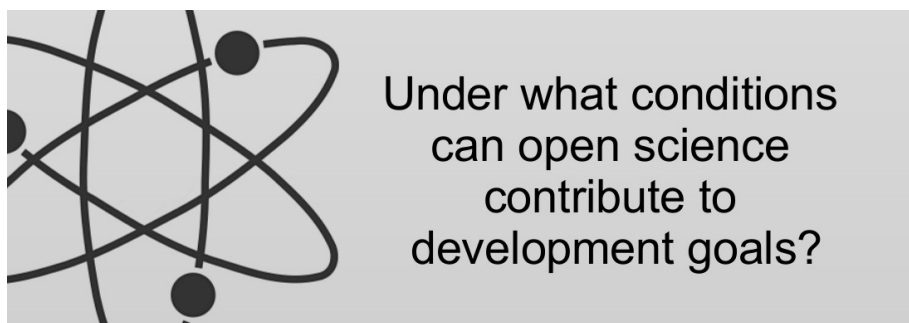


Open science & development goals: shaping research questions

What do we include in our definition of open science? And what is meant by development? Two key questions when you're discussing open science for development, as we were yesterday on day one of the IDRC [OKFN-OpenUCT Open Science for Development workshop](#).

Participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have gathered at the University of Cape Town in an attempt to map current open science activity in these regions, strengthen community linkages between actors and articulate a framework for a large-scale IDRC-funded research programme on open science. The scoping workshop aims to uncover research questions around how open approaches can contribute to development goals in different contexts in the global South. Contextualization of open approaches and the identification of their key similarities and differences is critical in helping us understand the needs and required frameworks of future research.



Several key themes, which generally provided more questions than answers, came up throughout a day packed of presentations, discussion and debate: strategic tensions, inequalities, global power dynamics, and the complexity of distilling common challenges (and opportunities) over large geographical areas. Some of the key strategic tensions identified include the balance between the "doing" of open science as opposed to researching it, as well as the tension between high quality research and capacity building at an implementation level. Both tensions are centred on inextricably linked components which are important in their own right. This brings up the question of where should the focus be? Where is it most relevant and important?



The issue of inequality and inclusivity also featured strongly in the discussions, particularly around citizen science – by involving people in the research process, you empower them before they are affected. But this begs the questions: How open should citizen science be? Who takes the initiative and sets goals? Who is allowed to participate and in what roles? With regard to knowledge, a small number of countries and corporate entities act as gatekeepers of the knowledge produced globally. How should this knowledge be made more accessible? Will open scientific approaches make dialogue and knowledge distribution more inclusive?



By the end of the first day's discussion, the workshop had surfaced opportunities and challenges for each of the regions, but many questions still remain in terms of how to address the complex issues at hand and bring together the complex and disparate components of open scientific activity. Day two of the workshop will be focused on articulation of research problems, possible areas of activity and the structure of the envisioned research programme.

Join the discussion via Twitter via #OpenSciDev.

(See the post covering Day 2 and the wrap up on our site [here](#) or on the OKFN blog [here](#))

by SarahG (Pictures by Uvania Naidoo)



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