

# Publish What You Fund

## Annual Report 2016



## About Us

We envisage a world where aid and development information is transparent, available and used for effective decision-making, public accountability and lasting change for all citizens.

Publish What You Fund is the global campaign for aid transparency – for more and better information about aid, that is accessible and usable by all. The first global campaign of our kind, we were launched at the 2008 Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness by a coalition of governance, aid effectiveness and access to information advocates.

Our 2016-2019 strategy has three key objectives: to raise both the visibility and quality of data on aid and development, and to encourage that data to be used. We want these three objectives to lead to more effective decisions on aid and development and for all initiatives to be accountable to the people they seek to help.

By **visibility**, we mean that at least 80% of aid and development information, including humanitarian aid, should be visible and accessible to anyone. The best way to do this is to publish data to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), a global registry of development data.

By **quality**, we mean that aid and development providers should publish data that is timely, comprehensive, accessible and comparable. This includes forward-looking financial data, project locations, activities and results.

By **use**, we mean identifying and removing barriers to using data for effective decision-making, accountability and learning. It is critical that aid and development information is joined-up with other important data sets e.g. on other financial flows and domestic budgets, so that those who use this information have the fullest possible picture to base decisions on.

Our head office is in London. We also maintain representation in Brussels and in Washington DC, where our work is supported by Friends of Publish What You Fund.

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Thank you to our funders who supported us during this year: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Omidyar Network, Interaction, Indigo Trust, Joffe Charitable Trust and Friends of Publish What You Fund.

## Message from Giles Bolton Chair, Board of Directors

Global development efforts are moving beyond aid alone. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, and the democratic process of their creation, shows a much broader global understanding of what it will take to enable people around our world to improve their lives and move out of poverty.

But funding remains vital to those efforts, whether it's for development aid, climate-related financing or humanitarian relief. In an era of ever-increasing accessibility to information, along with declining trust in governments and institutions in many developed and developing countries alike, transparent aid and development finance really is more important than ever.

### Looking back

Publish What You Fund's 2016 Aid Transparency Index showed that 25% of aid now meets the highest transparency standards, and a further 10% meets our Index category of 'good'. Five years ago, none did. This is encouraging, tangible progress, and I am proud of the role Publish What You Fund has had in achieving it.

Transparency is not confined to grants and project aid: in the past year, major donors extended their commitments to cover humanitarian aid and development finance. We also saw great progress in the behind-the-scenes work that is essential to enable increased transparency to translate into increased aid effectiveness. Our Joined-up Data Standards project, in partnership with Development Initiatives, is building practical bridges between open data standards, data users and statisticians. The Open Agricultural Funding project, in partnership with InterAction, has helped identify what those using agricultural data need to make aid information practically useable and efficient.

Transparency makes aid easier to use, it drives effectiveness and it increases support for it - with both recipients and the taxpayers who fund it. The progress in recent years is, in many ways, remarkable. But there is a lot more that still needs to be done. Aid can become much easier still to use, much more effective and much better understood.

### Our changing team

It has been a year of transitions for Publish What You Fund. I became Board Chair in June 2016 and was joined by Claire Hickson as Vice-Chair. I would like to thank my predecessor, Karin Christiansen, who becomes Founder and Patron, as well as Fran Perrin who served as Chair in 2014-15, and all other members of the Board past and present.

Our team also saw some changes during the year. A number of long-serving team members left Publish What You Fund, including Liz Steele and Nicholas Winnett. We welcomed James Coe, Andy Lulham, Saara Rashid and Catherine

Turner, who joined the existing staff, including Nicholas Dorward, Elise Dufief, Linda Grimsey, Tom Orrell, Sally Paxton and Katie Welford, led by Rupert Simons. I have been deeply impressed by the team since becoming Chair, and would like to thank them here for their tireless work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders for their support over the past year. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has supported our work since Publish What You Fund was founded in 2008. We also acknowledge support from the Indigo Trust, Joffe Charitable Trust, New Venture Fund, Interaction and the Omidyar Network.

