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# The OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas

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**Impact and
Learning Report
2015 - 2017**

OAS | School of GOVERNANCE

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The Organization of American States (OAS) is the main political forum of the region, which gathers all the independent nations of the Western hemisphere to jointly promote and consolidate democracy, strengthen human rights, foster peace, security and cooperation, and advance in achieving common interests.

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The principles of transparency, collaboration and participation –nowadays referred to as Open Government– are fundamental for the exercise of democracy as recognized in the Inter-American Democratic Charter. To develop capacities, build knowledge networks and create opportunities for the exchange of experiences is essential for the promotion of the Open Government principles in our region. Therefore, the Organization of American States (OAS) developed, in 2014, the "OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas", an initiative that is unique at the global level.

The OAS Fellowship is an experiment. Therefore, we want to *share* our experiences, results and learnings of the program's first three years with the community in the hemisphere, to highlight the achievements as well as the challenges we encountered and to discuss what remains to be done.

With this report, we also want to *render account*. Our main sources of financing are public funds and –beyond the Organization's formal audits and the reporting to our donors– it seems appropriate to share with the public what we have been able to do with these funds.

We have also *analyzed* the 1,500 applications to the program we have received from across the Americas in the last three years. Although not all candidates have been able to participate in the program, these 1,500 applications contain highly valuable information for our organization. It is

essential for the OAS –as the main political forum in the region that seeks to promote democracy, strengthen human rights, and promote security and inclusive development– to learn about the concerns and hopes of young professionals in the region and what they consider to be the main challenges in their communities and propose as possible solutions.

Finally, we want to *celebrate* our Fellows with this report: 69 young people from 20 countries across the Americas with a great diversity of personal and professional backgrounds, experiences and ideas, who have become agents of change in their institutions and communities. They have also enriched the work of the OAS as they are not only the program's protagonists, but also guarantee its success and impact. The network of OAS Fellows is a very active community that we want to continue to make the most of, using the group's talents to implement initiatives that strengthen Open Government practices across the region.

For this occasion we asked the Fellows to name words that, in their opinion, best characterize the OAS Fellowship. I was struck by the fact that, apart from terms such as "learning", "community", and "innovation", many mentioned "solidarity", "rights", "democracy", and "collaboration" – terms that mark the key values of the OAS. In this regard, I welcome the fact that this initiative has been an inclusive regional program in which, in addition to the 18 countries that are part of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), young leaders from all OAS Member States can participate.

We are grateful to all the institutions and individuals who have contributed to the program's success and hope it can continue to promote the principles of Open Government in the region for a long time to come.

Luis Almagro
Secretary General
Organization of American States
Washington, D.C.

Preface

# María Fernanda Trigo

The Organization of American States (OAS) and its partners are celebrating three editions of the OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas. Over the last years, this program has created a space for targeted knowledge-exchange and regional dialogue on Open Government experiences among young leaders from public administration, civil society, and the private sector across the Americas. These young leaders have been developing their own projects to strengthen transparency, citizen participation, and efficiency in public administration in order to improve the quality of life of the citizens in the hemisphere.

Today, governments in the Americas face very diverse challenges with regard to the policy-making process. The opening of economies, the inclusion of previously marginalized social groups, the recognition of new identities and the emergence of transnational actors have made the task of governing more complex. In addition, today's citizens are better informed thanks to the use of ICT and social networks as tools for mobilization and control. As a result, the relationship between government and citizens is changing. Political representatives, public officials and the many different social actors are called upon to collaborate in order to build the democracy of the future based on a transparent, effective, collaborative and participatory government, in other words, an Open Government.

To consolidate the transformations the Open Government paradigm has introduced and to move forward on our way to a new culture of public management, it is essential to promote leadership and co-operation in the hemisphere. The OAS Fellowship seeks to strengthen the capacities and tools of the region's young Open Government leaders so that they can continue to lead this change towards more open societies, become multipliers in their communities and, above all, can contribute –through collaboration and shared learning– to building an ever more democratic region that provides opportunities for all its citizens.

At the OAS Department for Effective Public Management, we want to thank all our partners –Member states, Permanent observers, multilateral organizations, and private foundations– for their support which made it possible to carry out the program's first three editions. These partnerships have been instrumental in increasing our initiative's reach, impact, and sustainability.

But above all, we want to thank our Fellows for their tremendous commitment, passion and dedication over the years. I am impressed with the work they have been doing during the seminars, in their projects and, above all, by their engagement in numerous activities that prove to be important examples of the successful collaboration between actors from different countries and different sectors of our societies. We invite you to get to know some examples of these activities in this report.

We wish all our Fellows great success in their future endeavors and hope that the stimulus, tools and opportunities we have provided them with as well as the building of this network with colleagues from all over the region will help them be effective agents of change.

María Fernanda Trigo
Director, Department for Effective Public Management
Organization of American States
Washington, D.C.

# 1

# Idea & Concept
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# Background

Most Latin American societies have advanced considerably in their democratic consolidation in the last three decades. However, important challenges remain in the exercise of some of their citizens' fundamental rights. The right of access to public information is one of these rights, and it is today recognized as crucial to asserting other economic, social and cultural rights in democratic societies: A government that acts openly and transparently, grants citizens access to public information and encourages collaboration and participation enables them to make well-informed decisions in all areas of life, demand better quality of public services, hold public officials accountable and participate actively in their country's political debate and decision-making processes. It increases its own democratic legitimacy and the people's trust in public institutions and the political system.

However, the right of access to information, as many others, runs the risk of being a right of the elites in Latin America, which is not exercised by all people to the same degree – in particular in the case of women, the rural poor, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and other marginalized groups. The region, faced with increasing expectations from its citizenry, needs to improve the integrity of public office-holders, increase public accountability, make the management of public resources more efficient, and improve public services.

It is in this context that the concept of Open Government has emerged as one of the most important paradigm shifts in public management in the 21st century: a set of public policies that are founded on the principles of transparency and access to public information, citizen participation, inter-sectorial collaboration and the harnessing of new technologies to promote and achieve a better relationship between different government stakeholders, better public services and citizens' quality of life. Open Government is a key ingredient of democratic governance, social stability and economic development as it meets the citizens' increasing demands for effectively exercising their rights and actively participating in their countries' decision-making processes.

In 2011, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) was launched as an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. Since then, OGP has grown from 8 to 75 participating countries (and 15 subnational governments), in which government and civil society are working together to develop ambitious action plans to implement Open Government principles. The Americas, in particular, stand out as the region with the most widespread participation in OGP, including 18 OAS Member states.

Although the concept of Open Government is relatively new, the OAS has been working on many of the related topics for years, including transparency and access to public information, anti-corruption, citizen participation, and e-government. The OAS Department for Effective Public Management has been supporting the organization's Member states in a number of related initiatives that focus on three main areas of work: strengthening institutions, capacity development for public officials, and awareness-raising among citizens.

Against this background, the Department developed the "OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas" with the aim of giving the process

of implementation of Open Government policies in the region the necessary additional impulse. Thus, the Fellowship contributes to fulfill the organization's mandate as expressed in numerous OAS General Assembly resolutions of the last ten years and an action mandate adopted at the Seventh Summit of the Americas (2015) "to promote Open Government and access to information as key tools for achieving greater transparency, better public administration, citizen participation and social inclusion, and to support initiatives currently under way in this regard".



● **2011**
Brazil, Mexico, U.S. (founding members)

● **2012**
Canada, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Honduras ("cohort 2")

● **2013**
Costa Rica, Argentina, Panama ("cohort 3")

● **2014**
Trinidad & Tobago

● **2016**
Jamaica

**As of today, 18 OAS Member states participate in the worldwide Open Government Partnership (OGP).**
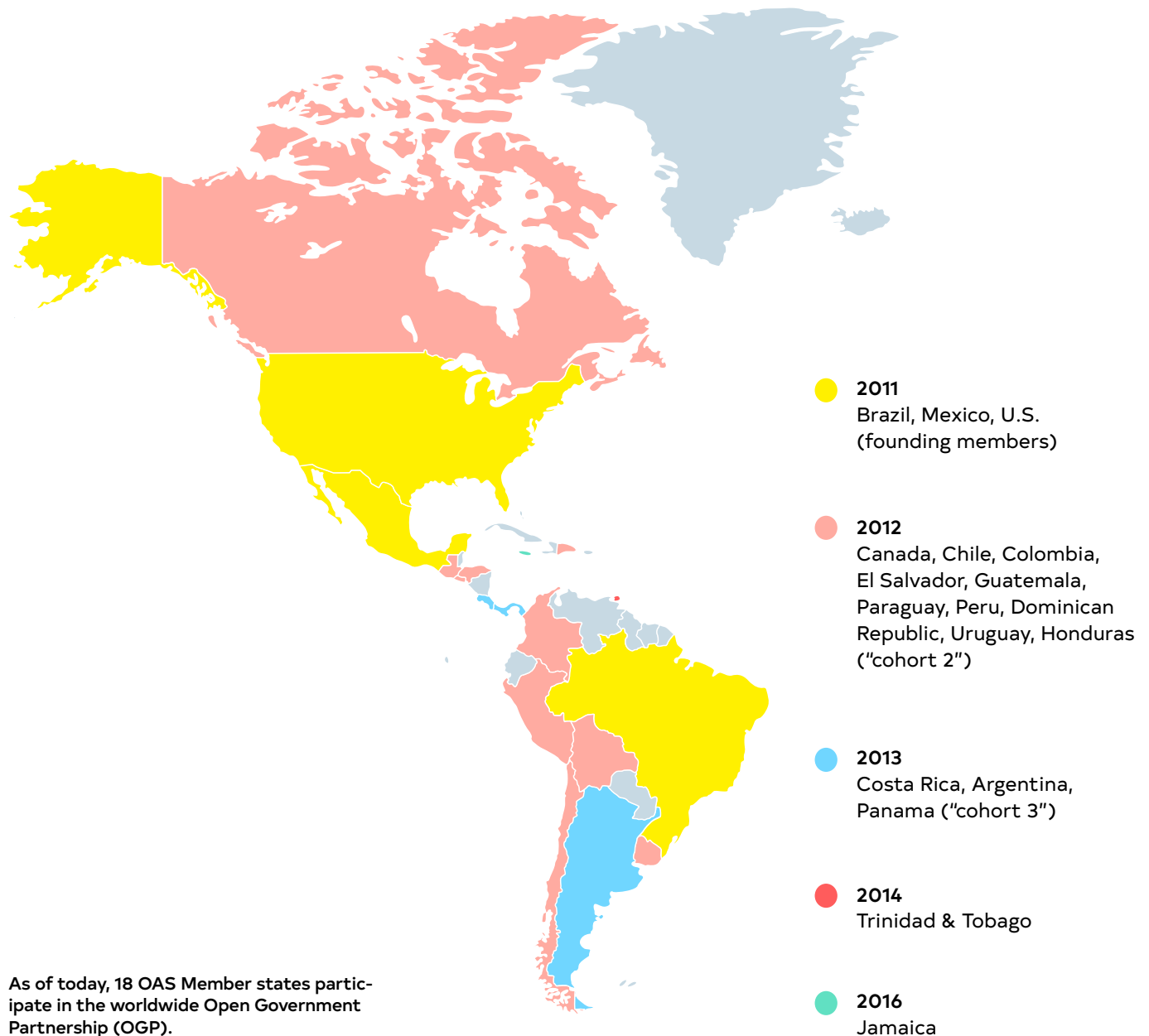
# What is unique about the OAS Fellowship?

The OAS Fellowship was developed against the background that there is currently no program that provides systematic capacity development and regional exchange for the next generation of Open Government leaders in the Americas.

There are, of course, a number of institutions (governments, international organizations, NGOs, and private sector actors, among others) that organize young leaders programs, be they of a more general kind or focus on specific thematic areas. Very few organizations run programs that are related to the specific issues the OAS Fellowship addresses: Code for America, the Accountability Lab, to a certain degree also the Open Society Foundations; the Open Knowledge Foundation runs a number of related programs, mostly in Africa. Others, such as OGP and the Mexican government have been looking for ways to support young reformers which they call "Open Government Champions" or "Innovation agents", the OECD established a "Network of Reformers".

Although some of these programs partly touch upon issues of Open Government, they either have a different regional focus, are very limited in scope or follow an entirely different conceptual approach.

The OAS Fellowship's concept does build, however, on experiences with several young leaders programs from other areas and was conceptually designed as a "best of", learning from these programs. They include the German Bertelsmann Foundation's Transformation Thinkers Network, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Fellowship, the Arab-European Young Leaders Forum,

the Rotary Foundation's World Peace Fellowship, and the Mandela Washington Fellowship of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. In addition, numerous conversations have been held with the Accountability Lab, AgoraPartnerships, the Young Americas Business Trust, the BMW Foundation's Responsible Leaders Network and others in order to tap existing experiences and expertise and not repeat mistakes made in the past.

As a result, the goal of the OAS Fellowship was defined as strengthening Open Government practices in the region's public administrations, namely in the areas of transparency, civic participation, and collaboration among government stakeholders from different sectors of society. Thus, the project intends to contribute to more democratic governance and to enable citizens to actively participate in their countries' political debates, shape public policy formulation and take part in the decision-making processes, with the aim of providing access to better public services and improving the citizens' overall living conditions.

The purpose of the OAS Fellowship is to create a network of change agents that brings together young leaders from the public sphere, civil society and the private sector likely to shape the future discussions and realities of Open Government in the Americas and engage them in targeted knowledge-transfer and regional co-operation on Open Government strategies and experiences.

## Structure

To achieve this purpose, the OAS Fellowship combines capacity development (workshops and seminars related to Open Government topics)

with leadership training (public narrative, negotiation skills, coalition-building), the development of projects, and networking elements. Each edition of the program lasts approximately nine months and comprises four modules or phases. The completion of each of the four phases is crucial for the success of the next one.

**1 -** Two-week online course on Open Government strategies in the Americas
**2 -** First one-week seminar in the U.S.
**3 -** Six-month project phase (home-based, with mentoring and online coaching)
**4 -** Second one-week seminar at rotating locations in Latin America

**Online course**
2 weeks in spring

**First seminar**
1 week, Osprey Point & Washington D.C.

**Project phase**
6 months, home-based

**Second seminar**
1 week, Latin America
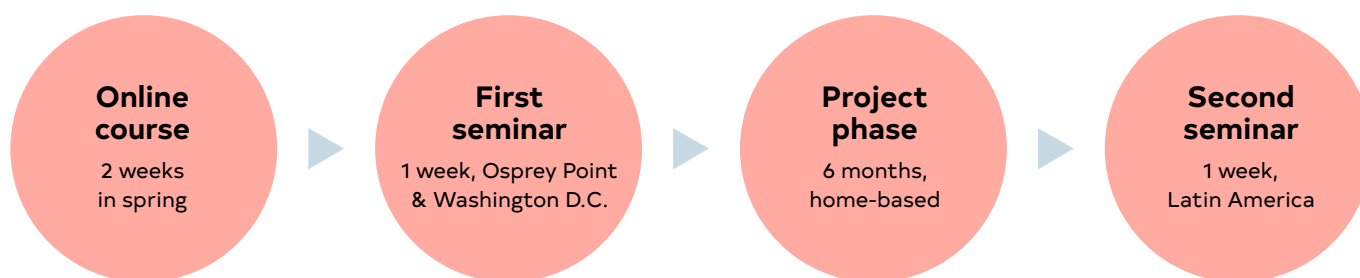
The online course, organized in close co-operation with the OAS Campus Virtual, is intended to lay the foundation and ensure all Fellows have a comparable level of knowledge in the relevant topics of Open Government. This typically includes a conceptual introduction to Open Government, the structure and activities of the Open Government Partnership, as well as familiarizing the participants with successful Open Government initiatives and tools in the region. It also is the first chance for participants to interact with each other and exchange their past experiences with Open Government practices in their countries.

During the first seminar, the Fellows deepen their knowledge and understanding of the most relevant practices, challenges, and benefits of Open Government and broaden their perspective through capacity development and an exchange of ideas and good practice experiences with the other participants as well as experts from different sectors of society and from all over the Americas. In addition, the program provides exposure to international Open Government experts at networking events in Washington D.C. This regularly includes two public events: one Round Table debate at the Hall of the Americas, at the OAS Main Building, with meet-and-greet opportunities with OAS authorities, and one speed-networking event at the OpenGov Hub with the most relevant organizations and actors working on Open Government in the Washington D.C. area.

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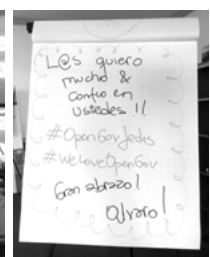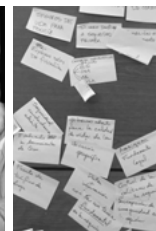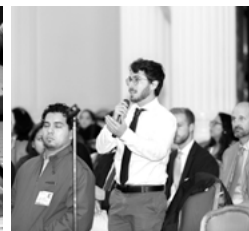
The main function of the first seminar, however, is to create an "esprit de corps" among the Fellows through an intense common learning experience and team-building activities, which are crucial to enabling the group to get to know each other well and ensure participants can work together over the six-month project phase.

In this context, the first seminar's location more than just a conference venue is part of the concept: While distractions abound in Washington D.C., the OAS Fellowship team looked for a secluded location "in the middle of nowhere" that would allow for a week outside the ordinary, a place that invites participants to reflect without their normal daily lives' pressures, to contemplate strategies, resolve problems, and establish new visions.

The Osprey Point Retreat & Conference Center with its remote setting on Maryland's majestic Chesapeake Bay, a 90-minute-drive from Washington D.C., has offered three generations of OAS Fellows such an experience. Avoiding the high costs and anonymous atmosphere of a conference hotel in Washington D.C., its exclusive use of the premises offered the Fellowship's participants and staff the ideal environment for all kinds of indoors and outdoors activities beyond a traditional seminar setting and allowed for an intense and unique team-building process in this crucial phase of the program.





During the project phase, the Fellows develop tangible solutions to specific Open Government challenges in their communities or countries. These projects are typically designed as co-operations between two or more Fellows from different sectors of society and professional backgrounds. They build on existing ideas and interests of the participants rather than the organizers' needs or suggestions. Working groups, topics

of the project and a work plan are agreed upon among the participants during the first seminar, with expert feedback and peer discussion on relevance and feasibility. The project phase is co-ordinated by the OAS, supported by its project partners, alumni or external experts who serve as mentors, and structured by a thorough curriculum on solving public problems developed and conducted by The GovLab. This includes the GovLab's participation in the first and second seminar, monthly online coaching sessions with all current Fellows and guest speakers, and one-on-one online sessions with all project teams and individual Fellows as needed.

The second seminar focuses on consolidating the network, discussing the projects and identifying opportunities to scale them up or adapt them to other national contexts. The second seminar always takes place at rotating locations in Latin America in the context of large international conferences to provide the Fellows with networking





opportunities and exposure to the broadest possible audience: The second seminar 2015 took place in Mexico City at that year's OGP Global Summit; the program's 2016 edition concluded with a seminar at the international innovation conference E-XPERIENCE in Medellín; the second seminar 2017 –and first official reunion of all OAS Fellows– takes place in the context of the OGP Regional Meeting of the Americas in Buenos Aires.

After completion of the entire program, the participants become part of the network of OAS Fellows that grows with each new edition of the program. After three editions, this network consists of 69 OAS Fellows, spanning 20 countries from all of the hemisphere's sub-regions and covering all sectors of society.

## Beneficiaries

The OAS Fellowship is a program that benefits organizers and participants alike: While the participants benefit from the convening power of the OAS for their own professional development and get international exposure and a high-level exchange with experts in their field, the OAS and its partnering organizations have preferential access to the network of Fellows and get first-hand insights into the Open Government realities and challenges in the region. In addition, the participants' presence adds to the intellectual verve of the institutions.

In addition, there are other direct and indirect beneficiaries of the program. All those who contribute to the program as co-organizers, speakers or facilitators benefit from the exchange with the Fellows as the up-and-coming actors in Open Government "on the ground". As a capacity development program, those who participate in the program also bring an indirect benefit to the organizations they work for (in public administration, civil society, or the private sector of their respective countries), through their newly acquired knowledge, skills and networks. The citizens of their countries of origin also become indirect beneficiaries as OAS Fellows develop their projects with the aim of improving transparency, accountability and, ultimately, the quality of public services and the overall living conditions in their countries.

