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## Robust and self-sustainable data infrastructures: Drivers of data literacy and citizen empowerment

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In today's data-centric world, the ability to understand and interpret data is no longer a specialised skill but a fundamental literacy that empowers citizens to engage with governance and societal issues effectively. However, a large gap exists between the burgeoning role of data in society and the average citizen's data literacy levels. Bridging this gap requires a multifaceted approach that fosters a symbiosis between data-related grassroots initiatives with top-down government-led collaborations. A resilient data infrastructure acts as the spine of a data-literate society. By providing reliable, accessible, and understandable data, these infrastructures become breeding grounds for various data-related activities, such as data analysis, storytelling, and decision-making. In particular, Data Champions Programmes flourish when embedded in a robust infrastructure.

Data Champions Programmes are community-led initiatives designed to identify and mentor individuals with the aptitude and enthusiasm for data interpretation. These individuals serve as catalysts within their communities, promoting data literacy by disseminating knowledge, facilitating discussions, and acting as data liaisons during decision-making processes. While these initiatives are powerful tools for grassroots initiatives, their impact is often localised due to resource constraints and lack of standardised training and tools.

Governmental intervention can remedy these limitations. By collaborating with civic data initiatives such as open data platforms, hackathons, and educational workshops, governments can provide Data Champions with the resources and platform they need to scale their efforts. This creates a symbiotic relationship where the government gains valuable community insights, and citizens gain the skills and confidence to engage with data-driven governance.

A robust data ecosystem is not just beneficial for individual citizens; it serves as a fertile ground for journalists, universities, and research centers. Journalists can leverage this infrastructure to produce data-driven stories that are both compelling and informative. Universities and research centers benefit from a citizenry that values data, often resulting in more substantial community engagement in research projects and increased data availability for academic purposes.

The Planning and Statistics Authority of Qatar (PSA) plays a pivotal role in establishing a resilient data ecosystem. By creating partnerships with civic data initiatives and developing a robust data infrastructure, PSA is nurturing a data-literate society effectively. Through PSA's efforts, data becomes a resource accessible and interpretable by the masses, thereby promoting a more informed citizenry and more participatory governance. They save time and effort while moving forward instead of re-walking on roads that have previously proven – through information, data and statistics –useless.

The accuracy of data, information and statistics and their continuous availability in point-in-time measurements is a crown that gives these data, information and statistics value to users. The benefits are dependent on their accuracy and availability in a time frame that helps individuals, institutions, societies and States to maximize their utilization.