

Title: OpenGov and the trust dilemma

Session Type: Panel / Roundtable - Dynamic, high-level facilitated conversations with 4-5 experts or practitioners, including ministers, heads of local governments, elected representatives, and civil society leaders. Most likely the session will be part of Civil Society Day, **17th July at 14:00 - 15:30 at the Rooms Hotel in Tbilisi, Georgia**, see [program](#).

Format: A 60 minutes panel with OpenGov leaders including government, civil society and private sector. The session starts off with sharp and potentially provoking statements (1-2 min max.) by each panelist to set the tone. A talented moderator will guide an interactive discussion by including questions and comments from the audience.

Objectives: Critically review the current discourse about open government as a tool restoring trust in public institutions. “OpenGov will restore trust” – really? The discussion will examine: How can OpenGov practices and processes help restore trust? How to measure trust? Do we need certain levels of distrust? What is the role of trust in public institutions in times of globalization and shift of power to private sector? How can private companies build/restore trust?

Follow up: A joint blog post including the input from all participants that will hopefully contribute to a continuous debate among OGP on the notion of trust.

Potential issue areas and guiding questions:

1. What are the **functions of trust and distrust** across sectors in society? Why and where, by whom in what is trust needed and where, when and why is distrust actually a good choice?
2. **Trust in public institutions is eroding, as it is in private sector and civil society** - what role can OpenGov and OGP play in restoring trust in each sector?
3. **‘OpenGov helps to restore trust in public institutions?’ - really?** Or is this wishful thinking: recent movements of OpenGov, and the new wave of transparency and accountability initiatives can also be interpreted as symptoms and response to growing distrust. Also within OGP we have seen huge backlash within OGP like the Mexican civil society stepping out from the National Action Plan ([see 2017's letter to OGP](#)) due to the illegal digital government surveillance revelations and the weakening of the 3rd Action Plan commitment's scope.
4. What is the **role of the private sector, particularly social media companies**, in ensuring accountability, transparency and trust? How can their actions help or hinder trust in institutions and information?
5. **How can governments be held accountable for representing the interest of their constituencies? In particular, if they are co-opted/bound/trapped by network of power (corruption/state theft), bilateral or multilateral treaties or agreements following a neoliberal agenda (GATT, TRIPS, NAFTA, TTIP, etc), or other intergovernmental obligations (austerity agendas such as from IMF, WTO, EU, WB or other banks), or being simply being pressured and manipulated by interest of powerful international private sector corporations?**
6. What are the roles of governments/public administrations, civil society, private sector and other players in building and restoring trust?
7. Some question on **trust in times of decline of democracy, autocratic regimes, shrinking civic space, violence, corruption, state-theft by organised crime, human rights abuses and impunity** ...
8. Some question on trust in challenging environments like countries in situations of war, post conflict situations, rise of radical/fundamental (political or religious) movements/parties ...
- 9.
- 10.
11. Please add ...

Speakers:

1. **Will Janssen, Director Open Societies, Hivos, Netherlands**

2. **Alfredo Elizondo Rosales, GESOC, Agencia para el Desarrollo, A.C. México**

Speaking about the Mexican situation I point out that our scenario reflects the limits of the OGP approach at the moment. The actual focus is on **National Action Plans but has little to do in terms of how States apply a policy of openness** not only at the national level but in the **subnational levels and in other powers within the States**. What I want to stress is that while a country can be implementing correctly its National Action Plan, at the same time could be executing actions against the same principles of OGP, without a concrete consequence given the fact that OGP is focused on Action Plans rather than the level of openness of States.

3. **Sam van der Staak, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Sweden**

Sam van der Staak is the head of International IDEA's Europe programme. He advises political parties, electoral commissions and other state institutions on a broad range of democratic reforms. **Sam** is the author of publications on topics including political party development, citizen movements, and political finance, and he is a regular commentator for various European media. Prior to his involvement in democracy assistance, **Sam** worked in the Netherlands House of Representatives.

That would go somewhere along the following lines:

1. Present statistic on **(youth) trust in social media as opportunity** vs threat for democracy.
2. Describe recent **shift from high trust to low trust in social media & digital technology**, as a result of i) microtargeting, ii) disinformation, and ii) hacking in elections. Mention some findings of IDEA-work in all three areas.
3. Describe **scenarios to restore positive role of social media & digital tech** through 3 approaches: i) citizen education, ii) self-regulation by social media, iii) government regulations.

4. **Waltraud Heller, EU Fundamental Rights Agency, EU**

My short bio:

Wal Heller works at the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, an independent EU public service institution, where she is responsible for cooperation with civil society. Previously, she had been FRA's spokesperson. Prior to working for FRA, she worked for the European Commission as well as for a development cooperation NGO.

My points will be:

1. **Personal trust vs 'professional trust'** – the confusion between trust and agreement (one concrete example from Poland)
2. **Trust in people or trust in institutions?** (and a few EU figures from Eurobarometer on the latter)
3. **Building trust – 2 concrete examples:** joint trainings & 'paying it forward'

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5. **Moderator: Julia Hoffmann, Hivos, Netherlands**

Tuesday, 2-3.30pm, Central Room

Literature review

- Ethan Zuckerman: <http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/blog/?s=trust>
- Lawrence Lessig <https://newrepublic.com/article/70097/against-transparency>
- Nicolas Kayser-Bril <http://blog.nkb.fr/trust-transparency>