## Alumni engagement

For the network to remain active and working, it is essential that the alumni remain engaged with the Fellowship after their participation in the nine-month program, are being connected among each other systematically, and support each other across different cohorts. Therefore, the OAS Fellowship includes its alumni in a variety of ways in the further development of the program.

For example, many alumni have participated in the selection of the next generation of OAS Fellows, by helping with the dissemination of the call for applications, writing letters of recommendation for candidates they know, submitting comments on the short-listed candidates, or participating as members of the selection committee (Laura Paonessa '15 and Pepe Tonin '16).



Carolina Pozo '15, Daniel Carranza '15, Marina González '16 and Humberto Fuentes '16 produced short videos welcoming the next cohort to the program and explaining the benefits their participation has had for their own work. Iris Palma '15 has served twice as the tutor for the online course on "Open Government Strategies in Latin America", the program's first module, and, thus, introduced all Fellows of the second and third edition to the program.

Fernanda Campagnucci '15, Laura Paonessa '15, and Yamila García '16 have participated in the next edition's first seminar in Osprey Point representing their respective cohort and facilitating workshops

for the next generation. Maikol Porras, Daniel Carranza, Gerardo Pérez, and Edilma Prada, all '15, participated in the second seminar 2016 in Medellín facilitating workshops, sharing their experience and organizing the next steps for the network.

Paulina Bustos '15 organized a public workshop at the OGP Regional Meeting of the Americas in Montevideo in June 2016 on how to successfully implement Open Government projects, together with several Fellows from the first and second generation.

Mauricio Delfín '15, Fabro Steibel '15, Marina González '16 and others have served as mentors for one of the next edition's working groups, advising them on the development of their projects.



Several Fellows of all generations have contributed to other departments within the OAS and its related organizations as election observers, consultants or advisors or have been invited as speakers, experts, or moderators to events organized by other OAS projects, departments and secretariats.

A total of 50 Fellows has been actively and visibly engaged as speakers, panelists, organizers or facilitators at all relevant regional and international conferences, acting as ambassadors of the OAS and its Fellowship. This includes the International Open Data Conference (Ottawa 2015 and Madrid 2016), the OGP Global Summit (Mexico City 2015 and Paris 2016), the OGP Regional Meeting of the Americas (Montevideo 2016), AbreLatam/ConDatos (Santiago de Chile 2015, Bogotá 2016, San José 2017), etc.

# Results

A thorough stakeholder analysis and numerous conversations with all relevant players in the Open Government arena before its inception showed a clear interest in a program like the OAS Fellowship. The number of applications received (over 650 for 25 slots in the first year) as well as hundreds of information requests from all over the world confirm this impression and show that the OAS Fellowship meets a need.

The OAS Fellowship remains the only regional initiative that systematically works to empower the next generation of Open Government leaders from all sectors of society in the Americas. It offers a unique mix of capacity-development, regional knowledge-exchange, leadership skill building, and networking opportunities, all tools the

participants need to be –or become– effective Open Government champions in their countries. Its conceptual approach and structure can generally be considered a success, while important challenges regarding the project phase and the implementation of projects remain. To embrace the diversity and richness of ideas from the region, the OAS Fellowship more than a curriculum carved in stone is what its participants make of it: It aims to be a participatory platform for targeted regional knowledge-exchange, develop innovative ideas and provide a common learning experience in the process.

## Learnings

**1 -** While very little in the Fellowship is improvisation, a lot of it is experimentation. This, by definition, entails the possibility of failure in different stages of the process. While there is a lot of discussion about the value of experimentation, course correction and "learning institutions", many organizations and funders continue to manage their projects with systems that do not support adaptation. Oftentimes an institution's or donor's –very justified– expectations can get in the way of our courage and possibilities to go off the beaten track and try new things.

**2 -** In many institutional contexts, we tend to expect tangible and presentable results very quickly, as the program's accountability and its future financing may depend on it. While this is very understandable in most cases, sustainable capacity-development requires time. "Grass does not grow faster if you pull it", as the African proverb goes, and sometimes there is no way around it: It takes time to incubate new ideas and let them grow into something useful.

**3 -** The Fellows are not only the program's protagonists; they are also its biggest resource. Even if they are carefully selected and come already very well-prepared and with great ideas, a program such as the OAS Fellowship needs to invest more in its participants before it can reap the fruit of their efforts and projects.

# 2

## The Candidate Pool & Selection Process
## 21 - 33

**22.**

The selection of the "right" participants is one of the most important success factors of young-leaders-programs such as the OAS Fellowship. Many organizations use a by-invitation-only or by-recommendation-only approach, which keeps the number of applications to a number that can easily be handled and provides several pre-selection filters. However, given the institutional nature of the OAS and its partners as well as the program's concept, this seemed to be too narrow an approach for the OAS Fellowship. Rather, the project team opted for a broadly disseminated public call for applications. Everyone interested in participating in the program can apply between the launch of the call for applications and the application deadline (typically between three and six weeks).

# The criteria

The published selection criteria are the following:

- Between 25 and 40 years of age
- Citizens of one of the 35 OAS Member states
- Fluency in Spanish
- From the private sector, civil society or public administration
- With ample experience in Open Government or its related topics of transparency, participation and collaboration
- Leadership potential, highly motivated and in a strategic position that allows the candidates to influence future debate and practice of Open Government in their community and introduce policy changes and innovative solutions
- Open-minded, innovative and eager to engage in regional exchange and co-operation

In addition to the published selection criteria, a number of other factors are taken into account for the selection:

- Gender balance
- Balance between countries and sub-regions
- Balance between the region's large metropolises and interior cities/provinces
- Balance between different sectors of society as much as possible (public administration, civil society, and the private sector)
- Expected potential to make a contribution in their community/country
- Expected potential to make a contribution to the Fellowship program
- Inclusion of the perspectives of marginalized groups and minorities, indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, and candidates with special needs
- Do candidates currently live in –or seem likely to return soon to– their home country?

Finally, in the program's second and third year, additional aspects gained more and more importance, such as how many Fellows from a particular country had already participated in earlier editions, or whether applicants work for organizations that are already represented in the network by an alumnus of the program.

# The pre-selection

**1 -** The project team filters out all those applications that were not sent in time, were incomplete or obviously did not fulfill the formal application requirements (e.g. of age or country of residence).

**2 -** Another team of colleagues from the OAS Department for Effective Public Management, who have experience in selection processes of similar programs and work on Open Government or related topics, is thoroughly briefed by the project team before it conducts a complete first review. This review includes a thorough evaluation of all valid applications using the "Candidate Scoring Matrix", attributing a score between 1 (non-competitive) and 5 (excellent) for five different categories: CV, three essays, and letter of recommendation. The single scores for each category are then added up to a total score between 5 and 25.

# A Candidate Scoring Matrix is used for every independent review of the candidates' applications.

| | CV | Essay 1 | Essay 2 | Essay 3 | Letter of Recommendation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Reflecting the candidate's professional and/or academic background; current position and accomplishments; interest, motivation and commitment to Open Government topics and practices; and leadership potential. | "Por favor, explica cómo has contribuido a introducir una nueva idea, iniciativa o producto relacionado con el Gobierno Abierto y cómo lograste el apoyo para hacerlo." | "Por favor, identifica un desafío específico que enfrente tu comunidad, organización, industria o país. Indica cuáles crees que son los principales obstáculos para resolverlo y cómo podrían superarse utilizando las herramientas del Gobierno Abierto." | "Una parte importante del Fellowship es el desarrollo de proyectos en equipos. Teniendo esto en cuenta, ¿en qué temáticas sobre Gobierno Abierto estás trabajando actualmente o te gustaría desarrollar en el futuro? Ten presente que la temática final de los proyectos grupales deberá ser consensuada entre los miembros de cada equipo." | From a person who knows the candidate's professional accomplishments well and can assess his/her innovation potential as well as commitment to public/community service, and whether the home community would benefit from his/her participation. |
| **5** Excellent | - Clearly displays an exceptional and diverse academic and professional background.<br>- Effectively highlights considerable accomplishments, excellent commitment or clear interest regarding Open Government practices in his/her community and beyond.<br>- Has received substantial recognition in his/her field of work and shows great promise with regard to innovative solutions and leadership potential.<br>- Is extremely motivated to work on Open Government topics and does an excellent job in articulating this motivation. | - Effectively highlights experience in creating a new idea, initiative or product, and clearly addresses how he/she obtained support for it.<br>- Is focused and well organized, with a clear progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates excellent understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Provides excellent information on current challenges in a community, organization, industry or country with convincing steps for problem solving and overcoming challenges with the instruments of Open Government.<br>- Is focused and well organized, with a clear progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates excellent understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Application effectively conveys specific details of a current project and/or specific action plan for a future project.<br>- Is focused and well organized, with a clear progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates excellent understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Clearly reflects a close relationship between referee and candidate which enables the referee to assess the candidate's experience, accomplishments and potential.<br>- Shows that the home country, community or organization would strongly benefit from the candidate's participation.<br>- Conveys that the candidate is very actively engaged in his/her community and shows outstanding initiative in matters of public interest. |
| **4** Good | - Displays a solid academic and professional background.<br>- Highlights accomplishments, commitment and interest regarding Open Government practices in his/her community and beyond.<br>- Has received recognition in his/her field of work and shows promise regarding innovative solutions and leadership potential.<br>- Is motivated to work on Open Government topics and clearly articulates this motivation. | - Highlights experience in creating a new idea, initiative or product, and clearly addresses how he/she obtained support for it.<br>- Is somewhat focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates adequate understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Provides substantial information on current challenges in a community, organization, industry or country; substantial information is also given on problem solving and overcoming challenge with the instruments of Open Government.<br>- Is somewhat focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates adequate understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Application conveys details of a current project and/or an action plan for a future project.<br>- Is somewhat focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates adequate understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Reflects a close relationship between referee and candidate which enables the referee to assess the candidate's experience, accomplishments and potential.<br>- Shows that the home country, community or organization would clearly benefit from the candidate's participation.<br>- Conveys that the candidate is actively engaged in his/her community and shows above-average initiative in matters of public interest. |
| **3** Fair | - Displays an average academic and professional background.<br>- Shows some commitment/interest regarding Open Government practices in his/her community and beyond.<br>- Has received some recognition in his/her field of work and shows some promise regarding innovative solutions and leadership potential.<br>- Demonstrates some motivation to work on Open Government topics. | - Highlights experience in creating a new idea, initiative or product, but does not give extensive detail about how he/she obtained support for it.<br>- Is unfocused and unclear, with an unorganized progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates some understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Provides limited information on current challenges in a community, organization, industry or country.<br>- Is unfocused and unclear, with an unorganized progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates some understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Application conveys limited details of a current project and/or an action plan for a future project.<br>- Is unfocused and unclear, with an unorganized progression of ideas.<br>- Demonstrates some understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Reflects a relationship between referee and candidate which enables the referee to assess the candidate's experience, accomplishments and potential.<br>- Shows that the home country, community or organization would benefit from the candidate's participation.<br>- Conveys that the candidate is engaged in his/her community and shows some initiative in matters of public interest. |
| **2** Poor | - Displays a very limited academic and professional background.<br>- Shows little commitment/interest regarding Open Government practices in his/her community.<br>- Provides little evidence that he/she is seriously motivated to work on Open Government topics.<br>- Has received limited recognition in his/her field of work and shows limited promise regarding innovative solutions. | - Does not clearly articulate experience in creating a new idea, initiative or product, and fails to demonstrate how he/she obtained support for it.<br>- Is poorly focused, or suffers from poor transitions between ideas.<br>- Displays very little understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Provides minimal information on current challenges in a community, organization, industry or country.<br>- Is poorly focused, or suffers from poor transitions between ideas.<br>- Displays very little understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Application conveys little detail of a current project and/or no clear action plan for a future project.<br>- Is poorly focused, or suffers from poor transitions between ideas.<br>- Displays very little understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Reflects some relationship between referee and candidate which enables the referee to assess the candidate's experience, accomplishments and potential to a certain degree.<br>- Barely shows how the home country, community or organization would benefit from the candidate's participation. |
| **1** Non-competitive | - Lacks formal qualifications and relevant professional experience.<br>- Shows no commitment/interest regarding Open Government practices in his/her community.<br>- Provides no evidence that he/she is motivated to work in the field of Open Government.<br>- Has received no recognition in his/her field of work and shows no promise with regard to innovative solutions. | - Fails to provide any examples of a new idea, initiative or product.<br>- Is unfocused, resulting in an incoherent essay.<br>- Displays complete lack of understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Provides no information on current challenges in a community, organization, industry or country.<br>- Is unfocused, resulting in an incoherent essay.<br>- Displays complete lack of understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Application conveys no detail of current projects and/or no clear action plan for future projects.<br>- Is unfocused, resulting in an incoherent essay.<br>- Displays complete lack of understanding of the concept of Open Government. | - Conveys that the referee barley knows the candidate and cannot relay speak to his/her experience, accomplishments and potential.<br>- Shows no evidence that the home country, community or organization would benefit from the candidate's participation. |

*This Candidate Scoring Matrix uses elements of IREX's Washington Fellowship For Young African Leaders (YALI) and the OAS's Inter-American Prize for Innovation in Effective Public Management.

**3 -** The project team conducts a second, independent review of all applications (not knowing the scores of the first review), applying the same method and, again, providing five single scores and a total score between 5 and 25 for each application.

**4 -** The results of the first and the independent second review are then compared, and only those applications that received a total score of 40 or more (from the total of the first and the total of the second review) are processed to the next round.

**5 -** From these remaining applications (typically around 100 to 120), those with the highest total score are compared directly, considering a balance with regard to country, gender, sector of society as well as personal and professional background of the candidates. The result of this pre-selection process is a short-list of around 50 candidates that presents the broadest possible pool of candidates to the external selection committee that has the responsibility for the final selection of participants. The selection committee is a group of international experts in Open Government as well as representatives from the program's partners and (beginning with the second edition) alumni of the program.

## Applicants per country



| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Argentina | 58 | 35 | 58 |
| Bolivia | 23 | 25 | 18 |
| Brazil | 30 | 23 | 29 |
| Chile | 33 | 20 | 38 |
| Colombia | 46 | 35 | 45 |
| Costa Rica | 28 | 18 | 21 |
| Dominican Republic | 32 | 15 | |
| Ecuador | 26 | 16 | 23 |
| El Salvador | 24 | 29 | 16 |
| Guatemala | 28 | | 22 |
| Honduras | 8 | 9 | |
| Mexico | 136 | 47 | 77 |
| Nicaragua | 49 | | 52 |
| Paraguay | 15 | 15 | |
| Peru | 81 | 29 | 32 |
| Uruguay | 19 | 8 | |
| Venezuela | | 12 | 22 |

# 26.
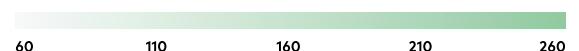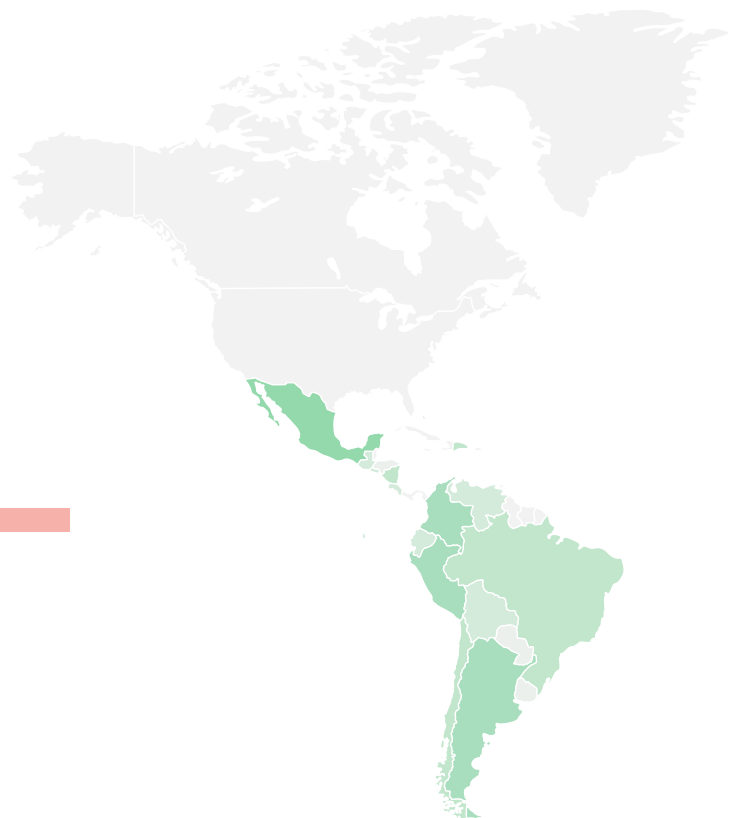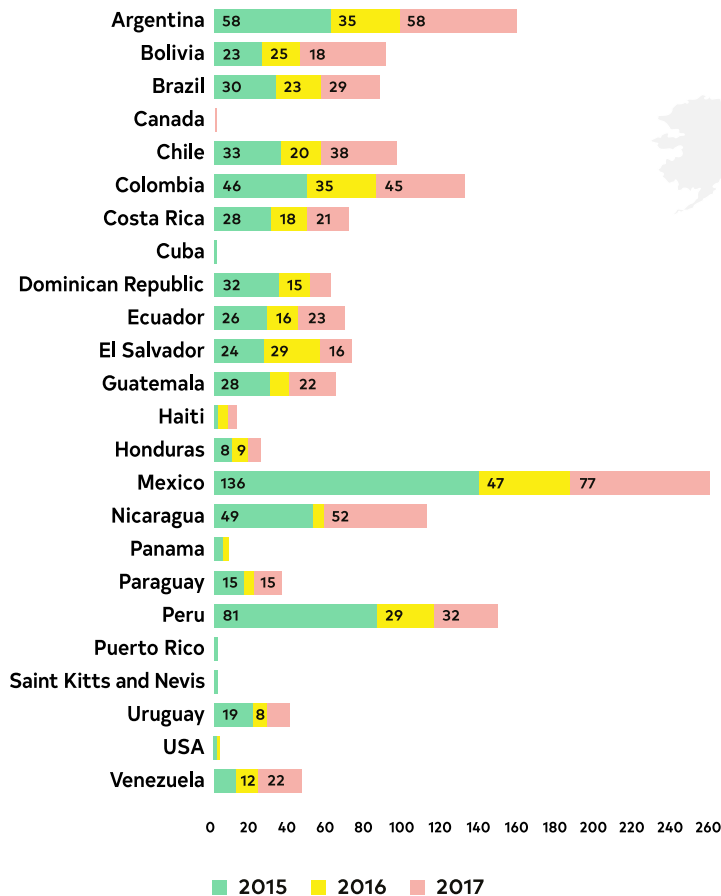
**Over the course of three years (2015-2017), the OAS Fellowship has received 1,509 applications from the five sub-regions of the Americas**

## Applicants

- 29.17%
- 4.92%
- 21.93%
- 17.74%
- 26.25%

Legend:
- Andean Region
- Caribbean
- Central America
- North America
- Southern Cone

## Selected Fellows

- 20.00%
- 2.86%
- 20.00%
- 14.29%
- 42.86%

Legend:
- Andean Region
- Caribbean
- Central America
- North America
- Southern Cone
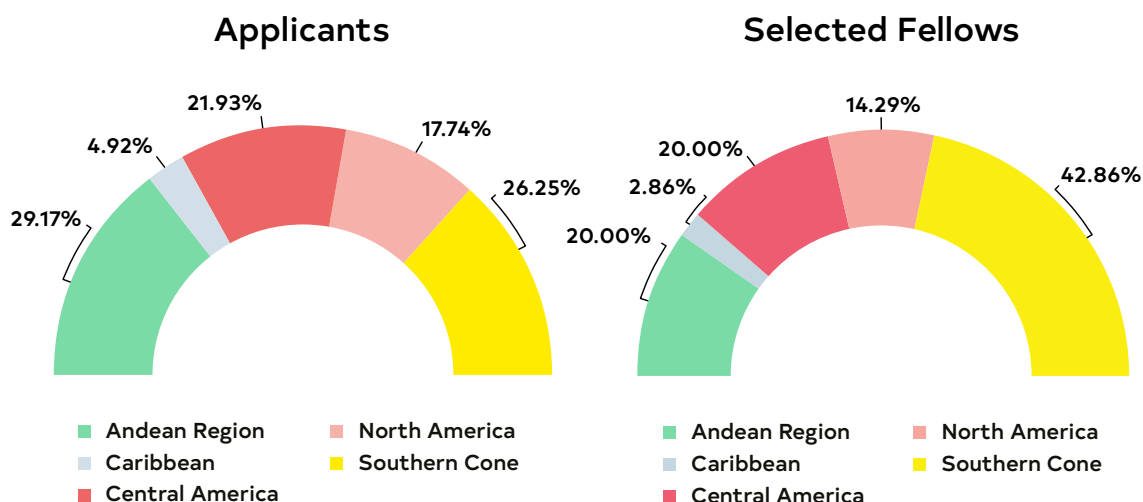
## Applicants' age distribution*

- Under 25: 6.75%
- 25 – 29: 37.19%
- 30 – 34: 30.18%
- 35 – 40: 22.96%
- Over 40: 1.19%
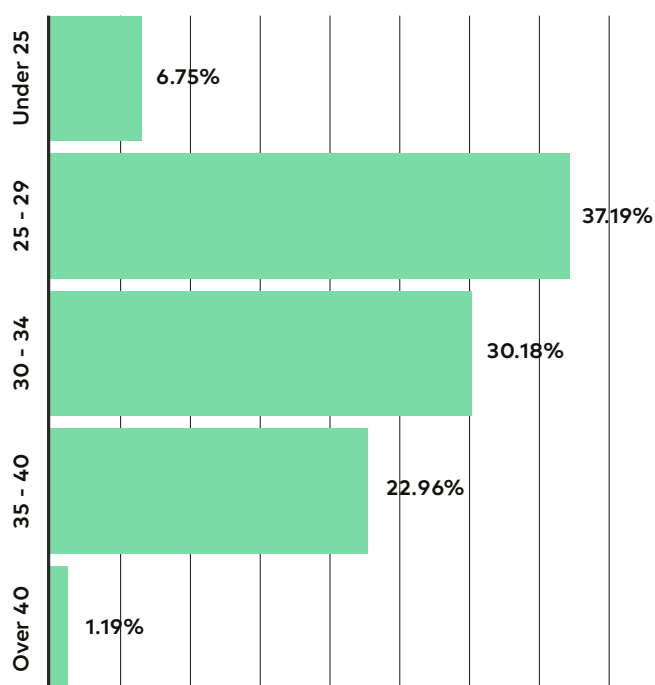
*The Fellowship limited applications to candidates between 25 and 40 years of age.

