Data for Leadership Online Discussion Report Back Notes

On June 25th, 2019, we held a Data Literacy Consortium Meeting on Data for Leadership. We were fortunate to have Jennifer Chan, Tin Geber, Mor Rubinstein, Samhir Vasdev and Lisa Peterson to lead small groups to discuss the topics and get inputs from Bob Gradeck, El Yusuf Suleiman, Augustina Palencia, Anne Winnie Kamau, Greg Bloom, Hannah Wheatley, Javier Carranza, Ameline, Tara Cooper, Matt Sims, Mark Irura, Corina Demottaz, Maurice McNaughton, Katie, Afshin, Yacine Khelladi, Christina Goodness, Wafa Hassainya & Lauren Bateman.

Jen's Group Notes:

Who was in the group?
Bob Gradeck, El Yusuf Suleiman, Augustina Palencia , Anne Winnie Kamau, Jennifer Chan

Main Topics of Discussion:

How can leaders support data culture in their communities?
- Organizations and stakeholders in Nigeria and W. Africa need to go beyond making data available - must focus on the entire life cycle of data and also focus on what it takes to make the data accessible and useful.
- Building capacity in the U.S. is also a similar challenge - Data producers often lack data management capacity across the data lifecycle. They need support.
- Most of the challenges that I've faced during my work with data are related with availability and accessibility. Also, disaggregation and representativeness. And regards, accessibility, there are issues in relation to access to technology and of course data literacy.
- Important to have providers connect data with users in a meaningful way - Data must speak to people that are using it. Issues of documentation, format, data user skills (pulling data from a pdf is often too great an obstacle)- these challenges make it hard for journalists and others to use the data

How can leaders support developing data culture in their communities, organisations, & institutions?
- Capacity building is one thing that can be valuable
- To build a culture, leadership needs to buy into using data - look into what data says
- It takes a long time to build trust and relationships and then you can then build on those relationships to encourage people to use data.
- Investment is also needed in technology and people
- Being open is an important part of the culture. By releasing data openly, people are able to find value in data that they didn't have access to - examples around improving farming practices and farming yield in Kenya
- When you build trust with people, it becomes easier to convince people to share more data.

- Build data literacy among leaders and managers to create a culture.
- I think that in many community based organizations the process of producing information is already happening. Official information is not always as representative as it should be, so communities need to develop by themselves systems to collect information. The challenge is to find a way to incorporate community produced information to public data in the hands of the government. I think collaboration is the key here.

Closing points
- Stewardship of the ecosystem is an important ethic. Do what you can to make things better for everyone, even if it's as small as improving data quality, improving documentation, or introducing people to one another.
- Must be able to demonstrate the impact of data to build more interest in having others share it.
- We need to advocate for governments to reach out to communities and start collaborating to produce meaningful information.

Best Practices:

Helpful Resources:
I get a ton of value from being part of the NNIP data intermediary network - lots of great resources on the website (Bob) https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/

Questions/Issues for further focus/research.

Tin's Group Notes:

Who was in the group?
Greg, Hannah, Javier, Ameline

Main Topics of Discussion:
Greg - open referral initiative, open access to health human and social services
- Developing open data and sharing services
- Previously hosted a fabriders call!
- Not a tech person, learned on the fly how to talk about data and tech
- Being intermediary, liaison, while holding the vision, facilitating evangelising
- Feeling lonely! Great opp to talk with other people about this stuff

Hannah - CIVICUS
- Worked with DataShift, over the last three years working with members who tend to be quite cautious and thinking data is not for them
- How to provide them something that is immediately useful for them, get them started on the data journey
- 7000 members! All the topics, all the regions

Javier - Working on the development side of the data literacy consortium and writing about concepts such as datacy and [citizen-to-government data partnerships](#) to assess the impact of data literacy programs.
- More of a tech guy, also academic writer . He works on the side of data literacy realm
- Btw there is a new concept going on called datacy
- Running an experience related to data literacy with the National Stats Office in the country of El Salvador
- Working with local NSO, trying to build an experience out of data, calling out, summoning civil society
- We show them open data tools, create a dialogue, aid the census operation
- In the 2020 round we'll have lots of censuses in the world
- We know about the data playbook, but not other experiences from civil society
- Dialogue and find ideas, experiences, perhaps write something together!

