by PEPFAR and are being implemented by MCC.

The Data Collaborative for Local Impact (DCLI) model hinges on four interconnected investments that together address the root causes of insufficient and ineffective use of data by country-level stakeholders and strengthen the overall data ecosystem. These are:

dLab: Promoting innovation and data literacy through a premier center of excellence. http://www.dlab.or.tz

DLI Innovation Challenge: Identifying, networking and supporting youth and entrepreneurs to create data-driven innovations for real life problems. http://dliinnovationchallenge.com

Data Zetu: Making data meaningful and accessible to spark citizen action at the community level. www.datazetu.or.tz

Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data: Strengthening data-driven decision making to achieve the SDGs. http://www.data4sdgs.org