## Applicants' sector

- 16.25%
- 38.81%
- 35.92%
- 9.02%

Legend:
- Academia
- Private sector
- Civil society
- Public administration
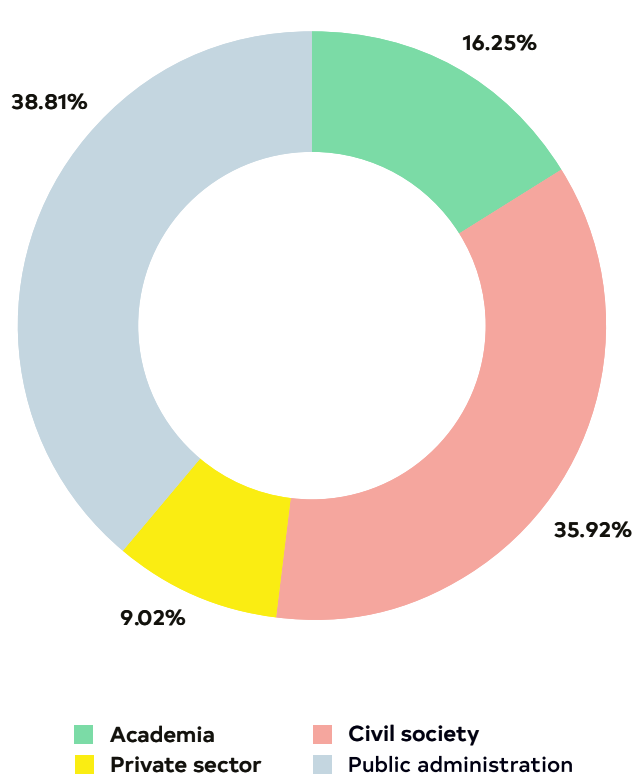
## Applicants' overall gender distribution over time



Female
- 38.60%
- 46.26%
- 45.74%

Male
- 61.40%
- 53.74%
- 54.26%

■ 2015  ■ 2016  ■ 2017
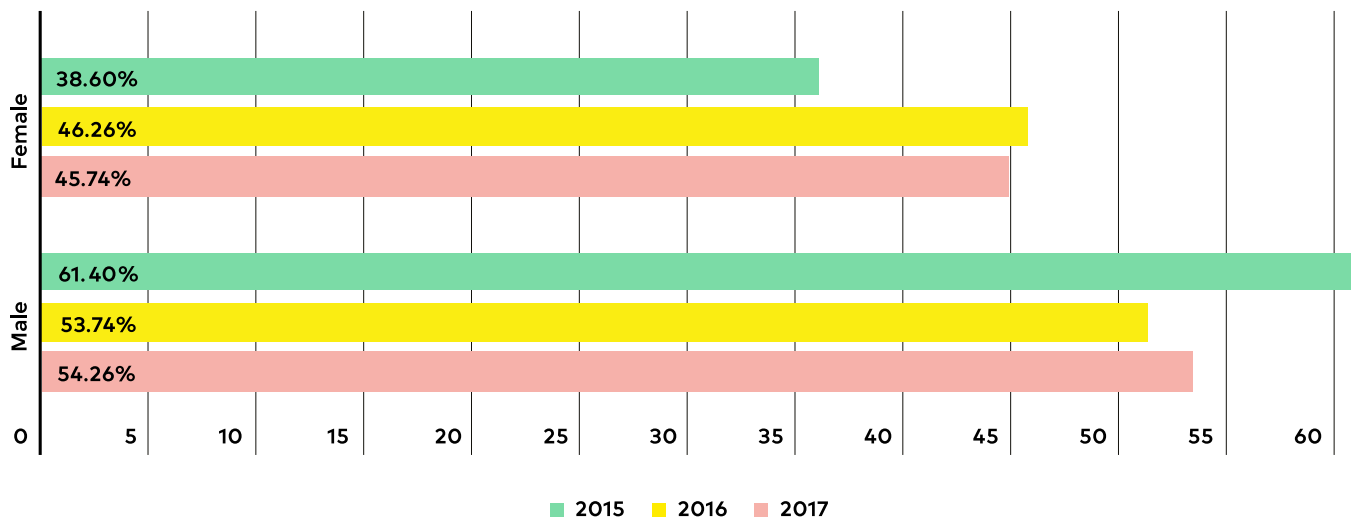
# The committee meeting

The complete applications of all shortlisted candidates are sent to the members of the selection committee one week before the selection committee meeting. Each application consists of personal information, an updated CV, one letter or recommendation, and the answers to three essay questions (see the "Candidate Scoring Matrix"). The committee meets for one day at the OAS Headquarters in Washington D.C. to choose the 20 to 25 best participants for every edition of the Fellowship.

At the beginning of the committee meeting, each of the shortlisted applications is briefly presented to the selection committee by a member of the OAS Department for Effective Public Management. Some of the program's partners as well as alumni from past editions are offered the opportunity to submit written comments on candidates they know, have worked with in the past, or can provide any kind of additional in-

formation on. This information is introduced by the moderator after each application's presentation. Each candidate's suitability is then discussed from all perspectives, before every member of the selection committee assigns him/her one overall score between 1 (non-competitive) and 5 (excellent).

The sum of all committee members' scores determines the list of priority candidates. This list is reviewed one more time to ensure it reflects all basic considerations of the selection process (such as gender balance, country balance, etc.) before the final list of 20 to 25 new OAS Fellows as well as a waiting list of the next 10 candidates is established and approved by all members of the committee. At this point, the quality of the remaining profiles does not vary much anymore; the final decision is rather about putting together a balanced and interesting group. When a vote is necessary, all external members of the selection committee have one vote. The members of the OAS Department for Effective Public Management have one combined vote.

**The selection committee 2015:**
Daniel Cámara Ávalos (MEX), Permanent Mission of Mexico to the OAS; Alejandro Pareja Glass (URU), Inter-American Development Bank; María Paz Hermosilla (CHL), The GovLab@NYU; María Ximena Argüello (NIC), AgoraPartnerships; María Fernanda Trigo (BOL), Milagros Freyre (ARG), Matthias Jaeger (DEU), and Verónica Álvarez (ARG), all from the OAS Department for Effective Public Management (on February 6, 2015).

**The selection committee 2016:**
Paloma Baytelman (CHL), Open Government activist; Vonda Brown (USA), Open Society Foundations; Nicolás Dassen (ARG), Inter-American Development Bank; Leandro Gorgal (ARG), CAF Development Bank of Latin America; Liesje Klomp-van Beek (NLD), Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the U.S.; Jaime Mercado (GUA), World Bank; Laura Paonessa (ARG), OAS Open-Gov Fellow 2015; María Fernanda Trigo (BOL), Matthias Jaeger (DEU), and Verónica Álvarez (ARG), all from the OAS Department for Effective Public Management (on March 11, 2016).

**The selection committee 2017:**
Anabel Cruz (URU), Communication and Development Institute (ICD); Leandro Gorgal (ARG), CAF Development Bank of Latin America; Corina Lehmann (ARG), Permanent Mission of Argentina to the OAS; Laura Paonessa (ARG), Inter-American Development Bank & OpenGov Fellow 2015; Andrew Stevenson (USA), Permanent Mission of the U.S. to the OAS; Pepe Tonin (BRA), Ministry of Transparency, Oversight and Comptroller General & OAS OpenGov Fellow 2016; María Fernanda Trigo (BOL) and Matthias Jaeger (DEU) from the OAS Department for Effective Public Management (on March 30, 2017).



# A word on gender...

The gender aspect of Open Government work in Latin America is one that deserves much more attention. On the one hand, many see the area as related to new technologies that have, in the

past, attracted more male than female candidates. On the other hand, it seems that in several countries in the region many more women than men work on Open Government related issues, especially in civil society (although not necessarily in leadership positions).

The OAS Fellowship incorporates a gender perspective in all its activities through a gender balance in the selection of participants, selection committee members and speakers, as well as through the topics that are covered during the workshops and panel discussions. For instance, in the program's first edition we had 13 male and 11 female participants. Out of 20 speakers, experts, moderators and team members involved in the first seminar, 11 were male while 9 were female. A gender and diversity perspective was also taken into account for the design of the seminar program, including workshops on "Gender-based and other inequities of the Right to Public Information in Latin America" or "Gender and Negotiation".

Conducting an analysis of the applications from individual countries, we found that only four countries had an almost 50/50 gender balance among applicants: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay. At the other end of the spectrum we found that the following countries had a gender application gap of more than 20% between male and female applicants: Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Peru. Guatemala was the most extreme case as only 33% of applicants throughout the three years were female. Among the total of applicants from across the region (1,509 in three years), 57% were male and 43% female. In contrast, the selected cohort of Fellows sustained a gender balance throughout the program:

## Applicants 2015-2017



■ Male 57%   ■ Female 43%
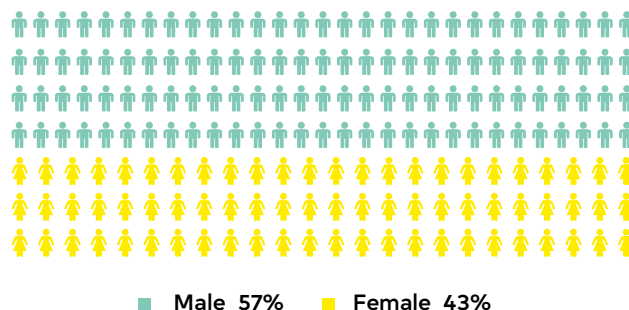
## Selected Fellows 2015-2017



■ Male 48%   ■ Female 52%
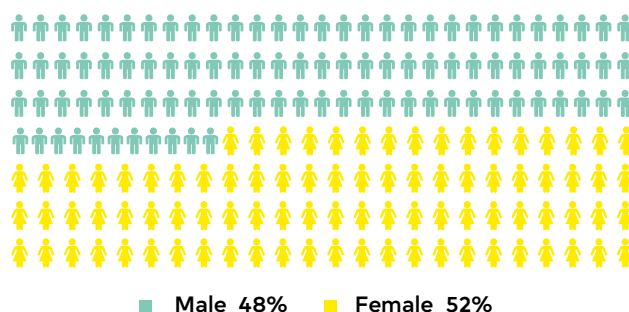
# Results

In general terms, the selection process for the OAS Fellowship has received praise for achieving the highest levels of objectivity, transparency, and diversity, in particular in comparison to other leadership programs in the region. The groups that have been selected successfully reflect the several considerations that were part of the process's design (see above). The wide dissemination via Twitter, email and Facebook but also through the OAS's and its partners' very diverse networks in the region reached a broad audience, even though the successful channels of communication turned out to be different ones in different countries: Twitter, for instance, was the most important channel in Argentina while it was word of mouth in Brazil or Honduras; Facebook was by far the most successful way to reach potential candidates in Nicaragua:

## How did the applicants find out about the Fellowship?

### Comparison per country with 10+ applicants (2016-2017)



Legend: Email, Facebook, Twitter, Word of mouth, Former Fellow, Internet, Other
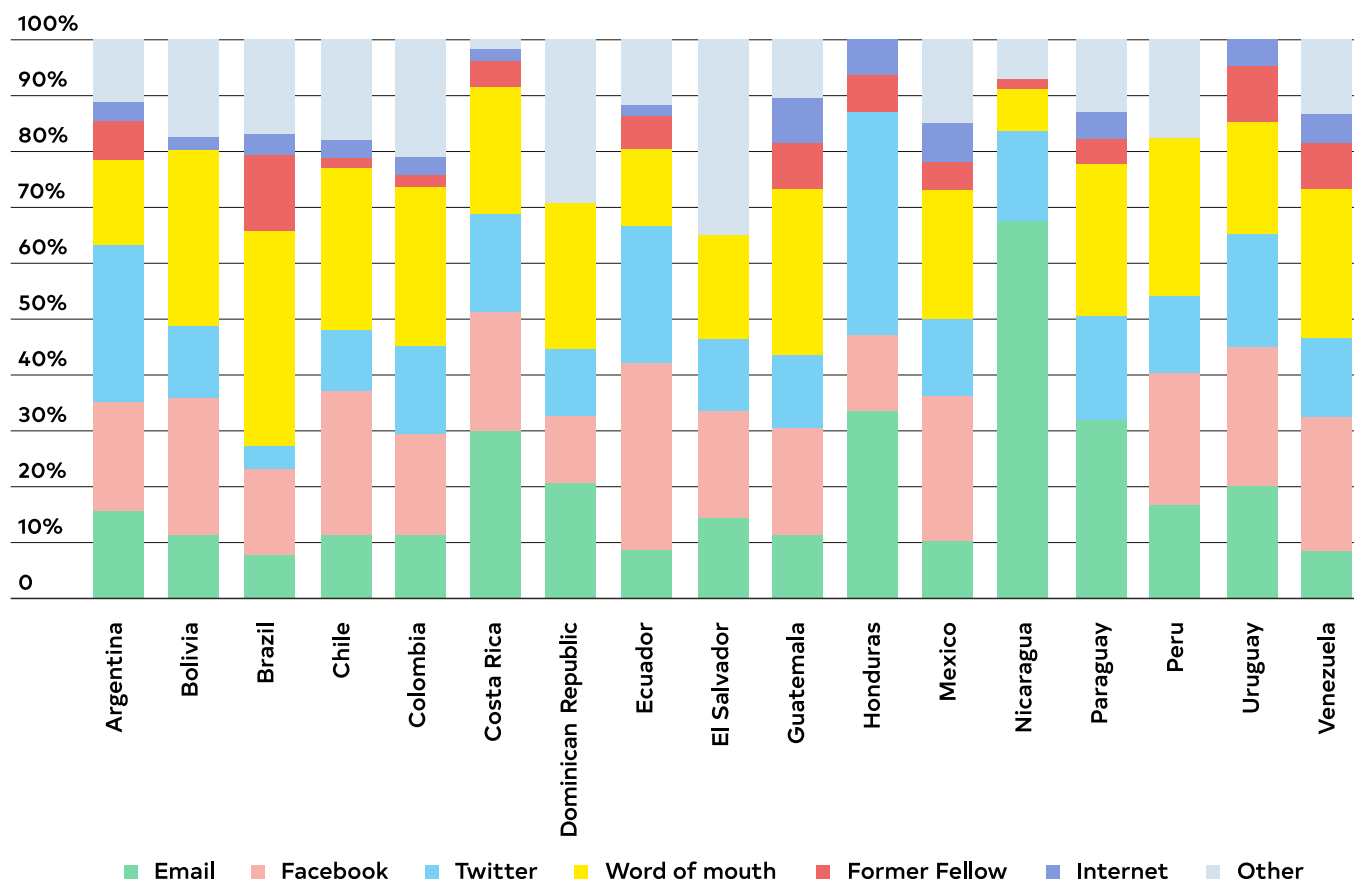
The chosen selection process design successfully prevented the program from supporting the brain drain from the region by choosing participants who are from Latin America but have been living and working in Europe or the U.S. for some time already and are not likely to go back to their home countries soon – even though these candidates' profiles oftentimes were highly attractive for the program and its outcomes. In addition, it ensured that the program does not contribute further to the gap between the region's capital and interior cities by only selecting participants from metropolises such as Buenos Aires, Mexico City or São Paulo.

With regard to (sub)regional distribution, although 52% of the applications originated from just five countries (Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru), the OAS Fellowship prioritized geographic representation, successfully establishing a network of Fellows distributed among 20 different countries in the region.

What turned out to be more difficult was to strike a balance between identifying the "best and brightest" candidates working on Open Government in the region without ending up with the "usual suspects" who are already positioned strategically and have the support they need to

succeed anyway. The challenge was to find the right mix of experienced and already connected candidates and bring them together with those who have a lot to offer to broaden the debate but have not been part of the discussion so far.

While it is difficult to answer the question whether the program achieved this goal, it is interesting to look at the level of the applicants' previous experience with Open Government. We cannot say if this shows a bias in the selection committee to look for more experienced candi-

dates, or if the candidates' general knowledge and experience with Open Government has improved in the last years. In any case, however, there is a significant increase in the understanding of the basic concepts of Open Government in the candidates from practically all countries in the region. In the regional average, this increase almost equals 20 percentage points from one year to another (2015: 40% of applicants showed a basic understanding of Open Government concepts, 2016 this figure was already 62%, and in 2017 it was 78%).

## Applicants' previous experience with Open Government topics per country (excluding those with fewer than 10 applicants)

| Country | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | 51.72% | 68.57% | 87.93% |
| Bolivia | 65.22% | 35.00% | 55.56% |
| Brazil | 56.67% | 86.96% | 96.55% |
| Chile | 54.55% | 52.17% | 68.42% |
| Colombia | 54.35% | 62.86% | 86.67% |
| Costa Rica | 32.14% | 77.78% | 71.43% |
| Dominican Republic | 46.88% | 40.00% | 90.91% |
| Ecuador | 42.31% | 56.25% | 69.57% |
| El Salvador | 33.33% | 65.52% | 81.25% |
| Guatemala | 32.14% | 60.00% | 95.45% |
| Honduras | 12.50% | 55.56% | 83.33% |
| Mexico | 46.32% | 74.47% | 88.31% |
| Nicaragua | 20.41% | 100.00% | 48.08% |
| Paraguay | 46.67% | 75.00% | 80.00% |
| Peru | 32.10% | 44.83% | 81.25% |
| Uruguay | 52.63% | 62.50% | 90.00% |
| Venezuela | 40.00% | 66.67% | 77.27% |

■ 2015  ■ 2016  ■ 2017

## Applicants' previous experience with Open Government topics*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Yes** | 40.27% |
| | 62.07% |
| | 78.42% |
| **No** | 59.73% |
| | 37.93% |
| | 21.58% |

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70

■ 2015   ■ 2016   ■ 2017

*Applicants' previous experience was derived from their responses to the question: "Please explain how you have contributed to introducing a new idea, initiative or product related to Open Government..."