Ameline - ICRC Geneva
- Operations department
- Provides training on the reporting tools that we use
- As an underlying foundation, I need to work on data literacy
- Resources are for people on the field, varying levels of data literacy, some very low
- The goal is to bring this work closer to them - train them so they can use it and see the added value for them directly
- We're just starting with data literacy, there are some bottom-up initiatives, but we're just starting
- Joined one call before, but very new - happened to see HEather's call on linkedin

Best Practices:

What is leadership supposed to do to incentivise various levels of data literacy people to train and receive literacy?
- Ameline: we each take it from different angles, we miss alignment
  - This is very basic but you need a definition to work towards
- Javier: probably we're speaking about standards! Coming to many diverse groups, we need a standardised idea about what we're collecting/training
  - When you think about running a census, and need so many groups to participate
- Greg: I don;t think that the too many standards are a thing, that's what tech folks say is a problem
  - The standard that we're developing is an interchange system - it is meant to enable interoperability
  - It is one of many ways tech people shut down conversations
  - Ultimately the beneficiaries of this work end up having much less power: my job is creating circumstances in which power is rebalanced from tech people to the users, from vendors to the orgs that purchase and use their software
  - This means finding a handful of vendors that are cooperative, then work from there
  - One of the main challenges I have in this work are information intermediaries – people who manage info, administer data

- ○ They're extremely valuable subject matter experts, feel very disempowered
- ○ I suspect that, in many cases, if they had a little bit more skills to do things on their own, they would have lots more agency and autonomy
- ○ We need skillbuilding - it's really difficult to raise money for basic skillbuilding

What worked well?
Hannah
- ● Leadership should give many more opps to do something
- ● They should stop talking so much about data, and talking about what they need to do for the people
- ● And even drop the word data - it is so scary and loaded for my audience
- ● We want to talk about what they want to accomplish, and give them very simple surveys, very hard to fail on them, and they see really quick wins and start asking their own questions

Javier
- ● Complementing what Hannah said about added value you want to give to people
- ● Besides funding, you can at least document something about the agreements that people arrived to
- ● Data playbook is good because of co-creation process - people agree not only on what they do, but also on what they think they should do
- ● That way it becomes a circular exercise, adding value to both data and the manual
- ● Leadership has to facilitate the dialogue around what people think should be done

What would you like to see the consortium do?

Javier:
- ● In our experience, we worked mostly with countries, for instance to produce indicators for SDGs, it's a matter of a new kind of integration, and finding new approaches for countries.
- ● There's a lot of talking to govs, what are they expecting from the contribution from civil society? We want to aid work of govs, not only monitoring issues.
- ● Perhaps consortium should have one foot on the ground and engaged in the official dialogue, for instance with UN bodies, NSOs, stat dev offices.
- ● And we should be doing exactly what we're doing right now
- ● Next steps should be to officialize what we do, sitting with governments.
- ● For instance, we have been invited to the world data forum programme committee and, we're going to propose the data literacy topics to be discussed on the WDF
- ● Those steps of integrating to the "official " statistical realm will help a lot to build momentum together in the future

Ameline
- ● +1 = we're doing it right now, sharing experiences, bringing together resources
- ● Not reinventing the wheel, and being able to reach out to people who already built and used certain resources

Helpful Resources:

- https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3888793/9393549/KS-TC-18-007-EN-N.pdf/513c6ca6-fbb3-4928-afdd-691285401e5f (this is not specifically about data literacy but its the basis of what we are working on to built up on the data literacy research)

Questions/Issues for further focus/research.

Mor's Group Notes:

Who was in the group?
Tara Cooper, X Equals/TEDxLondon
Matt Sims (MapAction)
Mark Irura,
Mor Rubinstein, 360Giving
Corina,

Main Topics of Discussion:

First main question: how can we use data for decision-making?

"Data informed decision making is a unicorn" - is it or is it not?

- Data is not being used as much as it should, even though it's being collected and citizens are not always able to take advantage of the collected data.
- Corina suggests data informed decision making can work - for instance - in a project on internal displacement in Honduras, they have produced data that will enforce policy and decisions at higher, governmental levels. Another example on community level projects in Myanmar where data was collected for a project and then created into a video to explain the results back to the local community.
- Matt suggests that visualisation of data/maps can help decision making - especially if you can see the gaps in the data. Data visualisation/maps are also very good at triggering conversations as well.
- Other tools are also important along maps - one idea is to make maps more accessible for decision makers would be to add notes with them. As Mor suggests that many people also don't quite understand the maps themselves even though they like them. Also, how do you ensure these maps are accessible to those without smartphones/costs (licenses, hosting etc)?
- Increasingly a lot of organisations are interested in having the data analysed and not necessarily created into a map - rather they would like to explore/analyse the data itself.