Finally, I am very grateful to our US-based Friends of Publish What You Fund, chaired by George Ingram. We worked closely together over the past year and will continue to do so in pursuit of our joint vision of a world where aid and development information is transparent, available and used for effective decision-making, public accountability and lasting change for all citizens.

### **Looking ahead**

In the coming year, Publish What You Fund will put a special emphasis on understanding and removing barriers to greater use of aid data. In particular we hope to make aid data easier for recipient governments to build into their own budgets and contracts, and for civil society organisations to use to hold governments and donors to account.

Closer to home, we will review the methodology of our Aid Transparency Index, and we will carry out an evaluation of our own impact as an organisation to help ensure we play an effective role in the future. And we will, of course, continue our advocacy on aid transparency and our monitoring of progress across the industry.

2016 marked a significant debate in many countries about the kind of societies and international collaboration people want. Whether you are worried that aid is not as effective as it should be, or you are worried about public support for aid declining in provider countries: transparency helps. Our role is to ensure that it continues to increase.

**Giles Bolton**

**Chair, Publish What You Fund**

# The Aid Transparency Index

The Aid Transparency Index, first published in 2011, is the only independent measure of aid transparency among the world's major aid organisations. It tracks and encourages progress, while holding donors to account for commitments they have made to open up their information.

2015 was an important year for Publish What You Fund as it was the year of the Busan deadline. Back in 2011, we worked hard to secure an agreement at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) for donors to publish to IATI by December 2015. As such, a critical focus this year was pushing all donors, and especially our key targets, to meet their commitment, and to provide a report on how they performed.

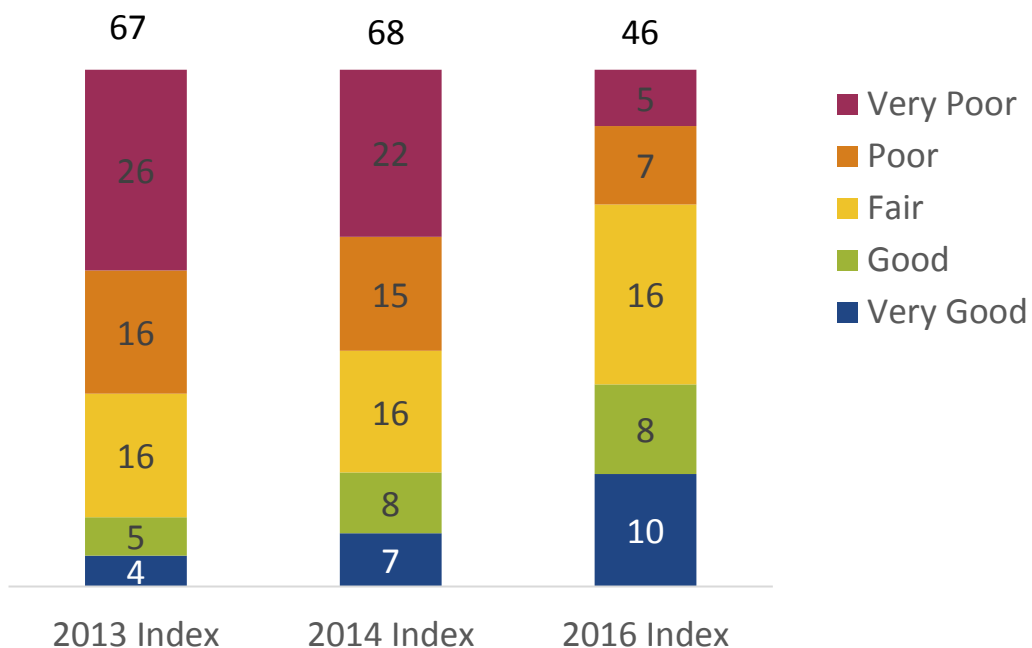
To facilitate this, we undertook publication of the [fifth Aid Transparency Index](#), timed to coincide with the Busan deadline. The Index cycle consists of three main stages: Data collection and consultation; Website design and report production; Launch and promotion.