One aspect that the program has not resolved so far is the language question. The OAS Fellowship has been run in Spanish instead of English for the last three years, in order to make sure nobody is excluded because he or she has not had the opportunity to live and study abroad or otherwise achieve a good demand of the English language. While the program has had considerable and successful participation of native speakers of Portuguese, French, and English who are also fluent in Spanish and therefore able to participate actively in the discussions, it is also true that many candidates are left out by this decision, in particular from the Caribbean but also the U.S. and Canada (the idea of working with simultaneous translation was discarded early in the program design as it would not be consistent with the informal nature of the intended exchange). The OAS is currently considering several options such as running one entire edition of the program in English or setting up an additional program tailored to the needs of an English language audience, to be integrated in the network at a later stage.

# Learnings

**1 -** Although there were good reasons to opt for an open call for applications, the disadvantages soon became clear: Especially in the program's first edition, the program received multiple applications that clearly did not fulfill the established eligibility criteria, such as being from an OAS Member state (applications from Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, South Korea or Spain) or complying with the age criteria (candidates between 10 and 55 years of age).

**2 -** The internal electronic system used to process the received applications (around 650 in the first edition, 350 in the second, and 500 in the third) was outdated and did not provide tools to automatically disqualify those candidates who did not comply with the formal eligibility criteria or disregarded the maximum length of essays.

**3 -** Although this had been made clear from the very beginning of the program, there was very lit-

tle understanding in the region that candidates are selected on an individual basis, for their personal profile, projects and ideas, not as representatives of any particular institution.

**4 -** Somewhat ironic for a program on Open Government, the acceptance of the results of even the most elaborate selection process proved to be limited, resulting in numerous emails and phone calls from candidates as well as supporters attempting to influence the selection process and to achieve that a particular candidate be accepted to the program.

**5 -** In the selection of candidates, there can be a trade-off between the aim to select the best-qualified candidates and an intention to include a rich diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. One might be tempted to give preference to profiles and applications that comply with formats and arguments that we are familiar with and that make us expect they will produce "state of the art" results we can then present to our donors. In the OAS Fellowship's experience, the diversity of backgrounds and points of view allows for a much richer exchange among the network of Fellows, which does not only influence the program's results but bears great potential to add something new to the discussion – and, sometimes, change our participants' perspective forever. Opting for the "riskier choice" (and there are many in every program), however, takes both responsible implementing organizations and patient donors.

**6 -** Perseverance is an important quality for those who want to lead Open Government practices in their communities, building coalitions and establish successful collaboration between different government stakeholders. Therefore, we valued persistence and took re-applications

very seriously. Of the 1,509 applications we received between 2015 and 2017, 86 candidates applied twice, 12 of them even three times. Ten of those candidates who applied more than once were selected in the end and have become some of our most active Fellows.

## Re-application to the Fellowship



- Applied three times
- Applied twice
- Applied once
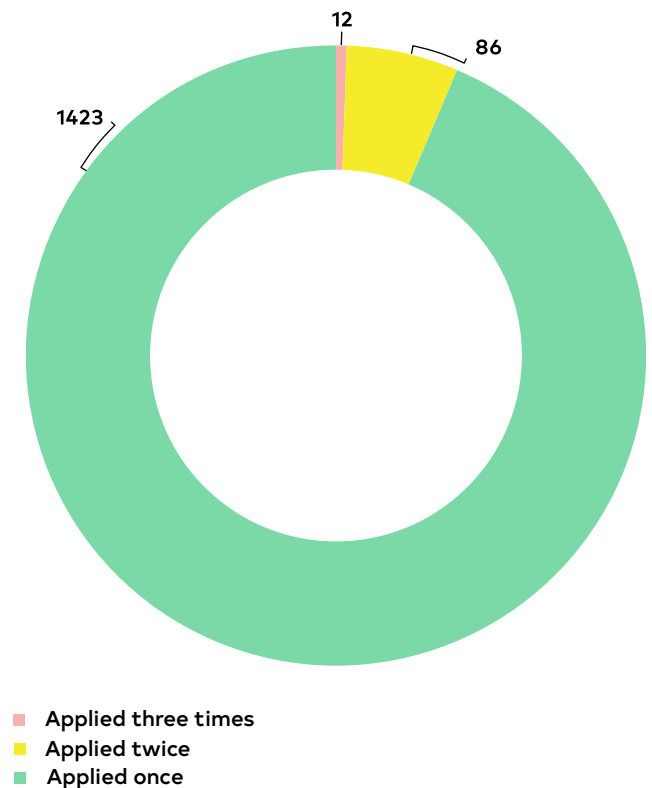
Between 2015 and 2017, 86 candidates applied to the program twice and 12 candidates applied three times. Out of the group that re-applied to the Fellowship, 10 candidates ended up being selected as OAS Fellows.

# 3

# The OAS Fellowship: Learnings for the Region

By Dinorah Cantú-Pedraza,
The Governance Lab

## 34 - 43

**35.**

As part of this "Impact and Learning Report," the OAS commissioned The Governance Lab, based at New York University, to undertake a systematic analysis of the 1,509 applications to the Fellowship's 2015, 2016, and 2017 editions, in order to better understand the demographics and professional background of applicants as well as to gain insight into the main challenges and potential solutions as articulated by this group of under 40s from the region.[1] The purpose of this analysis was to inform the OAS Department for Effective Public Management (DEPM) about the need for capacity development in the region and its sub-regions and allow DEPM to tailor future training programs to the real needs, as well as contribute to knowledge-generation in the worldwide Open Government community and identify potential for collaboration that so far remains untapped.

[1] In addition to asking for demographic data and a letter of recommendation, the OAS Fellowship application process tasked applicants with writing 3 essays on the following topics:
Essay 1: Explain how you have contributed to introducing a new idea, initiative or product related to Open Government and how you managed to obtain support for it;
Essay 2: Identify a specific challenge your community, organization, industry or country is facing and indicate what you think are the main obstacles to solving it and how they could be overcome using Open Government tools;
Essay 3: Describe a project related to the concept of Open Government in which you are currently working or which you would like to develop in the future with the support of the Fellowship.

## Introduction: Skill-Building as the Building Block of Innovation

Whereas fellowship programs often award selected recipients a grant or convene winners for an event, the OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas instead gave its 69 selected innovators from across the Americas a six-month training program that uniquely included group and one-on-one coaching and mentoring. The program was designed to help participants develop their Open Government projects – which covered an array of public interest issues from public safety to judicial transparency – from idea to implementation.

In the coaching program, the Governance Lab met with all of the Fellowship's project groups once a month online to work through a series of exercises. The program was designed to help Fellows advance their work, with the dual goals of making them more effective change-makers in their communities and solving problems that impact people's lives.

Coaching sessions covered such topics as "problem definition," designed to help participants identify the problems their projects would solve and their root causes as well as "engaging with people and data," designed to help OAS Fellows learn how to conduct interviews and use open data to further refine and improve their projects.



| Defining the problem | Describing the project | Engaging with people and data | Measuring impact | Persuading the audience | Prototype test, evolve |

Peer-to-peer coaching

Rapid results research
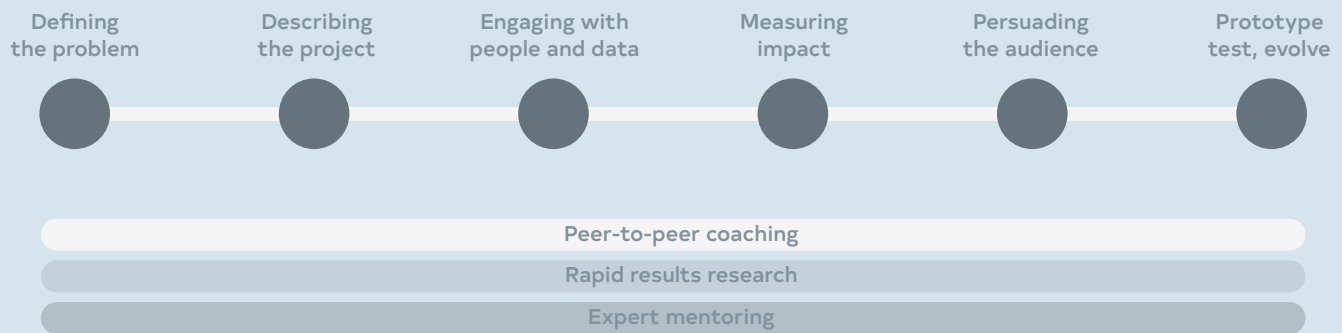
Expert mentoring

The Anatomy of the OAS Coaching Program

In addition to these online coaching sessions, each team received personalized mentoring from global skill and subject-matter experts to address both deficits in knowledge about innovation and in know-how about the means to apply that knowledge to projects. Both the group coaching and the individual mentoring from those with a track record of leading successful social change were designed to cultivate the mindset and the skillset of "public entrepreneurship," namely the ability to bring about social change effectively. In addition, however, a heavy dose of peer-to-peer support, whereby OAS Fellows encouraged one another, helped to create further incentive for success. In between these online meetings, of course, the OAS Fellows, participating in the coaching program on top of their day-to-day jobs, gathered data, interviewed experts, conducted background research, and advanced their work.

In addition to the twenty social impact projects that resulted from the OAS Fellowship and the many more that will come to fruition following its conclusion[2] (the participant survey reveals that 65% of the OAS Fellows are

continuing at least some component of their projects), the time spent in intensive conversation with three generations of OAS Open Government Fellows as a result of this coaching experience, combined with ex post survey data, has helped to generate a unique perspective on, and new insights about, the needs of innovators in the region that go beyond what we otherwise know from looking at innovation at the macro-level.

Indeed, it is well-understood that corruption and crime are among the top issues facing the region. But the need for skills development is also an issue.[3] And the Fellows' insights have afforded a perspective from the point of view of the current and next generation of leaders about this key challenge facing the region if innovation is to flourish, namely the demand and need for capacity building. A recent report on the region concluded that despite strong political will for Open Government, a lack of institutional capacity and know-how is hampering its implementation.[4] Furthermore, the experience of the Fellowship offers insight into impactful and scalable ways to overcome this deficit, namely through coaching and mentoring and building a community of practice among innovators for mutual learning. We summarize these learnings in a series of four "lessons" enumerated below.

## Four Lessons for Capacity Building

**Lesson 1:**
**Build a Community of Innovative Practice**
**Connecting innovators with one another generates a lasting public infrastructure that can help solve public problems more effectively**

To be effective, people need to do more than read about new ways of working. They need and want to connect with individuals who have practical experience. It is, therefore, not surprising that OAS Fellowship participants cited as the key to success the fact that the Fellowship created a community and fostered peer-to-peer learning, rather than merely one-off training. They repeatedly and in myriad ways cited the importance of the community to the value of their experience.

> *"The network of Fellows. It is comforting to know that a network exists that is constantly supporting and answering the questions of the Fellows on different subjects; and also, to know that there are more people with whom we share the passion and conviction to give more spaces and more action to the citizens,"* said Marielos Chang (OAS Fellow 2016) in response to the question "What do you value the most about the Fellowship?"

In fact, when asked to describe the single most important and useful asset obtained through the OAS Fellow-

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[3] Outlook on the Global Agenda 2015. World Economic Forum, 2014. Full report: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC14/WEF_GAC14_OutlookGlobalAgenda_Report.pdf Crime and Corruption Top Problems in Emerging Developing Countries. Pew Research Center, 2015. Full report: http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/11/06/crime-and-corruption-top-problems-in-emerging-and-developing-countries/

[4] Winds of Change II: Progress and Challenges in Open Government Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean. By Álvaro Ramírez-Alujas and Nicolás Dassen. Inter-American Development Bank, 2016. See Table 7. Full report: https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7621/Winds-of-Change-Progress-and-Challenges-in-Open-Government-Policy-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean.pdf?sequence=5

ship program, 85% of the selected Fellows mentioned the network of professionals, mentors, and contacts gained through the program. On the same note, when asked to select all the aspects they found most use-

ful about the OAS Fellowship, again 85% of the OAS Fellows selected "to know about other projects and organizations;" followed by 80% selecting "getting in contact with other Fellows."

### The OAS Fellowship: A Network of Learning

| | |
|---|---|
| Knowing other projects and organizations | 85.07% |
| Contact with other Fellows | 80.60% |
| Open Government training | 58.21% |
| Contact with other experts and speakers | 53.73% |
| Project development | 30.43% |
| New tech tools | 30.43% |
| Fellowship certificate | 29.85% |
| Leadership training | 28.36% |
| Letters of recommendation | 16.42% |
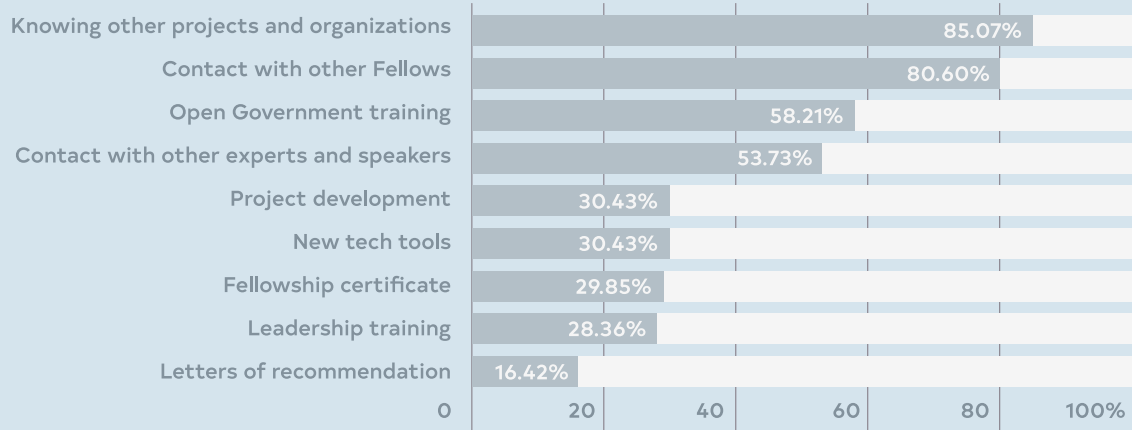
Most helpful aspect of the Fellowship program, in percent, according to the participants.

The community that arose was thanks to the face-to-face and the regular online meetings over many months that brought people together for ongoing networking at no cost to participants or the environment. People all wanted more in-person gatherings but, with limited resources and time, the online coaching provided a way to build community in a cost-efficient way. "These have been some incredible months. I deeply appreciate the opportunity of considering me to belong to this brilliant and innovative community," said Katherine Wikrent (OAS Fellow 2017).

This online network, strengthened through the face-to-face meetings at the beginning and end of the program, served diverse purposes for the participants, including affording a place for knowledge exchange, consultation, collaboration or simply, as some said, offering a safe space to test new ideas and to which to belong. The value extended past the program as participants collaborated with one

another both during and after the program ended. A full 70% of participants in the two cohorts of OAS Fellows that have already completed the program (2015 and 2016) report starting collaborations with their peers after the period of the Fellowship ended. From speaking opportunities, to organizing and co-hosting events together, to developing new projects or replicating and implementing existing projects of other Fellows, the network created a fertile and lasting infrastructure that enabled participants to continue to work together and have impact across sectors, countries and the sub-regions of the continents.

The learning by doing methodology of the program is a more proactive approach than the traditional passive method of transferring policy-making and problem-solving knowledge and best practices and insures against results such as those cited in a World Bank report from 2014, which found that more than 31% of their policy reports have never been downloaded and almost 87%

have never been cited.[5] Despite myriad online tools, guides, templates, case-studies and content, [6] the community went beyond what mere content could offer by catalyzing real-time knowledge sharing and network building. Any time someone had a question, someone in the network could answer. The OAS Fellowship is one of the few oportunities to network among public innovators, especially across country boundaries.
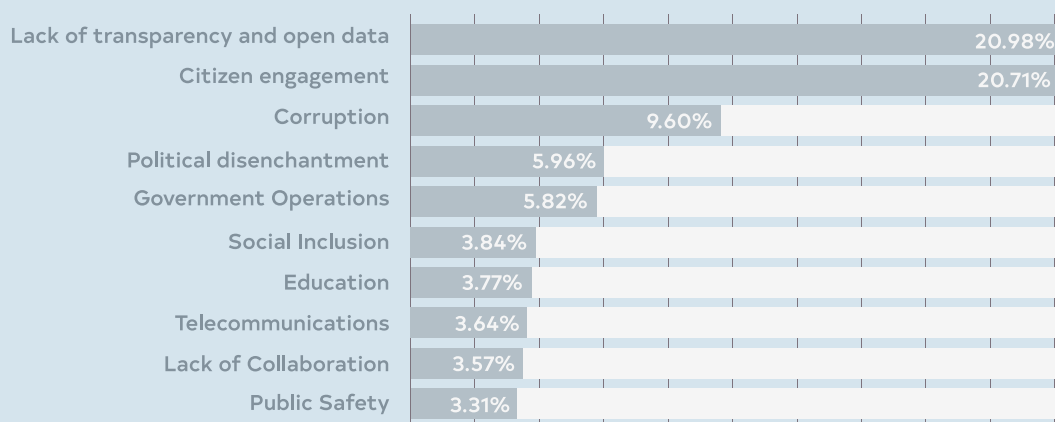
### Lesson 2:
**Meet the Demand for Governance Innovation Skills**
**Teaching People to Work Differently Helps with Solving Hard Problems**

People want to use Open Government skills and ways of working as the means to tackle hard problems. Fellows have worked, or are working, on tackling some of the most complex and pressing challenges, including corruption, education inequity, economic development and social inclusion. Addressing them correctly is vital, not only to positively

impact the lives of people, but also to preserve the democratic values espoused by the Organization of American States. To help them accomplish their goals, participants told us that "lack of transparency and open data" and "the need for more citizen engagement" were among the most frequently cited challenges – and the most urgent need – in every country where more than 10 people submitted applications. Notably in countries like Mexico and Brazil, which rank highly on the Open Data Barometer for open data transparency, [7] the need cited by participants is especially urgent, presumably because there is awareness of why these new skills can help with solving problems. As the GovLab's Open Data's Impact report concludes, open data initiatives are limited by a lack of capacity and preparedness among those who could potentially benefit most and, at the same time, that low capacity is a problem both on the demand side and supply side of the open data value chain – policymakers and those tasked with releasing data are often as unprepared as intended beneficiaries.[8]

## Applicants' perception of the key challenges in the region

| Challenge | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| Lack of transparency and open data | 20.98% |
| Citizen engagement | 20.71% |
| Corruption | 9.60% |
| Political disenchantment | 5.96% |
| Government Operations | 5.82% |
| Social Inclusion | 3.84% |
| Education | 3.77% |
| Telecommunications | 3.64% |
| Lack of Collaboration | 3.57% |
| Public Safety | 3.31% |

[5] Which World Bank reports are widely read? The World Bank, 2014. Full report: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated en/387501468322733597/Which-World-Bank-reports-are-widely-read.

[6] To name a few: (1) The Open Government Partnership - Toolkit; (2) The Open Government Partnership - Toolbox; (3) The World Bank - Open Government Data Toolkit; (4) The Inter-American Development Bank - Code for Development; (5) The GovLab's - Open Data Impact Case-Studies; (6) Nesta's - DIY Toolkit; (7) The Open Data Institute - Open Data Guides; and, (8) The Open Knowledge Foundation - Open Data Handbook.

[7] "A global measure of how governments are publishing and using open data for accountability, innovation and social impact." Learn more at: http://opendatabarometer.org/

[8] Open Data Impact: When Demand and Supply Meet. By Stefaan Verhulst and Andrew Young. See recommendation #5. Full report: http://odimpact.org/key-findings.html

The vast majority of applications detailed how the applicants contributed to introducing a new idea, initiative or product related to Open Government, together with how they managed to obtain the support needed to launch them. More than half focused on three main areas of Open Government: access to information, open data and citizen engagement initiatives. Other topics noted with some frequency include digital government, smart cities, open parliament, open justice, citizen reporting, capacity building and data journalism.