Best Practices:

Helpful Resources:

- Data for Policy - (http://dataforpolicy.org/) can be a useful resource
- http://guides.mapaction.org - an initial attempt to summarise how maps can help inform decision making.
- Sphere standards
- Open Data Services - Joy Diversion - https://github.com/OpenDataManchester/training-and-resources/tree/master/joy-diversion - a practical way to understand mapping by going out and doing a treasure hunt!

Questions/Issues for further focus/research.

Samhir's Group Notes:

Who was in the group?
Maurice McNaughton, Caribbean Open Data Initiative (Jamaica)
Katie, World Food Programme (Rome)
Ashfin, NGO and civil society consultant (Amsterdam)
Samhir, IREX
Yacine Khelladi (briely) (COI + Fund. Taiguey Dominican Rep.)

Main Topics of Discussion:
How can we...
Support data informed decision making amongst leaders
　　Differs based on context
- Non for profit sector and NGOs
- Private sector - getting data literacy/culture within the business from the top level down
- Public sector - getting data literacy/culture into society
- Fact/evidence based decision making should be the focus, which automatically leads us to use data… so how do we get that data in the best way?
- Important to make the distinction between what are solid facts, what are opinions, important for people to understand the difference, analyze where data comes from, how conclusions are drawn, etc.
- Treating data as an asset and valuing how powerful it can be is crucial in all contexts
    - At WFP, data use is a sort of new thing - new dashboards etc being introduced. But this is the tip of the iceberg:
        - Hype around dashboards (for instance) leads to lack of critical engagement with data quality, source, reliability, etc.
        - There's a need for a critical eye about this data - "softer skills side of data literacy"
    - In resource-constrained orgs (e.g. non profits) data isn't always the highest priority - weakness in that industry

Support and define data culture

Use data to strengthen communities and networks?

Best Practices:
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Helpful Resources:

Questions/Issues for further focus/research.
- Looking for examples of how leaders can be "shown" the value of data and how its useful for their orgs

Lisa's Group Notes:

Who was in the group?
Christina Goodness
Wafa Hassainya
Lauren Bateman
Lisa

Main Topics of Discussion:
How can we support data-informed decision-making?
How can we engage leaders to understand it and step up as leaders in their institutions?
How to

Best Practices:
- Using language that people use, that they may not realize they are making decisions, they may call it planning, etc.
- Private sector: data-driven, politics and contexts that are not quantifiable. How can we produce good data?
- Draw out a hypothesis- what is the question you're trying to get at?
- What are the questions that are keeping you up at night? Helps ground the decision that might need to be taken at some point.
- Not using technocratic language as much as possible - using human terms. "Key information/intelligence questions".
- Programmatically - if we don't have good data supply chains, then it doesn't really matter.
- Data on staffing systems in the Public Service Commission in Canada - trying to implement a data culture : clarify the roles and responsibilities of the data actors in the organization.
- Chief Data Officer - he'll be the leader on developing the culture.
- Paralysis by analysis: a lot of data, different levels of data literacy makes things difficult.
- We're not really information-poor, actually data-rich, but we haven't effectively met the goal of putting up the proper filters- evidence that is coming up is being aggregated at a sufficient level for different kinds of decision-making, different levels. (ie: key points where strategy is determined, or immediate tactical purposes)
- The closer to the action you are, the more you tolerate a little data error, but say at the Security Council, you need more accurate data and more aggregated data.

- Reflecting on the culture: organically created innovated creations proposed by people who love solutions, data visualizations. The more technocratic we get about setting up a culture, the worse it is.
- Evolution in data literacy - reaching out to higher levels, you can show how this describes the situation, illuminates and can contribute to the discussion and the decision that needs to be made.
- "Last-mile" data literacy support in operations has sort of infused a data culture into the set of operations managers and decision-makers that often deploy with IFRC.
- Graph looking at decision-levels and error rates: pattern to how data was coming in and how it was being used.
- Frequent data collection/assessments might allow for some more uncertainty/error at the operational-level, but at higher levels, perhaps slower reporting times, but require a much higher-level of accuracy, with greater situational contextualization.
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Helpful Resources:
- Data for decision-making - https://blog.qlik.com/essential-steps-to-making-better-data-informed-decisions
- How to talk about data for programs and data for reporting. Really resonates with leaders - https://reboot.org/2016/10/12/longreads-moving-real-time-data-real-time-programs/
- Book recommended by a colleague - https://www.amazon.com/Data-Driven-Leader-Delivering-Measurable/dp/B07GDR73NX/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=data+driven+leader&qid=1561467102&s=gateway&sr=8-2

Questions/Issues for further focus/research.

Next Steps

Learn about [Facilitative Leadership](#)