The results and analysis demonstrated that overall, the quality of data published to the IATI Registry has improved, with donors improving the comprehensiveness and timeliness of their publications. Ten donors, accounting for 25% of total aid, are included in the 'very good' category, fully meeting the Busan commitment to aid transparency.

“Publish What You Fund’s annual assessment is very powerful driver for improving reporting on aid transparency... you [Publish What You Fund] really motivated us to work very hard... we’ve seen [the Index] as a huge incentive to work to excel.”

Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP, 2016 Index launch

Number of donors by Index category, 2013 - 2016



However, there is a lack of key data on development projects from a majority of publishers. Out of the 46 organisations included in the Index, 28 are still in the 'fair' to 'very poor' categories. Specific information on finances, performance and relevant documents such as evaluations and contracts is not always published. Furthermore, over half of the organisations do not publish forward-looking budgets.

Some publishers such as Italy, Japan- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France- Ministry of Economy and Finance and China have been in the 'very poor' category for the past three years, highlighting their lack of commitment to transparency efforts. The results show that UNDP was the top performer closely followed by the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and UNICEF. In addition, 17 donors improved by one category, and one - Belgium - improved by two categories. Since 2013, 16 donors have improved their total score to move up at least one performance category.

We launched the Index in Washington, DC, on April 13, 2016. The event featured a keynote speech from UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. The panel included senior representatives from UNDP and MCC, and expert input from Jerry Sam of PenPlusBytes Ghana and Charles Kenny, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Global Development.

## Projects

Publish What You Fund works to make sure that information on aid is transparent, usable and used. Whilst good progress has been made by donors to make their aid and development data available, there is still much work to do. Above all, the quality of that information must improve if governments and civil society in recipient countries are going to be able to use it, as well the donor organisations themselves. Ways that we can contribute to this include helping people to understand better how data is used in particular contexts and for that data to be usable alongside other important sets or pieces of information. Our project work, therefore, aims to find ways to make information easier to use in specific sectors and compatible with other important data sets. During the past year, we worked on two projects:

### Joined-up Data Standards

Data has immense potential to help drive poverty eradication and sustainable development. It can enable a better understanding of development challenges and the policies needed to address them. However, while more and more data is becoming available, the vital information it holds often remains inaccessible because it is being published in different formats or standards. People can see snapshots of what is going on, but not the whole picture. Existing and future data standards need to be able to join up.

With support from Omidyar Network, Development Initiatives and Publish What You Fund are working together to make this happen by focusing on two things – technical solutions and political will. Joined-up data will help both decision-makers and those holding them to account to have the crucial information they need. This information can support better decision making to drive poverty eradication, sustainable development and to respond effectively to crises.

Our research to date leads us to make three clear recommendations:

- New standards must be created with joined-up thinking from the start.
- We need joined-up leadership: standard setters from different organisations and governments must work together on this issue.
- We urgently need technical translation services to read between machines and formats to meet the ambitions of the 2030 development agenda.

This project runs from August 2015 to December 2017.

## Initiative for Open Ag Funding

The Initiative for Open Ag Funding is supporting donors to publish specific information that will allow a clearer and more reliable picture of agricultural investments worldwide. This will ensure that the billions of dollars invested in agriculture each year reach their full potential.

Investments in agriculture are critical to improving food security and nutrition, and to reducing poverty. In order to make the most effective investment decisions, organisations must have access to timely, comprehensive, and comparable information from across the sector. For example, knowing what crops or value chains are already present in a certain district or region allows organisations to invest in other crops or regions for greater impact. It also helps find areas for collaboration with existing programmes.

At the moment, this information is either unavailable, poor quality or not comparable due to differing data or coding standards. Without this data, organisations struggle to identify where their resources can make the most difference. They miss opportunities for collaboration, duplicate efforts or even replicate unsuccessful programme approaches.