> *"The development of Open Government remains a non-priority for governments on duty. There is no space around the theoretical-practical implementation of open government, dialogue and participation of citizens and civil society organizations. There is no scope for participation in decision-making on Open Government policies and implementation of strategies."* **(Applicant from Argentina, 2016 cycle).**

The applications also revealed that people across the region are facing the same kind of obstacles when trying to successfully implement innovative approaches to problem solving and citizen engagement. The similarities of what the applicants are facing –from the lack of capacity-building opportunities for public officials, especially at the local and municipal level, to widespread political disenchantment, to issues with laws and regulations, to the lack of digital infrastructures and quality data– further justifies the need to create common frameworks for knowledge sharing that reach far beyond borders and sectors.

Large public problems are by definition cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary. They defy boundaries and require a variety of expertise, knowledge and data in order to be successfully addressed. The network of OAS Fellows could become an agile, bottom-up and large-scale, "platform" to enable innovation in the region, especially innovation in governing and problem-solving. Participants suggested that, in order to deepen the Open Government skill building component of the program, it would have been helpful to evaluate their skill levels prior to the start in order to customize the program to their needs to an even greater extent. Although not complained of by participants, a potential downside, of course, to focusing on cross-cutting skills issues without focusing on a specific "vertical" theme is that the Fellowship eschews the opportunity to focus on – and thereby make a dent in – one or two particular problems. But the disadvantage of inviting Fellows who are working on a wide range of topics is more than made up for by the value of working on open data or citizen engagement across issue areas.

**Lesson 3:**
**Teach the Widely-Lacking Skill**
**of Problem Definition**
**In order to be successful and have impact, innovators must be able to define the problem they are trying to solve**

The coaching program begins with face-to-face followed by online training in "problem definition." Problem definition is the iterative process, according to Ken Watanabe, of getting to the root cause of an issue by identifying what you do and do not know about the problem, endeavoring to learn what you do not know, ascertaining the constraints, and, finally, determining this at a level of specificity that leads to the articulation of an actionable problem, rather than an intractable issue. Effective solutions can be developed only when one has a clear definition of the problem to be tackled. Thus, the centerpiece of the program focuses on asking participants to redefine and refine their description of the problem they are trying to solve before they ever focus on the project. This rigorous focus on problem definition is based on our

observation that the downstream consequences of in-exact, incomplete, and/or insufficiently well-understood problem definition are often frustrating, time-consuming, and wasteful. When problems are poorly defined, solutions are often out of focus and needlessly expensive, ill-serving to those they are most intended to help.

Participants frequently cited transparency, open data and citizen engagement or rather the lack thereof as problems.

> *"The main obstacles that we are currently facing are: the poor management of information from the departmental and municipal government, the lack of spaces for citizen participation and the lack of alignment between government activities and the needs of the community, so that public policies, many times, are not developed according to solving real needs." (Applicant from Bolivia, 2016 cycle).*

The coaching program helped to distinguish between what are actually solutions and the actual root causes to be addressed, helping people to get to the bottom of why there was poor information management or lack of engagement.

Indeed, the inability to define a problem properly was endemic. Through an in-depth analysis of a randomly selected sample of the submissions per country, we found that: 70% of the applicants focused on describing an Open Government solution rather than a problem; 15% of the applicants described the problem too broadly to be able to then define a clear path to action; while 10% of the applicants did not even try to mention a problem or a challenge at all.

**Most common pitfalls found in the OAS applications when people tried to explain the problem they were trying to solve:**

**Describing the solution as the problem**
Perhaps the most common challenge and a constant temptation is to articulate a solution rather than a particular problem. For example, "we want to use predictive analytics to spot the most frequent instances of a disease" does not define a problem. Rather, when seeking help, it is important to explain the challenge of knowing where outbreaks occur due to the tendency among the population to avoid hospitals for specific economic or cultural reasons.

**Articulating an issue instead of a problem**
Challenges also arise when the identified problem is too broad to be actionable. For example, an initiative aimed at stopping buses from idling while passengers board is more actionable than an initiative broadly aimed at reversing climate change.

**Failing to articulate underlying causes and support with evidence**
Even if a problem is defined in a sufficiently granular way, a failure to articulate assumptions and root causes and to identify who is already working on the problem can introduce new challenges. When problem-solvers fail to map the system in which a problem exists and map the constituencies working on or affected by the problem, there is the potential for solutions to exacerbate other related problems or lead to the duplication of efforts already in place in government, civil society or the private sector.

**Failing to support the problem definition with metrics**
Finally, it is difficult to know if a solution works if the problem is not accompanied by success metrics. Especially in a government context where budgets are tight and resources only go toward efforts that can demonstrate success, ensure that the problem being addressed has a baseline against which to measure progress, and a potential source of data to collect and analyze after implementation of a new solution.

This is not uncommon as people frequently fail to realize that a good problem definition is not the same thing as a broad issue area (such as "corruption"), nor is it a solution to be implemented (such as a new app or the creation of a new nonprofit). A good problem definition is one that is framed in a way that the person writing it can actually do something about solving the problem.

In other words, although corruption might be a very compelling issue, it is not, in and of itself, an actionable problem. Thus, there is a tendency to attribute it to "culture" and a failure to develop implementable solutions. Rather, corruption is caused, for example, by the inability to trace who is bidding for and being awarded government procurement contracts due to a lack of data being collected in standardized formats that can be published and analyzed. Instead of asking for help with corruption, which yields few tractable solutions, a problem definition that explains the root causes of data unavailability in connection with government procurement can give rise to specific solutions that work and that can be measured, such as the creation of an open contracting website.

By spending weeks on clearly defining the problems, the OAS Fellows were able to switch their focus and tackle directly an actionable problem, bringing innovation to the question of "How" but only after clearly understanding the "Why" and for "Whom". In other words, the lack of transparency or lack of use of Open Government tools stopped being the focus of the conversation as we instead addressed who was affected by the problem and why we haven't been able to solve it, as a means to finally identifying an effective point of intervention.

**Lesson 4:**
**Use Data to Solve Problems**
**Pedagogical priorities should include making problem-solving more data-driven and evidence-based**

Throughout the applications, when asked to describe their achievements, candidates focused on relating activities rather than impact. Without exception no one was able to talk about the impact their work had on the lives of others. This may be modesty at work, but if public service is designed to solve problems and strengthen communities, then in addition to a strong focus on problem definition, another pedagogical priority for the region should include enabling public professionals to develop the skills to measure impact. That is to say, people need to know how to design evidence-based solutions to public problems.

The OAS Fellowship coaching program trains participants to develop hypothesis-driven projects informed by the application of open data and user interviews that help them ultimately to fashion a theory of change that cohesively connects the problem definition with the proposed actions, the expected impact and the metrics to be used when testing the project.

## Conclusion

Through its focus on community and capacity building, the OAS Fellowship is forging the next generation of innovator for the Americas. As our experience with the program has revealed, we can use new technology to help people solve problems in their own communities more effectively by bringing them together for peer-to-peer learning complemented by coaching and mentoring. These are not mutually exclusive but, rather, complementary activities that the Internet makes pos-

**43.**

sible in support of innovation. By following a structured curriculum designed to help people take their projects from idea to implementation, we have begun to cohere this distributed network of regional innovators and catalyze collective intelligence where, previously, there were disconnected individuals working in isolation to bring about more open and innovative government.

Although we had anticipated gaining empirical insight from our analysis into priority policy issues (and the topics of people's projects gave us some inkling), the unexpected and yet more profound insight is that the greatest asset the region has is, in fact, its young people whose innovative spirit and commitment to the public interest are more important to overcoming challenges than are the challenges themselves.

According to Ramón Olivas (OAS Fellow 2015) the highlight of the program was "the ability to contact any Fellow with a consultation about your subject of specialization." "The human potential of the whole team," said Edilma Prada (OAS Fellow 2015), "is great because it creates the potential of ideas becoming projects and creating value for the region." Maikol Porras (OAS Fellow 2015) told us that "the network of people that the Fellowship created, and knowing that you count with colleagues willing to help in almost any country in the region" was unparalleled. A "network of friends with a common goal" was how Silvia da Rosa (OAS Fellow 2016) described the program. Over and over, the testimonials of participants lay bare that the great opportunity for the region – more than any physical asset – is the value of its human capital. By investing in platforms and processes for connecting people one to another, coaching them, and connecting them to global mentors in a resource-efficient way, the OAS Fellowship program has doubled down on its investment in people as the linchpin to the success of Open Government and, more broadly, as the means to the end of making a dent in solving hard public problems.

# 4

## The Network of Fellows
## 44 - 56

# OAS Fellows 2015

**46.**

**Bruno Andrade Brandão**

Brazil - 1982

*brandao82@gmail.com*

Executive Director, Transparency
International Brazil, Rio de Janeiro

**Jaime Boyd**

Canada - 1985

*boyd.jaimie@gmail.com*

Team Lead Open Government
Implementation, Treasury Board
of Canada Secretariat, Ottawa

**Paulina Bustos Arellano**

Mexico – 1987

*arellano@article19.org*

Tech Fellow, Article 19 Brazil,
São Paulo

**Fernanda Campagnucci Pereira**

Brazil – 1985

*campagnucci@gmail.com*

Public Policy Analyst,
Municipality of São Paulo &
Coordinator Patio Digital,
Secretariat of Education, São Paulo

**Daniel Carranza**

Uruguay – 1982

*chino@datauy.org*

Co-founder, DATA Uruguay,
Montevideo

**Mauricio Delfín**

Peru – 1979

*delfin@solar.pe*

Director, Solar, Lima

**Mariana Gatti Font**

Uruguay – 1981

*mariana.gatti@agesic.gub.uy*

Coordinator, AGESIC Access
to Public Information Unit,
Montevideo

**Guillermo Incer Medina**

Nicaragua – 1985

*direccion@inges.org.ni*

Director, INGES & President,
Nicaraguan Federation of NGOs,
Managua

**Jorge Gabriel Jiménez Barillas**

Guatemala – 1988

*jorgegabrieljimenez@gmail.com*

Student, Stanford Law School, Palo
Alto; Member of the Board of Directors,
Guatecambia, Guatemala City

**Jimena Elvira Luna Benavides**

Chile – 1985

*j.luna.b@gmail.com*

Director of the Department of Technology for Inclusion, National Disability Service, Santiago de Chile

**Gustavo Henrique Maultasch De Oliveira**

Brazil – 1980

*ghmol@yahoo.com*

Deputy Head of the Division of Information Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasília

**Ramón Olivas Gastelum**

Mexico – 1981

*olivas.ramon@gmail.com*

Consultant, Natural Resource Governance Institute & Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, Mexico City

**Natália Eunice Paiva Moreira**

Brazil – 1984

*paiva.natalia@gmail.com*

Public Sector Consultant, McKinsey & Company, São Paulo

**Iris Bertila Palma Recinos**

El Salvador – 1981

*irispalma11@gmail.com*

Director, DatosElSalvador, San Salvador

**Laura Paonessa**

Argentina – 1981

*laurapaonessa@gmail.com*

Open Knowledge Consultant, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington D.C.

**Gerardo Pérez Gallardo**

Mexico – 1979

*perezgerardo24@gmail.com*

Director Good Governance and Special Projects, Municipality of Xalapa, Xalapa

**Carlos Ernesto Pimentel Florezán**

Dominican Republic – 1976

*carlos.pimentelf@gmail.com*

Director Transparency Program, Participación Ciudadana, Santo Domingo

**Maikol Porras**

Costa Rica – 1985

*maikolp@gmail.com*

Co-Founder And President, Asociación Centro Ciudadano De Estudios Para Una Sociedad Abierta (Accesa) & Officer Strengthening Civil Society, Hivos, San José

**Carolina Pozo Donoso**

Ecuador – 1985

*carolina.pozo.d@gmail.com*

Director, Multienlace Innovación, Quito

**Edilma Prada Céspedes**

Colombia – 1984

*edilmaprada@gmail.com*

Director and Journalist, Agenda Propia, Bogotá

**Fabro Steibel**

Brazil – 1981

*ofabro@ofabro.com*

Executive Director, Its Rio & Irm Brazil, Open Government Partnership, Rio de Janeiro

**Teófilo Urbieta González**

Paraguay – 1983

*teourbieta@gmail.com*

Student of Public and Social Policies, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona

**Alan Octavio Vera Velasco**

Bolivia – 1982

*alanoc7@gmail.com*

Coordinator, Andean Community General Secretariat, Lima

**Rebeca Lidia Yáñez Fuentes**

Chile – 1981

*rebecayanezf@gmail.com*

Lecturer, Andrés Bello University & General Manager, Gestoinfo, Santiago de Chile

## OAS Fellows 2016

**Caroline Burle**

Brazil – 1984

*carolburlesg@gmail.com*

International and Institutional Relations, W3C Brazil Office, Web Technologies Study Center and Brazilian Network Information Center, São Paulo

**Yudina Castillo Maradiaga**

Honduras – 1981

*yudi_castillo@yahoo.com*

Director of Transparency, Accountability and Open Government, Honduran Secretariat for Government Coordination, Tegucigalpa

**Marielos Chang**

Guatemala – 1988

*marielos.chang@gmail.com*

Intern, The B Team, London

**Romina Colman**

Argentina – 1984

*rcolman@lanacion.com.ar*

Data Manager and Project Coordinator, Newspaper La Nación, Buenos Aires

**Carolina Contreras Hugot**

Chile – 1987

*carolina.contreras.hugot@gmail.com*

Academic coordinator of the Energy Engineering Master Program, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Santiago

**Carolina Cornejo**

Argentina – 1985

*carocorne@gmail.com*

Open Government Consultant, Ministry of Modernization, Buenos Aires

**Luis Cruz**

El Salvador – 1986

*luisalonsocruz@gmail.com*

Legal Assistant, Secretariat of Citizen Participation, Transparency and Anticorruption, San Salvador

**Silvia Da Rosa**

Uruguay – 1979

*tayzee@gmail.com*

Consultant, AGESIC & Member, DATA Uruguay, Montevideo

**Carlos Fernández Bárcenas**

Colombia – 1990

*carlosfernandezbarcenas@gmail.com*

Executive Director, Cartagena 2033, Cartagena

**Humberto Fuentes Pananá**

Mexico – 1986

*fuentespanana@gmail.com*

General Director, Invernaideas, Mexico City

**Santiago García**

Paraguay – 1986

*santigarciapy@gmail.com*

Executive Director, Paraguay Educa & Marketing Director, Catholic University, Asunción

**Yamila García**

Argentina – 1982

*yamilagarcia@gmail.com*

Consultant, World Wide Web Foundation & Executive Director, Open Knowledge Foundation Argentina, Buenos Aires

**Noelia Gómez Téllez**

Bolivia – 1983

*noelia.gomez17@gmail.com*

Specialist for Project Evaluation and Advocacy, United Nations, La Paz

**Yamil Gonzales**

Honduras – 1986

*yamilg@gmail.com*

Lead Designer, Acklen Avenue & Content Creator, Hidden Honduras, Tegucigalpa

**Marina González Magaña**

Mexico – 1989

*marinaglezmagana@gmail.com*

Program Coordinator, Innovations for Poverty Action, Mexico City

**Leandro Massaccesi**

Argentina – 1983

*massaccesileandro@gmail.com*

Municipal Councillor, Deliberative Council of Viedma, Viedma

**Audrey Mena Mosquera**

Colombia – 1989

*kariclari6@hotmail.com*

Advisor, Ombudsman's Office of Colombia, Bogotá

**Renato Morgado**

Brazil – 1983

*renato@imaflora.org*

Public Policy Coordinator, Institute for Forest and Agricultural Management and Certification (Imaflora), Piracicaba

**Joseph Harold Pierre**

Haiti – 1980

*desharolden@gmail.com*

PhD Student, Nottingham Trent
University, Nottingham

**Gregorio Riera Brito**

Venezuela – 1981

*gregorioriera@gmail.com*

Researcher, Pontifical Catholic
University of Peru, Lima;
Researcher, Acceso a la Justicia,
Caracas

**Román Sugo**

Uruguay – 1990

*roman.sugo@gmail.com*

Co-founder, CÍVICO, Montevideo

**Pepe Tonin**

Brazil – 1986

*ptonin@gmail.com*

Head of Division, Ministry of
Transparency, Oversight and
Comptroller General, Brasília

**David Zamora Barrantes**

Costa Rica – 1984

*davidzb06@gmail.com*

Consultant, UNDESA &
Researcher, University of Costa
Rica, San José

# OAS Fellows 2017

**Anexa Alfred Cunningham**

Nicaragua – 1978

*anebac@yahoo.com*

Legal Advisor, YATAMA, Managua

**Amelvi Barrera Alarcón**

Venezuela – 1978

*amelvi@gmail.com*

Executive Director of Internal Management, Municipality of Chacao, Caracas

**Laila Bellix**

Brazil – 1988

*llbellix@gmail.com*

Open Government Coordinator, Agenda Pública, São Paulo

**Jesús Cepeda**

Mexico – 1985

*chuycepeda@gmail.com*

Founder, www.onesmart.city, Monterrey

**Diego Emilio Cuesy Edgar**

Mexico – 1989

*diego.cuesy@gmail.com*

Student, London School of Economics, London

**Agustina De Luca**

Argentina – 1991

*agustinadeluca91@gmail.com*

General Director, Directorio Legislativo, Buenos Aires

**Diana Franco Suárez**

Peru – 1982

*dfranco@pucp.pe*

Strategic Planning Specialist, Ministry of Production, Lima

**Juan José Herrera**

Ecuador – 1989

*jjherreramera@gmail.com*

Project Coordinator, Grupo FARO, Quito

**Julio Herrera**

Guatemala – 1989

*jherrera@redciudadana.org.gt*

Country Engagement Developer, Hivos & Executive Director, Red Ciudadana, Guatemala City

**Lucas Jolías**

Argentina – 1983

*lucasjolias@gmail.com*

Director, Prince Consulting, Buenos Aires; Professor, National University of Quilmes, Quilmes

**Janaína Penalva**

Brazil – 1980

*jlpenalva@gmail.com*

Professor, University of Brasília, Brasília

**Iván Pinto**

Bolivia – 1990

*ivanpinto18@gmail.com*

President, Open Government Foundation, Santa Cruz de la Sierra

**Alejandro Ruiz Romero**

Colombia – 1979

*aruiz.agprecision@gmail.com*

Manager Agronet, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bogotá

**Gloria Salazar Lermont**

Venezuela – 1984

*gloriaslermont@gmail.com*

Sociologist, Espacio Público, Caracas

**Taryn Sánchez Montesinos**

Mexico – 1982

*tarynasanchezmontesinos@gmail.com*

Advocacy Director, Reforestamos México, Mexico City

**Carolina Sosa Leyes**

Argentina – 1985

*sosaleyes@gmail.com*

General Director of Financial Planning, Municipality of Corrientes, Corrientes

**Gabriela Uchoa**

Brazil – 1986

*gabrielauchoa@gmail.com*

Executive Director Agenda 2030, Municipality of Teresina, Teresina

**Jorge Umaña Cubillo**

Costa Rica – 1989

*jorge.umana.cubillo@gmail.com*

National Open Government Coordinator, Ministry of the Presidency of Costa Rica, San José

# 56.

**Mauricio Alejandro Utreras Sandoval**

Chile – 1982

*utreras.mauricio@gmail.com*

Director of the Department of Information and Statistics, National Energy Commission, Santiago de Chile

**Katherine Wikrent**

USA – 1990

*katherine.wikrent@gmail.com*

Data Scientist, Open Contracting Partnership, Washington D.C.

**Sofía Zamora Briones**

El Salvador – 1986

*oficialdeinformacion.ues@gmail.com*

Information Officer, University Of El Salvador, San Salvador
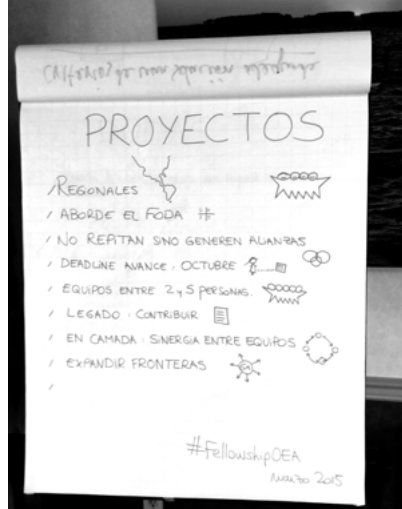
**Denise Zelaya Perdomo**

Honduras – 1991

*marlendenise@gmail.com*

Sub-coordinator of Investigations, Association for a More Just Society (national chapter of Transparency International in Honduras), Tegucigalpa

# 5

## Projects & Publications

## 57 - 71

The most challenging but also the most interesting part within the OAS Fellowship's concept is the project phase. While most comparable programs are limited to the shared experience of a one or two-week seminar or visitors program and then focus on community management and a reunion every few years, the OAS Fellowship requires a longer-term commitment from its participants.

Learning from limitations in the depth of some other young leaders' networks, the OAS Fellowship was designed, right from the beginning, as a more intense program in which participants need to remain actively engaged over six months through their project work and a continuous common learning experience. The successful completion of the project phase is a pre-requisite for an invitation to the second seminar and the award of the Fellowship certificate.

This is particularly challenging because the OAS Fellowship does not pay any stipends during the six-month project phase – in fact, we do not encourage participants to leave their jobs for the program. That means that after the introductory online course and the first seminar, participants go back to their personal and professional responsibilities at home and often find it hard to make the time for their project and the monthly online meetings. Many of the OAS Fellows are in the rush hour of their lives, getting married, having children, and finding themselves at crucial moments in their careers.

Nevertheless, a total of 20 projects have been developed during the Fellowship's first three years.

These projects' topics range from Open Justice to Open Journalism, Innovation Labs, Citizen Security, Human Rights issues, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and many others. Some of these projects are already being implemented, some failed, some await funding, and some are just being developed (particularly those of the program's 2017 edition). The following pages give a brief overview of the working groups, the problems they have been trying to solve, the approach they chose, and the solutions they proposed – in the Fellows' own words.

## The OAS Fellowship: A Network of Impact

### Has the project been implemented?



- 2.17%
- 15.22%
- 52.17%
- 30.43%

■ Yes  ■ Some components  ■ No  ■ Other
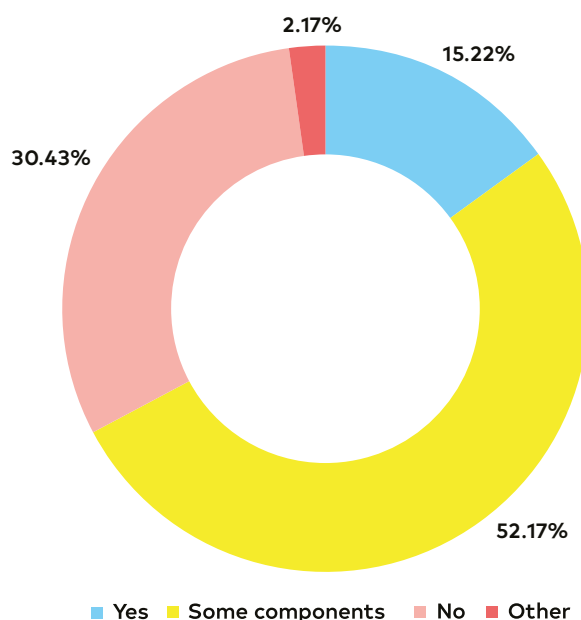
20 projects have been developed during the Fellowship.

70% of the 2015 - 2016 Fellows report starting collaborations with their peers after the period of the Fellowship ended.*

*The third edition of the Fellowship (2017) is currently taking place, thus, they are not included in this graphic.

# The Fellows' projects 2015

## Really OpenGov

**The team:** *Rebeca Yáñez (CHL), Alan Vera (BOL), Teo Urbieta (PAR), Jimena Luna (CHL), Mauricio Delfín (PER), Bruno Brandão (BRA)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** There are several actors and agendas that remain under-represented in sub-national, national and international Open Government efforts worldwide. This under-representation is due to the existence of a number of barriers that prevent some social groups (actors) and topics (agendas) from being part of Open Government debates and processes, for example people with disabilities, the LGBTI Community, indigenous groups or afro-descendants.

**The proposed solution:** The project aims at making the worldwide Open Government movement more inclusive, accessible, and diverse and its discussions more equitable. It focusses on raising awareness in the Open Government ecosystem and on improving the visibility and access of excluded actors and agendas; on identifying and eliminating barriers that keep some social groups from participating; and on creating knowledge about the problem and mapping the actors and agendas that are not yet part of the Open Government movement while supporting them in participating in the debate. The project suggests forming a permanent Working Group within the Open Government Partnership (OGP) to help promote a concept of "Really Open-Gov" at all levels and help both governments and civil society groups to include the respective actions in the formulation of their National Action Plans.

**The development status:** Not implemented
*http://reallyopengov.com/*

## My city: Open Government platform to monitor the progress of public infrastructure projects

**The team:** *Natália Paiva (BRA), Carolina Pozo (ECU), Jaimie Boyd (CAN)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** In many of the region's countries, there is a lack of easily available information on public contracting and the implementation of public works, such as the construction of schools or hospitals. Without this information, there is little or no effective social control and monitoring of public investment, which fosters corruption or, at the very least, inefficiencies in the implementation.

**The proposed solution:** The project proposes an online platform that allows for user-friendly and participatory monitoring of the progress of public infrastructure projects. The platform informs the public with geo-referenced data about the kind of public works, the budget with the respective date of approval, a list of all involved contractors, the percentage of completion of the works, the current situation, and a photo of the infrastructure project. Citizens and NGOs can not only use this platform for information purposes but also participate and contribute to it by uploading their own pictures of the construction site and leaving comments, suggestions, and complaints. The platform was first implemented in Quito and is planned in Ottawa and São Paulo, and it is available for free in open-source for any interested city.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## Open Journalism

**The team:** *Fabro Steibel (BRA)*, *Edilma Prada (COL)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Traditional journalism is more and more challenged by financial constraints while, at the same time, the need for a free and effective press that covers social issues is growing in many democratic societies. Considerable potential for collaboration remains untapped as traditional journalistic practices are mostly closed to citizen participation.

**The proposed solution:** The project promotes an innovative news-making formula to create public-oriented news. It mixes practices of traditional journalism, data journalism and citizen journalism, as well as crowdfunding and crowdsourcing tools, to collaboratively produce news products of relevance to the functioning of democratic societies. It connects journalists, citizens and hackers in sustainable models of collaborative journalism, and trains them to produce journalistic content together. Thus, the project stimulates citizen participation and cooperation and fosters a true access to public information.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## APPS Abriendo Países Para la Seguridad (Citizen Security in Central America)

**The team:** *Jorge Jiménez (GUA)*, *Iris Palma (SLV)*, *Guillermo Incer (NIC)*, *Carlos Pimentel (DOM)*, *Ramón Olivas (MEX)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** The levels of citizen security –or the lack thereof– in Central America are among the most dramatic in the world. And yet, citizen security is an area where participation and collaboration play a very limited role so far, as shown in the fact that only very few commitments in the region's National Action Plans towards the Open Government Partnership (OGP) focus on citizen security issues. This leaves considerable potential to strengthen public policies in security matters untapped.

**The proposed solution:** The project pretends to apply the strategies, policies and mechanisms of Open Government –in particular access to public information, transparency, and citizen participation– to the area of citizen security. It suggests the creation of an online platform that gathers data, visualizes information and develops standards on how to include commitments on citizen security issues in the region's National Action Plans, thus fostering regional co-operation on citizen security strategies across Central America and the Caribbean.

**The development status:** Waiting for funding

# 61.

## Fábrica de Laboratorios de Gobierno Abierto (Creating Open Government Labs)

**The team:** *Laura Paonessa (ARG), Paulina Bustos (MEX), Daniel Carranza (URU), Gustavo Maultasch (BRA), Fernanda Campagnucci (BRA), Gerardo Pérez (MEX)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** The complex challenges the region's societies are facing require collaboration between different sectors of society and innovative and participatory methodologies to make the best possible use of the available social resources. However, in many countries there is still a disconnect between citizens, government, companies, and academia that hinders this collaboration and its important innovation and problem-solving potential.

**The proposed solution:** The creation of social innovation labs –physical spaces that bring interdisciplinary teams together and enable them to develop ideas, prototypes and projects to solve public problems– has proven to be an effective way to tap into this potential. The "Fábrica" aims at strengthening these innovation spaces in the region by offering innovative methodologies, generating community and adding value through the exchange of experiences and the development of capacities. A first pilot project, the Innovation Lab in Xalapa, Veracruz (LABIX), has already been successfully implemented. Another one, the INNOvamos movement and creation of an innovation lab in Nicaragua –currently in its development phase– is benefitting from this support and from the network of innovation labs in the region as well.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## Open Justice

**The team:** *Maikol Porras (CRI), Mariana Gatti (URU)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** The majority of Open Government reforms and commitments focus on the executive branch, only very few on the legislative branch. The judicial administrations, of vital importance to the democracies in the region, mostly do not yet apply the principles of Open Government. This has negative effects on both the efficiency of the justice systems and the citizen's trust in these systems.

**The proposed solution:** The project seeks to better understand how to apply the principles of Open Government to the judicial branch in order to make information and data on the justice administration more easily available and provide citizens with more transparent, effective and efficient justice systems. As a first step, the project intends to develop open data standards for the judicial branch before extending its scope towards the formulation of national and regional/international open justice policies as well as citizen empowerment and capacity development for employees in the judicial branch.

**The development status:** Not implemented

# The Fellows' projects 2016

## Participación a la medida – Citizen Participation with an intercultural focus

**The team:** *Audrey Mena (COL), Yamil Gonzales (HON)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Public officials in Quibdó, Colombia, are not prepared to adequately deal with the population's high ethnic diversity in the area. The lack of communication and inclusion in local decision-making processes means there is practically no citizen participation at all, as the few existing attempts are not tailored to the target population.

**The proposed solution:** The project focuses on awareness-raising and capacity development among local public officials preparing them to better include traditionally marginalized populations from rural areas, afro-descendants and indigenous groups. To that end, the project conducts a series of workshops with local communities and develops learning materials and dialogue formats for public officials.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## Abriendo Prisiones – Transparency and Human Rights from within confinement

**The team:** *Carolina Cornejo (ARG), Luis Cruz (SLV), Pepe Tonin (BRA), Román Sugo (URU)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** In Latin American prisons, abuse and inhumane living conditions abound, and prison populations suffer from a variety of massive human rights violations. This problem is in part created by widespread opacity and discretionary decisions.

**The proposed solution:** The project introduces a new focus on transparency in penitentiary systems by establishing standards for the development and publication of open data on different aspects of prison life, such as health, hygiene, infrastructure, nutrition, etc. The objective of these legally-backed standards is to create a tool to easily and understandably monitor prison administrations and promote transparency and accountability of prison systems as a means to reduce human rights violations.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## GIGA – Open Government Innovation Gym (Gimnasio de Innovación en Gobierno Abierto)

**The team:** *Carolina Contreras (CHL), Caroline Burle (BRA), Romina Colman (ARG), Silvia Da Rosa (URU)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Many organizations that want to implement Open Government strategies suffer a lack of knowledge and do not find actors with the specific capacity and ability to help them.

**The proposed solution:** The project focuses on "learning, training, acting" in order to strengthen citizens' capacities and enable them to contribute to the co-creation of a more just society. It does so by applying Open Educational Resources (REA) to find solutions to public problems. The project consists of three lines of work: a school of practice where citizens learn public problem-solving and develop prototypes; the "opener", where public officials step into the shoes of a normal citizen and create a plan for open data by default; and co-creation of projects with multiple stakeholders.

**The development status:** Implemented
https://gigabierto.org

## Gobierno Abierto Joven

**The team:** *Santiago García (PAR), Yudina Castillo (HON)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** The age group between 15 and 25 practically does not participate at all in the co-creation and implementation of most countries' commitments towards the Open Government Partnership (OGP). This means that the commitments do not reflect their interests and needs and that the innovation potential that characterizes this age group in particular remains untapped.

**The proposed solution:** The project creates a Latin American Youth Network on Open Government that includes educational activities such as an online course, an online platform to exchange experiences, and a national Open Government meeting for youth groups, which allows them to develop innovative Open Government projects collaboratively and with the support of experienced mentors. The project focuses on Paraguay and Honduras and starts with 30 participants from each country, representing 5 different civil society organizations.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## Gobierno Abierto Local (Collaboration)

**The team:** *David Zamora (CRI), Marina González (MEX), Gregorio Riera (VEN), Yamila García (ARG)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Civil servants in the region are increasingly tasked with implementing Open Government strategies in their work. However, many of them lack the necessary knowledge and experience, and there are few mechanisms of support. This jeopardizes the successful implementation of Open Government principles at the local level, with collaboration being the principle that is least understood, measured and documented.

**The proposed solution:** The project proposes the development of an online platform that offers information on the topic of collaboration to guide and support civil servants who work on the implementation of Open Government policies at the local level. The platform provides definitions of collaboration, bibliography and tools on the subject, case studies and diagnostic instruments to measure the progress of collaboration work plans. According to the diagnosis, the tools provide civil servants with recommendations on how to adjust their collaboration strategies for a successful implementation.

**The development status:** Partly implemented

## Conexión Legislativa

**The team:** *Humberto Fuentes (MEX), Marielos Chang (GUA), Noelia Gómez (BOL), Román Sugo (URU)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** In many of the region's countries there is a disconnect between what citizens want and what legislators do, leading to a perceived crisis of democratic representation. Citizens argue that their petitions have little influence on parliamentary decisions, while legislators feel there is little and poorly organized citizen participation.

**The proposed solution:** The project seeks to close the communication gap between citizens and legislators. In a context where legislators spend considerable resources on communication efforts but seemingly fail to remain in touch with citizens, the project provides them with a tool to better interact with citizens and understand and attend their needs. Using a widget for digital media and a Facebook bot, the tool organizes the citizen's demands and proposals and makes it easier for legislators to include them in their work plan and communication. In exchange, the legislator who uses the tool commits to answering all requests he receives through the tool. Thus, the project creates a permanent conversation between public opinion and legislative agenda.

**The development status:** Prototyping and user-testing

**65.**

## Sustainable Connection

**The team:** *Carlos Fernández (COL)*,
*Joseph Pierre (HTI)*, *Leandro Massaccesi (ARG)*,
*Renato Morgado (BRA)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** In many parts of Latin America, the way municipalities deal with solid waste disposal still creates major environmental and public health concerns: Over 80% of municipalities do not have effective solid waste disposal plans in place, only 55% of solid waste is disposed of properly, and only 2% is returned to formal recycling systems.

**The proposed solution:** The project proposes a gamification approach to raise awareness among citizens and change behavioral patterns regarding waste and recycling in their immediate local environment. It suggests an educational campaign focused on collaboration and citizen participation that invites young people to develop environmental initiatives in their communities. Through an online platform, groups or individuals can participate in a number of recycling-related activities, earn points, compete with other groups across their city, country and the region and win prices for the most successful initiative.

**The development status:** Not implemented

# The Fellows' projects 2017 – a preview

## B4Gov – The Blockchain for Open Government

**The team:** *Lucas Jolías (ARG)*, *Chuy Cepeda (MEX)*, *Agustina De Luca (ARG)*, *Denise Zelaya (HON)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Many contemporary bureaucracies have created fragmented systems that impede the sharing of important information that could guarantee transparency, interoperability and traceability of administrative processes. This affects citizens' trust in government and opens the door to corrupt practices, in particular in the area of public subsidies. At the same time, it cannot be remedied by the existing external audits because those are typically done years later, thus seriously reducing any accountability effects they could potentially have.

**The proposed solution:** Digitalization and Blockchain technology provide new possibilities to organize administrative processes in more efficient and transparent ways, allowing for the accountability and access to information citizens demand today. Currently, the team is running a prototype in the municipality of Bahía Blanca, in Argentina, focusing on the administrative process of allocating cultural subsidies.

**The development status:** Prototyping and user-testing
*http://blocks4.com*

## Opening up the prison system (Prisión Abierta)

**The team:** *Julio Herrera (GUA)*, *Janaína Penalva (BRA)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Among the rampant human rights violations in many Latin American penitentiaries, the lack of adequate health care, sanitation and hygiene, in particular for women detainees, stands out. There is no effective access to information system in place that would hold governments accountable and guarantee effective human rights protection in this field.

**The proposed solution:** The project identifies which data is necessary to allow for effective social accountability in guaranteeing the female prisoners' right to health care and adequate sanitary conditions. The analysis is based on international human rights standards and earlier work of the Fellowship's 2016 working group on transparency and human rights in penitentiary system (see above). The analysis will result in a report that visualizes the existing data bases as well as the current data gaps and makes recommendations on how to connect the currently dispersed data in order to achieve more transparency and accountability.

**The development status:** In development

## YAMNI – Harmony games (Juegos de Armonía)

**The team:** *Anexa Alfred **(NIC)**, Diego Cuesy **(MEX)**, Sofía Zamora **(SLV)***

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Indigenous girls in Central America are much more likely to be excluded from exercising their basic human rights, such as health, education, or security, than the majority of the population, among other reasons because they show drastically higher school drop-out rates after the age of 10 than boys. The public schools these girls attend lack effective policies that address the inequality and discrimination the girls are exposed to.

**The proposed solution:** The project uses children's games to deconstruct prejudices with regard to gender and ethnicity, to increase the girl's self-confidence and the belief in their educational potential and to raise awareness among school authorities and parents. The team is currently preparing pilot projects in Chiapas, Mexico, and the indigenous coastal regions of Nicaragua developing games with a teaching and advocacy potential to positively influence both the boys' and girls' value system.

**The development status:** In development

## DemanDatos

**The team:** *Kathrine Wikrent **(USA)**, Jorge Umaña **(CRI)**, Iván Pinto **(BOL)**, Diana Franco **(PER)**, Mauricio Utreras **(CHL)***

**The problem they are trying to solve:** There is a striking information asymmetry in many countries in the region due to the fact that the data governments decide to open up is different from the data the citizenry is asking interested in. This gap between supply and demand of open data creates an ineffective use of a lot of government data and frequently leads to lost impact opportunities in the improvement of public services.

**The proposed solution:** The project aims to develop a methodology that helps identify and better understand the needs for open data in a specific sector, namely the tourism sector in Costa Rica (pilot), before the project is scaled up to other sectors and other national contexts. Through interviews with representatives from government agencies related to tourism, chambers of commerce and other relevant stakeholders as well as SMEs that provide tourist services, the team designs a methodological and participatory guide on how to open up data for the tourism sector, which is intended to lead to the release of datasets centered on users and their needs. Ultimately, the goal is to balance the demand and supply of data and thus make sure that the public resources spent on opening data are used effectively and can develop the desired impact.

**The development status:** Prototyping and user-testing

## Lxs Agro – Collaborative Production

**The team:** *Carolina Sosa (ARG), Alejandro Ruiz (COL), Taryn Sánchez (MEX)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** The agro-food small producers in Latin America show limited competitiveness and possibilities of development. These often originate in the lack of contact networks, channels of communication and the necessary knowledge of processes to maximize production, get access to markets and build management skills.

**The proposed solution:** The project proposes a platform that connects producers, in a user-friendly way, with the scientific and technical knowledge necessary to carry out their activity, incorporate new processes and reach new markets. The respective information is transmitted in an accessible, dynamic format and free of charge, allowing the producer to consult it any time and from wherever (s)he has access to the internet. The platform also provides a system of incentives to invite producers to share experiences and strategies with each other. The project's goal is to create a community in which useful knowledge for productive development is created, shared and disseminated with the aim of achieving productive and sustainable development.

**The development status:** Prototyping & user-testing

## SGDs on the local level in LatAm

**The team:** *Gabriela Ochoa (BRA), Amelvi Barrera (VEN), Juan José Herrera (ECU)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Latin American countries have taken several actions to implement the SDGs by 2030. However, these actions are planned, discussed and decided at the national level without local participation. This does not allow the municipalities' work to become visible nor does it take into account their contributions on the Agenda 2030. This also entails that there is little knowledge and information on the Agenda 2030 at the local level.

**The proposed solution:** The project seeks to visualize the work carried out at the local level with regard to the SDGs and bring the discussion to the region's cities rather than the national capitals. It wants to draw the decision makers' attention to local difficulties in promoting transparency and participation policies. To this end, a form is being developed in which the municipalities register their main projects as local governments and an online platform that matches these with the 17 SDGs, thus visualizing the local contributions to achieving the SDGs.