The Initiative for Open Ag Funding is a partnership of Publish What You Fund, Development Gateway, CGIAR, Foundation Centre and Open Data Services, led by InterAction. It will work directly with donor organisations to improve how they capture and publish this agricultural investment data. We are also exploring potential technical solutions to better capture and publish data, as well as encourage greater use.

This project runs from February 2016 to December 2017

## Future Plans

In 2016/17, Publish What You Fund will continue to promote transparency of aid and development finance. We will review the methodology of the Aid Transparency Index to make sure it remains relevant. We plan to look into humanitarian aid and development finance institutions as possible future areas of work. We will also work with governments and civil society in developing countries to understand how they are using data for development and how this use can be improved. Lastly, we are undertaking a rebuild of our main website in order to better reflect our current strategy and work.



# Finance Report

## Statement - Income & Expenditure 2015/16

	2015/16	2014/15
Balance b/f from	£234,468	£131,820
<b>Income</b>		
Voluntary income	-	-
Restricted	£186,574	£160,181
Unrestricted	£345,171	£537,726
Generating funds	-	-
Other income	-	£7,447
Interest	£470	£450
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£532,215</b>	<b>£705,804</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Charitable activities unrestricted	£348,383	£527,620
Charitable activities restricted	£194,676	£75,536
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£543,059</b>	<b>£603,156</b>
Funds c/f	£223,624	£234,468

## Balance Sheet as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016

<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	£5,500	£4,840
Cash at bank	£265,134	£300,608
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>£270,634</b>	<b>£305,448</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	£47,010	£70,980
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>£223,624</b>	<b>£234,468</b>
<b>Total Assets less liabilities</b>	<b>£223,624</b>	<b>£234,468</b>
<b>Represented by</b>		
Unrestricted funds	£130,122	£132,864
Restricted Funds	£93,502	£101,604
<b>Total</b>	<b>£223,624</b>	<b>£234,468</b>

Balance sheet as of 30th September 2016

Auditors: Buzzacott LLP, 130 Wood Street, London, EC2V 6DL

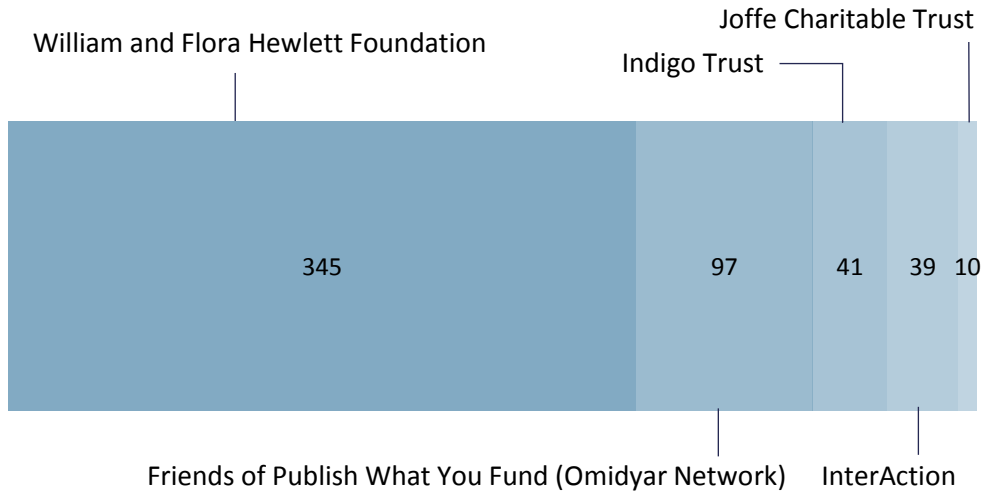
Detailed annual accounts are available on our website and via our publication to the [IATI Registry](#).

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## Income

Total: £532,215

### How we were funded



## Expenditure

Total: £543,059

### How the funds were spent fulfilling our objectives