**The development status:** In development & looking for funding

## Training civil servants for the implementation of local transparency policies

**The team:** *Laila Bellix (BRA), Gloria Salazar (VEN)*

**The problem they are trying to solve:** Almost 70% of Brazil's municipalities have yet to implement basic procedures to guarantee an effective access to public information and transparency, according to official data. Even though there is a Federal Law requiring them to do so, local governments have severe difficulties implementing these transparency policies.

**The proposed solution:** In order to understand the difficulties public officials are encountering, a survey was conducted finding that 87% of civil servants are not familiar with the Access to Information Law and the respective procedures, nor do they have any knowledge of how to implement it in their administrations. They state that much more training and dissemination efforts are needed. Therefore, the project focusses on targeted training for civil servants on the implementation of transparency policies. Applying different methodologies, three editions were conducted successfully with over 300 public servants in São Sebastião, a small municipality in Brazil. The training included everyone from the receptionists to the Mayor, resulting in the implementation of a local regulation and the creation of an information service for citizens.

**The development status:** Implemented

## Publications

While there have been many articles, blog posts, videos, etc. published by OAS Fellows or about OAS Fellows in the last three years, one official co-operation shall be highlighted here as it has been an integral part of the project phase for two generations of Fellows: their posts in the IDB Blog "YoGobierno".

This co-operation with the IDB was established during the Fellowship's first edition to visualize the challenges, opportunities, innovations and solutions in the region and the progress towards more open governments. As the Fellowship works with emerging leaders from across the region, the co-operation allowed the IDB to tap into a broad range of experiences, ideas and innovation potential while giving the Fellows the opportunity to share their stories and use them as an input for the open and participatory dialogue the IDB aimed for with this digital platform. "YoGobierno" was launched by the IDB's Institutional Capacity of the State Division (ICS) in 2013 and served as a space to share ideas and stories that allow governments and citizens to develop new forms of governance together, around the basic principles of citizen participation and collaboration.

The focus of the first edition's blogs (2015) was on the working groups presenting the progress in developing their projects. The focus of the second series of blog entries was on individual contributions by each of the OAS Fellows 2016, telling stories related to their experiences that may or may not be connected to the projects they developed in the context of the Fellowship.

The formal co-operation ended when the "YoGobierno" blog was discontinued by the IDB in early 2017. Since then, several Fellows have published their stories and ideas on an individual basis in another IDB blog, "Abierto al público".

## Results

During the OAS Fellowship's first three years, a total of 20 Open Government projects have successfully been developed and presented to the broader Open Government community at major international and regional events in the Americas (OGP Global Summit Mexico 2015, E-XPE-RIENCE Medellín 2016, and the OGP Regional Meeting of the Americas in Buenos Aires 2017).

The OAS Fellows 2015 and 2016 have contributed 24 posts to the "YoGobierno" platform (and several on "Abierto al público"), in addition to numerous other publications, sharing their ideas and experiences and interacting with a broad network of actors and institutions in the areas of transparency, open data, access to information, and public policy innovation.

69 OAS Fellows received targeted training, coaching, and mentoring on how to take their project proposals from idea to implementation, in co-operation with The Governance Lab. A specific project fund has been set up that will provide the most innovative and promising of the Fellows' projects with the necessary seed-funding for piloting or implementation.

## Learnings

**1 -** One of the challenges of the project phase is the diversity of the OAS Fellows and the projects they decide to work on: as the project's in-

ternal evaluations have shown, the coaching on "Solving public problems with technology" is a good fit for the more technology-oriented projects while others feel the methodology is not ideal for them. The project phase should become more flexible for future editions of the program.

**2 -** Some minor adaptions have been made to the project phase over time: The program's experience shows that smaller teams find it easier to coordinate themselves over long distances than the larger groups. Some groups identified their mentors very late in the process or worked without a mentor. The second and third cohort of OAS Fellows started the conversation about their project ideas much earlier than the first cohort. The project team and coaches tried to clarify their expectations regarding the output of the project phase.

**3 -** Beyond the implementation and impact of the Fellows' projects (which have been achieved to a varying degree), there is a clear value of going through this –sometimes difficult– process together as a cohort of Fellows. Even if some Fellows lost interest in their project over the course of the six-month project phase and if some project groups worked together better than others, there is still a lot to be gained from the online coaching, from meeting online with the entire cohort once a month and developing a feedback culture and support structure that is frequently used after the completion of the program.

**4 -** The Fellowship's pilot phase (2015) and second edition (2016) have clearly shown that the Fellows' projects require seed-funding in their initial phase in order to be successfully implemented and develop the desired impact. However, the OAS and its partners have not been able

to provide this funding in the past. Therefore, in several cases important momentum has been lost when Fellows presented their project ideas but did not find financing sources to further develop, pilot or implement them, which in turn jeopardizes the impact and long-term success of the OAS Fellowship itself. In fact, this has been one the major shortcomings of the OAS Fellowship for the first three years and has considerably hindered the program's impact on the ground. Only in mid-2017, an agreement could be reached with the Government of Germany to set up a special Project Fund of $100,000 to pilot or implement the OAS Fellows' Open Government projects. For its first edition, this Fund received 29 project proposals from a total of 42 OAS Fellows. A jury of international experts is, at the time of writing, selecting the most relevant and promising projects, which will receive seed-funding between $5,000 and $20,000, depending on the needs of the project. This Fund needs to be renewed in order to ensure funding for future generations of OAS Fellows and the implementation of their projects.

# 6

# Silent
# Co-operations
# 72 - 82

While the OAS Fellowship's seminars and projects generally draw the better part of the attention, some of the most interesting results are produced outside of the program's modules and work dynamics, in what some Fellows have come to call "cooperaciones silenciosas". This is where the members of the network support each other by exchanging experiences, ideas, tools and contacts, which oftentimes generates unexpected synergies. While this is nothing we can plan for, it is certainly part of the Fellowship's idea to create an environment of familiarity, trust, and mutual support where these co-operations can grow.

The "silent co-operations" are, mostly, co-operations between OAS Fellows who either didn't know each other before their participation in the program or were hesitant to push larger initiatives together, in many cases because of the distance that still remains between public administration and civil society groups in many countries in the region. Out of a long list of these initiatives, both large and small, we would like to share six examples that capture the essence and spirit of what the program and its network are all about.

# 1

## LABIX – Building the first Innovation Lab in Xalapa, Mexico

Every few months, Américo Zúñiga Martínez has a chance to visit one of his pet projects. The mayor of Xalapa/Veracruz then organizes an on-site visit with the press to one of his favorite construction sites, a ten-minute drive from City Hall: the new Xalapa Innovation Lab LABIX (for its Spanish name "Laboratorio de Innovación de Xalapa"). On these occasions Gerardo Pérez Gallardo, Director of Good Governance and Special Projects at the Municipality and OAS Fellow '15, explains how several open data initiatives he organized in the last years have slowly been evolving into a much more comprehensive citizen participation strategy for the city of Xalapa, which are now culminating in the ambitious LABIX project.

It came in handy that Gerardo was part of the OAS Fellowship's working group "Fábrica de Laboratorios de Gobierno Abierto" where, together with experienced colleagues from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Uruguay, he had worked on strategies of how to build an innovation lab and successfully create and sustain a working space for citizen participation, collaboration and open innovation. This working group's pilot project was developing the first Innovation Lab for the City of Xalapa, which has, since then, advanced impressively.

Already in November 2015, a fundamental "Open City" Regulation was published in the "Gaceta Oficial" of the State of Veracruz presenting the municipality's interest and laying the legal groundwork to establish Open Government as a priority for the municipality and create the conditions for ambitious transparency, accountability, citizen participation, collaboration, and innovation projects in Xalapa. This included the creation of an "Open City Municipal Council" that gathers representatives from public administration, academia, and civil society and now functions as the main organ to promote Open Government strategies, policies and actions in Xalapa.

While the physical space for LABIX is still under construction, many related activities have long begun: Xalapa is one of the most active municipalities in Mexico when it comes to organizing events on open data, access to public information, hackathons, or mapathons. And this is a field where Gerardo can count on other OAS Fellows, especially from his former Fellowship working group: Daniel Carranza '15 participated as the main speaker at the statewide Hackathon Veracruz 2015; with Codeando México (Paulina Bustos '15) Gerardo co-organized a series of events and trainings as well as a recent citizen mapathon; Marina González Magaña '16 and her organization Pides Innovación Social contributed with workshops on human-centered design.

As for the spectacular new building itself, Mayor Américo Zúñiga Martínez is highly optimistic: Construction was 80% completed at his last visit in September 2017 and is expected to be concluded before December 2017 – when the current municipal administration's term ends.

# 2
# Together towards transparency – Opening up the property registry of the municipality of São Paulo

On December 9, 2015 –International Anti-Corruption Day–, São Paulo Mayor Fernando Haddad announced a decree to open up the city's property register for the first time ever, in an attempt to strengthen transparency and social accountability in the city. This initiative marks a milestone in combatting corruption through openness of data that is pioneer not only in Brazil. It makes it easier for investigators and journalists to find out where the corrupt are investing in the local property market, oftentimes hiding behind shell companies. The data can be used to expose the purchase of major properties by offshore companies, to fight tax evasion and fraud, but it also helps increase efficiency in public administration and lower transaction costs for citizens.

The decree was the first product of an agreement of co-operation the City of São Paulo and Trans-

parency International (TI) had signed one year earlier. Two OAS Fellows from Brazil contributed decisively to giving tangible substance to this agreement, focusing on an issue that remains on top of TI's advocacy agenda: Fernanda Campagnucci '15 –at the time working in São Paulo's City Hall in a position of trust– and Bruno Brandão '15 who was then establishing a new regional strategy for TI in Brazil.

"The decree was the result of a lot of work, both on the technical and the political level", Bruno remembers. "There was a lot of resistance, internally and externally, and a serious risk –up to the last minute– for the decree not to be signed. Fernanda managed the internal processes with amazing diplomatic abilities and poise, while I brought in all of TI's weight in support. This was also a result of the co-operation Fernanda and I had established during the Fellowship: the meetings in Osprey Point, and later Mexico City, were fundamental to get to know each other and start working on a joint agenda."

Fernanda agrees: "The trust established during our participation in the Fellowship was crucial. Even though the Co-operation Agreement itself was signed before, the relationship we developed during the Fellowship where we started discussing possibilities of co-operation with the Comptroller General's office, allowed us to facilitate and accelerate the process considerably."

One year after the decree was announced, TI published a comprehensive report –coordinated by Bruno– which provides an in-depth analysis of the new data provided by the City of São Paulo: "São Paulo: Does Corruption live next door? Shell companies and the real estate sector in the largest city in the Southern Hemisphere". Bruno sees po-

tential to continue working along those same lines in the future: "With the Fellowship, we could actually replicate the idea in all major cities in the region where we have OAS Fellows in strategic positions – TI is certainly ready to help in this respect."

# 3

# Por Mi Barrio – Adapting a successful participation tool from Uruguay to municipalities in Costa Rica

Potholes, broken street lights, overflowing garbage bins – many citizens wonder where to report these problems, decide it is too complicated, and in the end nothing happens. That's why Daniel Carranza '15 and his colleagues from DATA Uruguay developed "Por Mi Barrio", an online platform that allows citizens to report their observations right when and where they make them. The platform was launched in 2014 and has been growing ever since: It started in the Uruguayan capital Montevideo and is now also available in the interior city of Rivera. More than 3,200 complaints have been registered online (of which almost 65% have already been fixed) and more are coming in every day. Most of the complaints concern waste management, road improvements, and street lightning.

When Daniel met Maikol Porras '15 from Costa Rica at the OAS Fellowship, they wondered whether this could be a possible solution for municipalities in Costa Rica as well. With Daniel's

experience and Maikol's local knowledge and contacts they managed to bring the idea to life, and that same year, "pormibarrio.cr" was launched. It was first implemented in the municipality of Palmares and has since expanded to Osa in the Puntarenas province.

A key success factor for both platforms is their user-friendliness. Anyone who sees a problem in his or her neighborhood can access the website "pormibarrio.cr" or "pormibarrio.uy", respectively, and report it. Complaints are immediately sent to the public authorities responsible for fixing them. Moreover, the platforms are free of charge for both the citizen and the municipality. This is possible thanks to the support of organizations such as Hivos, Avina, Omidyar Network, and other donors.

Looking back, Daniel concludes: "The interest from other cities in implementing 'Por Mi Barrio' has been huge. We are very, very happy that one of those implementations is now going on in Costa Rica." And both Maikol and Daniel see great potential for further expansions within their countries as well as across the region.



# 4

# Joining forces to organize Brazil's first national Open Government Meeting – and counting



Caroline Burle, Renato Morgado, and Pepe Tonin (all '16), three OAS Fellows from Brazil, jointly organized the First Brazilian Open Government Meeting in the city of São Paulo, on November 29, 2016. At this event, 235 participants from government and civil society as well as researchers and interested citizens from ten different Brazilian states attended 14 different panel discussions and workshops on the topics of Open Government, open data, and open contracting and how they relate to local government, education, climate change, the environment, gender, and human rights. The occasion was also used to launch Brazil's Third National Action Plan and the Open Government Action Plan for the City of São Paulo.

The three OAS Fellows were crucially involved in the entire process from its inception to its implementation, bringing together eight different orga-

nizations, including government agencies and civil society groups, thus strengthening much-needed inter-sectorial collaboration in Brazil. "The Fellowship was essential for our motivation to organize this event as a group. It has also been fundamental to build the trust between us and, as a consequence, foster collaboration between the institutions we represented and which had not, to that point, interacted a lot." An even bigger group of OAS Fellows from Brazil is currently co-organizing the second edition of this national Open Government Meeting for November 28 and 29, 2017.

# 5

# #INNOvamos – Creating a community of civic innovation in Nicaragua

Another example of "silent co-operations" that happen as a consecuence of the OAS Fellowship and its network are the activities Guillermo Incer '15 has been implementing in his native Nicaragua where an Open Government movement is still in its infancy: Together with other civil society actors and with the support from USAID, Guillermo organized a public seminar called "INNOvamos" for more than 350 participants from Nicaraguan civil society, an event widely covered in the na-

tional press that brought the topics of civic innovation and Open Government to the attention of NGOs, universities, and the media in Nicaragua.

Four of Guillermo's colleagues from the OAS Fellowship's first generation were instrumental to setting up this initiative by generously contributing their time, expertise and ideas: Maikol Porras (CRI), Iris Palma (SLV), Daniel Carranza (URU), and Laura Paonessa (ARG, all '15). Actually, 90% of the international experts invited as speakers to #INNOvamos were OAS Fellows, others from the network, such as Paulina Bustos '15 (MEX) and Gerardo Pérez '15 (MEX), were involved in the design of the initiative even though they could not attend the event itself.

Rather than a single event or a limited number of projects, Guillermo sees these activities as the beginning of a movement, as planting the seed for change in a country that is in dire need of more participatory and inclusive democratic practices. Here is how Guillermo describes his experience: "After concluding my participation in the Fellowship, I started working on several initiatives aimed at introducing Open Government practices to the civil society circles in Nicaragua:

I organized events with national youth networks, included the topic in my university courses and even managed for the University to set up three Certificate courses on Civic Innovation and Collaboration that resulted in over 25 social innovation projects in different parts of the country. I also helped to develop the country's first open budget portal on the municipal level, an important tool that has resulted in more than 20 social audit exercises."

"However, I felt a need to establish the topic of Open Government in Nicaraguan civil society more broadly, as there is a lot of frustration with the lack of effective participation mechanisms and little knowledge about tools such as open innovation, design thinking, open data, etc. One of the ways to channel this movement is setting up a citizen innovation lab in Managua, which we have already been able to bring on the way."

The public event in July 2017 was certainly a huge step in this direction: Guillermo and his colleagues kicked the event off with two days of "desconferencia" and 10 different workshops on innovation and Open Government. After the event, the participants presented over 60 proposals on Open Government initiatives to a new citizen innovation fund USAID had set up in support of the country's civil society organizations. For the last three days, the organizers gathered 40 promising young activists who call themselves the "INNOvamos Community" and, together with the OAS Fellows, developed four Open Government projects that intend to tackle pressing issues such as consumer rights, street harassment, adolescent pregnancy, and traffic safety. Talks are already under way with OAS Fellow Iris Palma '15 to replicate some of the Nicaraguan experiences in El Salvador soon.

"This important experience for my organization as well as civil society in Nicaragua as such would not have been possible without the support and solidarity from the other Fellows. Their experience and the trust between us is what encouraged me to embark on this adventure. They not only gave us a week of their time without charge and generously shared their knowledge but are really committed to supporting the whole process we have started here in Nicaragua. In my opinion, this is an excellent example of what the OAS Fellowship is all about, and it becomes even more relevant when you consider the Nicaraguan context – a country with serious democratic deficits, that does not participate in the Open Government Partnership, and where nobody talks about these topics so far. I feel the participation of so many OAS Fellows in this event also helped put Nicaragua on the map of the regional debate on innovation and Open Government."

# 6

# Entering new territory– Course on Open Government in Climate, Forestry, and Agriculture in Brazil

While the general awareness for the need and advantages of Open Government practises have increased considerably in the last years, the challenge is now to take the broader conversation to the level of implementation and to specific topics barely touched upon in the regional discussions so far. This is where OAS Fellows can make an

important contribution, as they are familiar with both the regional trends of the debate and the situation and challenges on the ground.

One such example is Renato Morgado '16 (BRA) who teamed up with Laila Bellix '17 (BRA) and others to implement an innovative course on "Open Government in Climate, Forestry, and Agriculture", which he developed with his organization IMAFLORA in Piracicaba, in the Brazilian State of São Paulo. "The course is part of a larger project intended to strengthen transparency, participation, and accountability in the Brazilian climate, forestry, and agricultureal sector", says Renato. The idea is to familiarize leading experts in these sectors –from both public administration and civil society– with the principles and strategies of Open Government. "The structure of the course is very much inspired by the OAS Fellowship", according to Renato, consisting of a series of online classes, face-to-face meetings, and the development of Open Government projects between September and December 2017. For its first edition, the course already received over 200 applications and has selected 25 participants.



# Results

The "silent co-operations" among the OAS Fellows are too numerous to keep track of and to highlight them all. Here are only some of those we have heard about lately:

Workshop on "Open Contracting in the Americas" in Costa Rica (Kathrine Wikrent '17 & Jorge Umaña '17)

***

Presentation of Public Innovation Experiences from Brazil and Uruguay to Costa Rican public officials at the municipal level (Maikol Porras '15, Fernanda Campagnucci '15 & Silvia Da Rosa '16)

***

Implementation of "A Tu Servicio" from Uruguay and open data standards for the health sector in Sonora, Mexico (Daniel Carranza '15 & Paulina Bustos '15)

***

Courses on open data and Open Government for the Municipality of Xalapa, Mexico (Iris Palma '15 & Gerardo Pérez '15)

***

Course on "Data on the Web Best Practices" for Costa Rican government officials (Maikol Porras '15 & Caroline Burle '16)

***

Communication and media training for "Congreso Transparente Guatemala" staff (Jorge Jiménez '15 & Edilma Prada '15)

***

Hackathon on Resilient Cities in Ecuador (Carolina Pozo '15, Laura Paonessa '15 & Daniel Carranza '15)

***

Several co-operation projects between DATA Uruguay and the Access to Public Information Unit at Uruguay's government agency AGESIC,

including an Open Government working group, a workshop on the reform of the Uruguayan Access to Public Information law, and quesabes.uy (Daniel Carranza '15 & Mariana Gatti '15)

\* \* \*

First Open Government event in Guatemala 2016 with several presentations, workshops, and meetings with politicians (Marielos Chang '16 & Daniel Carranza '15)

\* \* \*

Invitation to present at the PeaceTech Exchange Costa Rica (Maikol Porras '15 & Humberto Fuentes '16)

\* \* \*

Presentations and workshops on Open Government in Guatemala 2017 (Daniel Carranza '15 & Julio Herrera '17)

\* \* \*

Project on data standards for air quality and the respective monitoring app for the cities of Montevideo, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City (Daniel Carranza '15 & Paulina Bustos '15)

Publication of articles in the academic journal Espacios Políticos which Laura Paonessa '15 coordinates (Gerardo Pérez '15, Jaimie Boyd '15, Maiana Gatti '15, Paulina Bustos '15, Carolina Pozo '15, Guillermo Incer '15, Maikol Porras '15, Diego Cuesy '17, Marina González '16)

\* \* \*

Publication of blog posts in the IDB blog "Abierto al público", in co-operation with Laura Paonessa '15 (Jorge Umaña '17, Guillermo Incer '15, Juan José Herrera '17, Edilma Prada '15, Renato Morgado '16, Jaimie Boyd '15, Gerardo Pérez '15, Iris Palma '15)

\* \* \*

Co-operation Agreement on strengthening Open Government strategies between Fundación Conocimiento Abierto, Buenos Aires, and the Municipality of de Xalapa, Mexico (Yamila García '16 & Gerardo Pérez '15)

\* \* \*

Building a Citizen Innovation Lab, an open data platform and other innovation projects in Honduras (Carolina Pozo '15 & Yudina Castillo '16)

## The OAS Fellowship: A Network of Knowledge

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Speaking opportunities | 31.25% |
| Event organizing and co-hosting | 28.13% |
| Workshops and courses | 25.00% |
| Creation/exchange of open data standards and open data best practices | 21.88% |
| Became a mentor | 18.75% |
| Publication of short papers | 9.38% |
| Project development and piloting | 21.88% |
| Hackathons | 9.38% |
| Creation of a public innovation lab | 6.25% |

**Detailed list of collaborations beyond the Fellowship for the cohorts of 2015 and 2016.**

# Learnings

**1 -** The "silent co-operations" are perhaps the single most tangible outcome of the OAS Fellowship. While it can be hard to measure the impact of capacity-development and dialogue formats, especially with a group as diverse as the OAS Fellows, it is for everyone to see how initiatives such as the ones described above have only been possible as a result of the Fellows' participation in the program.

**2 -** Time and again, OAS Fellows mention the personal contacts, the network of like-minded colleagues and friends, and the trust they build during their common learning experience as the program's most important contributions. Creating this atmosphere of trust takes time and requires an investment in both online activities and face-to-face meetings among the participants, even though this involves a cost for airfares from across the Americas. The conclusion from the "silent co-operations" is that it is worthwhile investing in the network of Fellows at the beginning, because it creates value long after the Fellows' participation.

**3 -** Given the importance of the "silent co-operations" (as well as the many co-operations between OAS Fellows and individuals and organizations they meet during the program's networking activities) for the Fellowship's impact, there is a need to develop a more comprehensive tool to register and follow up on these activities, also but not exclusively to be able to show these contributions to our current and potential donors.

# 7

## Collaboration:
## Meet our Partners
## 83 - 90

Collaboration between different stakeholders is one of the main pillars of Open Government. Therefore, from its inception, the OAS Fellowship was designed as a collaborative effort of a variety of actors in the field of Open Government –in the Americas and beyond–, not only for the simple lack of sufficient funding from one organization alone but also for the firm belief that the results of such an endeavor would be far better when achieved in strategic alliances with others. We are grateful to all these partners who have contributed technically, logistically, financially and through their expertise and networks from the beginning. We are convinced that working with so many different actors from OAS Member states, Permanent observers, multilateral organizations, and private foundations helped us create synergies and, thus, increase the program's impact, reach, and sustainability.

# Our partners in their own words...

We asked our partners to explain their interest in Open Government and why they support the OAS Fellowship. Here is what they said:



The OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas is part of the OAS School of Governance, a new initiative of hemispheric scope that aims at articulating responses to new challenges in government innovation, Open Government and consensus-building for more effective government in the Americas. The School of Governance fulfills these objectives by offering educational opportunities and communities of practice, by facilitating a space for dialogue, and by developing applied research with respect to the region's collective challenges, with the goal of strengthening the leadership skills and technical expertise of public officials, representatives of social movements, community leaders and journalists throughout the hemisphere.



Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada

Canada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development is mandated to manage the country's diplomatic relations, promote its international trade and lead Canada's international development and humanitarian assistance. As part of its cross-cutting priority of strengthening democratic gover-

nance, the Ministry supports projects on transparency, accountability and citizen participation.



The Government of Mexico, committed to the fight against corruption and to promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen empowerment, has supported numerous initiatives at the national, regional and international level to transform the relationship between governments and citizens. These initiatives aim to provide more and better information, so that citizens are well-informed and able to participate in the elaboration of public policies and receive better public services. As part of these initiatives, the Government of Mexico has worked with the OAS and other multilateral organizations to identify and support the participation of change agents who promote open data and Open Government in different sectors and, thus, to create a platform for cooperation and exchange of good practices.



The United States remains committed to the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and the guiding ideals and principles that it represents. It encourages the creation of effective national mechanisms to further OGP's principles including mechanisms for access to information; civil society engagement and co-creation; budget and procurement transparency; civil service hiring; and efforts aimed at strengthening open courts and legislatures. OGP provides an important national

roadmap for good governance reform. With this in mind, the United States supports the creation of mechanisms to coordinate the co-creation and implementation of OGP commitments.

**Ministerio de Modernización**
**Presidencia de la Nación**

The Government of Argentina, through its Ministry of Modernization, promotes a state policy of openness, efficiency, transparency and close relationships between citizens and their government. As part of its Plan for the Modernization of the State, which includes its Open Government policy, the Ministry invites citizens and civil society organizations to different dialogue formats with the aim of co-designing the action plans to be presented to the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The Government of Argentina, furthermore, conducts online consultations on topics of public interest, organizes hackathons to collaboratively develop innovative solutions to national challenges, and proactively publishes administrative data in an open format, thus reinforcing its commitment to government openness and transparency.

The Republic of Korea is widely regarded as a global leader in e-government and has been participating in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) since its beginnings. It actively supports the principles and aims of Open Government to promote transparency, fight corruption, increase accountability, and harness new technologies to strengthen gov-

ernance and foster innovation. In this sense, it has launched several initiatives that disclose critical public information and create better communication channels between Government and citizens at all levels of administration to empower citizens in public decision-making processes.

The Netherlands is committed to the principles of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). With partners we work to increase the availability of information about governmental activities, support civic participation, implement the highest standards of professional integrity throughout our administration and increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability. For instance the information on our development assistance has been presented as open data since 2011. The foreseen budget, planned disbursements and actual expenses can be tracked and results of implemented activities are made public.

Federal Foreign Office

The Federal Republic of Germany promotes democratic transformation worldwide. Some of the core elements of democracy are transparency and citizen participation, which have a long tradition in Germany. Germany signed the G8 Open Data Charta in 2013 and launched the national portal GovData.de, which provides metadata for public institutions. Open Government has become a driver of innovative approaches to over-

come social challenges. Being open to new ideas and being willing to listen to citizens' concerns is a central element of the German political system.



The mission of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is to contribute to the region's economic and social development. The Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (IL-PES) is the entity within ECLAC that leads the institution's research, technical cooperation, as well as training in planning, economics and public sector management. It contributes to national and sub-national efforts to improve the quality of public policies and to strengthen institutional capacities, including programs related to Open Government, e-government and open data.



Since 1970, CAF - Development Bank of Latin America - promotes a model of sustainable development in the region through credit operations, grants, and support in the technical and financial set-up of projects in Latin America's public and private sector. In the context of institutional strengthening the capacity of governments and civil society, CAF promotes a public policy agenda focused on addressing the main governmental challenges in the areas of decentralization and local governments, capacity development of public officials, transparency, citizen participation and Open Government.



The Inter-American Development Bank supports governments to be effective, efficient and transparent in improving people's lives. Through technical and financial assistance, the Bank assists 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in the design and implementation of innovative citizen-centered Open Government policies that aim to improve public services, promote transparency, integrity and accountability of public officials, and increase citizen participation and collaboration. Initiatives such as the OAS Fellowship are part of our commitment to promote the development of human capital in the region.



The Carter Center is a nonpartisan organization that is guided by a fundamental commitment to human rights, democracy, and conflict prevention. The Center's "Global Access to Information Program" has been working –for more than 15 years– together with governments, civil society, and international and regional organizations to improve democratic governance by promoting transparency and the effective implementation of the right of access to information.



Hivos is an international development organization that, together with civil society organiza-

tions in developing countries, seeks to contribute to a free, fair and sustainable world for men and women alike. From its offices in South America and Central America, Hivos supports regional initiatives of cooperation and innovation in the field of Open Government and open data such as the "Iberoamerican Data Journalism Handbook" or "Developing Latin America."



The AVINA Foundation initiates and supports projects and programs oriented towards sustainable development, bringing together the private sector, civil society, academia and government institutions facilitating shared agendas for action. Through tools such as its "Technology for Social Change" program or the "Latin American Alliance for Civic Technology", AVINA contributes to Open Government and open data projects, the development of technology for civic purposes, and the use of ICTs as instruments of transparency, accountability and citizen participation.



The GovLab is an action-research center with a mission to improve people's lives by changing the way we govern. It aims to accomplish this by harnessing advances in technology to enable more open, collaborative, effective and legitimate ways to make better decisions and solve public problems. To this end, The GovLab fosters the availability and use of data and approaches each challenge and opportunity in an interdisciplinary,

collaborative way, irrespective of the problem, sector, geography and level of government.



The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people. Open Society aims to strengthen the respect for human rights and the diversity of opinion, democratically elected governments, and a civil society that helps keep government power in check. Through the Open Society Latin America Program, the Foundation supports initiatives in the region that promote debate on citizen security and human rights, transparency and accountability, drug policies in the region, and democracy in the 21st century.



The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) is a German political foundation with a Christian democratic political orientation. At the European and international level, and through 80 offices around the world, it works in 120 countries contributing to the promotion of democracy, a social market economy and the rule of law. Its projects, implemented jointly with its counterparts –government institutions, related political parties and civil society organizations– focus on the issuesof transparency and good governance as priorities in order to contribute to an international order that allows for development and freedom in all countries.

# Results

The fundraising efforts for the OAS Fellowship have been successful insofar as they have allowed the program to complete a cycle of three program editions and generations of Fellows. This has been possible thanks to the following financial contributions:

## Financial contributions to the program between 2015 and 2017 (all amounts in US-Dollars)

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OAS Member states** | | | |
| Canada | 120,000 | --- | --- |
| Mexico | --- | --- | 30,000 |
| USA | --- | 30,000 | 150,000 |
| | | | |
| **OAS Permanent observers** | | | |
| Korea | 50,000 | 25,000 | 20,000 |
| The Netherlands | --- | 54,400 | --- |
| Germany | --- | --- | 118,000* |
| | | | |
| **Multilateral organizations** | | | |
| CAF Development Bank of Latin America | --- | 30,000 | 30,000 |
| Inter-American Development Bank | --- | --- | 20,000 |
| | | | |
| **Foundations** | | | |
| Open Society Foundations | --- | 150,000 | 25,000* |
| Hivos | 54,400 | --- | --- |
| Fundacion AVINA | 7,500 | 7,500 | --- |
| Konrad Adenauer Stiftung | --- | 18,000 | 28,000 |
| | | | |
| **Total** | 261,900 | 314,900 | 421,000 |

* These funds were earmarked for a very specific activity within the program, such as the production of this report ($25,000) or for establishing a Project Fund to provide seed-funding for the Fellows' projects ($118,000).

In addition to these financial contributions, several OAS Member States (such as Mexico and Argentina), multilateral organizations (such as the UN-ECLAC/ILPES), and civil society organizations (such as The Carter Center and The GovLab) have, over the years, made considerable in-kind contributions to the program in the form of logistical and knowledge support or the bearing of local costs for our seminars which helped substantially reduce the program's running costs. The OAS has contributed considerable resources to the program through the time dedicated by several members of its staff.

Beyond formal co-operations, the OAS Fellowship has collaborated with numerous organizations and individuals who share the goal to foster more open and democratic governance harnessing new technologies, such as the Open Government Partnership, the World Bank, the Pan-American Health Organization, the Sunlight Foundation, AgoraPartnerships, Global Integrity, The Center for Open Data Enterprise, the Global Initiative on Fiscal Transparency, Mexico's National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI), the Laboratory for the City in Mexico City, Cívica Digital, Colombia's Center for Digital Public Innovation, Ruta N, the Young Americas Business Trust, and many others. Although these institutions and individuals are not official project partners, they do help us create an ecosystem of organizations working towards the same goal in which the OAS Fellows can interact, learn, and benefit for their own professional growth.

# Learnings

**1 -** Co-operating with several of the most relevant and experienced actors in the Open Government arena in the Americas right from the beginning helped establish the program as a credible and serious initiative within a very short period of time. It contributed considerably to maximizing the program's reach and avoiding the duplication of efforts by like-minded organizations.

**2 -** In some cases, however, strong institutional interests prevail and limit the possibilities of co-operation while incentivizing institutions to develop their own parallel activities rather than join a common effort. While the reasons for this preference can be entirely valid in every single case, the result is oftentimes that we miss a chance of creating synergies, do not make the best possible use of limited (mostly public) resources, or even duplicate efforts.

**3 -** As a first step to reduce obstacles to collaboration and offer better visibility and ownership to our partners old and new, the OAS has suggested to turn the "OAS Fellowship" into a "Multilateral Fellowship" for future editions, an "OpenGov Fellowship of the Americas", or simply "OpenGov Fellowship", to make it as attractive as possible for everyone interested in joining existing efforts rather than reinventing the wheel on their own.

**4 -** The funding model developed for the OAS Fellowship (i.e. working mainly with several minor contributions) turned out not to be sustainable. It did not allow for any mid- or long-term planning, contracting, and further development of the program. Several times during the three-year-cycle, the future of the program was un-certain due to lack of funding, jeopardizing considerably its impact and attractiveness to potential partners.

**5 -** The project team's time dedicated to acquiring this large number of minor contributions strongly hindered the further development of the program. To identify the ten donors that made important financial contributions to the program between 2015 and 2017, conversations have been held with over a 100 organizations, through email outreach, phone/Skype conversations, personal meetings, letters of inquiry, and formal grant applications.

**6 -** Donor fragmentation as experienced in this case poses a significant challenge for the project team as every donor has different reporting requirements. Sometimes, the efforts invested in approaching a donor do not pay off when the bureaucratic burden is disproportionately high in comparison to the contribution. In addition, project management gets highly challenging as the many earmarked contributions do not allow for a lot of flexibility in steering the program.

# Endorsements

**Alonso Cerdán Verástegui**
*Deputy Director of Government Support,*
*Open Government Partnership,*
**Washington D.C.**



**Pablo Collada**
*Executive Director,*
*Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente,*
**Santiago de Chile**

"Within just a few years, the OAS Fellowship has become a 'who is who' of Open Government in the region. Its model of incorporating a broad definition of young professionals, a well-designed selection process, training courses and constant collaborations between Fellows with online and face-to-face learning experiences has generated a real network of Open Government champions from different sectors which, I am sure, will continue to bear fruit for a long time."

"Fellowships are often particularly valuable at the level of individual learning. So when I heard about this program, focused on promoting Open Government leaders in the Americas, I imagined it would leave a trail of individual leaders. However, within these last three years, I have come to see that some of this program's most valuable contributions are the initiatives that are undertaken with a collective vision. And it is in this idea of community that I think Open Government really has a future."

**César Nicandro Cruz-Rubio**
*President & Policy Researcher,*
*GIGAPP Research Group for Government,*
*Administration and Public Policy,*
***Madrid***

**Nicolás Dassen**
*Modernization of the State Senior Specialist,*
*Inter-American Development Bank,*
***Washington D.C.***

"Today, there is no other initiative for the promotion of Open Government as intelligent, comprehensive and oriented to real-world challenges as the OAS Fellowship. In my opinion, this is a program that wholeheartedly fosters openness and public innovation, promoting transparency and public accountability at all levels, in a sustainable, participatory, dedicated and always results-oriented way. It means training, it means exchange, it means the use of technological tools,and it means capacity-development on the individual as well as on the group level. But above all, this program makes us accomplices –or allies– of openness, and it provides us with an effective collaboration platform to bring Open Government to its highest levels, thus reaching new models of governance in the countries of the region that seek equal opportunities, without discriminating or forgetting the most disadvantaged."

"The OAS Fellowship is a program that inspires. The young people we are training are full of energy and ideals that are contagious and make us continue pursuing the dream of more democratic, egalitarian and participatory societies. By teaching them all different aspects of what an Open Government –or, rather, an Open State– must have, our future political and social leaders learn about transparency and accountability, about citizen collaboration and participation, and about improving public services harnessing new technologies. At the Inter-American Development Bank, we congratulate and support the program with enthusiasm."

**Alejandra Naser**
*Information Technology Specialist,
ILPES-ECLAC/United Nations,*
***Santiago de Chile***

"ECLAC's collaboration with the OAS Fellowship has been of great relevance to our institution, as it not only reaffirms the collaborative and synergistic intentions between both institutions to highlight good practices of Open Government in the region, but also allows us to complement the substance of the program with a regional perspective and gives us the opportunity to pursue a universal and transformative vision that combines the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. More precisely, we believe that the great value of the OAS Fellowship is that it brings together agents of change from all sectors of society, and therefore, promotes understanding, dialogue and the exchange of experiences with a broader and holistic view, encouraging greater participation in this matter and the potential for the formulation of more inclusive public policies."

**Laura Neuman**
*Director, Global Access to Information
Program, The Carter Center,*
***Atlanta***

"The Carter Center has been thrilled to watch the development and growth of the OAS Fellowship. We were privileged to work with the OAS and others in the inception of the program and to serve as mentors to the initial cohorts. Over the past years, the OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas has inspired hundreds of young professionals who have successfully applied their creativity and knowledge to advance improved service delivery, more meaningful public engagement, and greater transparency in their countries and the region. The network of Fellows from government and civil society will have impacts well beyond their one-year Fellowship. The potential of the OAS Fellowship was clear from the start, and with the commitment of the OAS and its supporters, this potential has become a reality."

**Beth Simone Noveck**
*Professor, New York University
& Director, NYU Governance Lab,*
***New York***

"The OAS Fellowship is forging the next gener-ation of effective democratic leaders for Latin America. As our evaluation data demonstrates, the program has already made a considerable impact in the region by helping individual partic-ipants become more effective agents of change in their own communities and by building insti-tutional capacity to solve problems in innova-tive ways. The OAS Fellowship uniquely offers a structured curriculum to help people take their projects from idea to implementation and cre-ates the opportunity for ongoing mentoring by global experts. It serves as a platform for target-ed knowledge-exchange on sustaining and deep-ening democracy in the region and for a common learning experience among everyone involved."



**Álvaro V. Ramírez-Alujas**
*Professor, University of Chile;
Founder GIGAPP Research Group for
Government, Administration and Public
Policy & President, Fundación Multitudes,*
***Santiago de Chile***

"The OAS Fellowship is a unique space for capac-ity and community building with young people from the entire region committed to democracy and to improving the quality of life of our peoples. In only three years, they have been able to estab-lish a community of change agents who are lead-ing processes of opening up the State in many countries in the region, with a strong civic com-mitment and vocation of public service, which is not only reflected in the network of projects and multiple initiatives they have been develop-ing but also in the impact they have had on their communities and on the progress towards a gen-uinely Open State in Latin America."

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# Acknowledgments

# 97.

The OAS Fellowship on Open Government in the Americas has only been possible thanks to a group of highly motivated colleagues, partners, and participants who were willing to go the extra mile and compensate many constraints with their enthusiasm and creativity.

At the OAS, we would like to especially thank Matthias Jaeger who has developed and coordinated the Fellowship as well as mobilized the necessary resources to make it happen. Matthias has been the heart and soul of the Fellowship guaranteeing its successful implementation for the last three years.

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Gastón Cleiman has given all Fellowship products and materials an attractive and modern design in a traditional institutional context and always managed to visually express what we wanted to say.

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**María Fernanda Trigo**
*Director, Department for Effective Public Management*

## Contact

María Fernanda Trigo
Director, Department for Effective Public Management
*mtrigo@oas.org*

Matthias Jaeger,
Project Coordinator, The OAS Fellowship on Open
Government in the Americas
*mjaeger@oas.org*

Department for Effective Public Management
Secretariat for Hemispheric Affairs
Organization of American States
1889 F Street NW, Washington D.C. 20006

oas.org/OpenGovFellowship
*OpenGovFellowship@oas.org*
#fellowshipOEA