Humanitarian Data Transparency Series

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Grand Bargain and transparency agenda

- Grand Bargain launched at 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.
- Aims to tackle humanitarian financing gap.
- Committed to increase transparency in humanitarian spending (Workstream 1).
- Significant gains made since 2016.
- Information needs to be actively used.
Project Objectives

Objective 1
• To increase understanding of the information needs and challenges of humanitarian actors on the ground, in particular local and national responders.

Objective 2
• To identify existing open data standards, platforms and tools, and assess their accessibility and usefulness in relation to meeting the needs and challenges identified.

Objective 3
• To identify possible improvements to open data standards, platforms and tools to better provide the information needed and in a way that makes it accessible to these actors.
Project Timeline

Feb 2019: Project implementation, methodology development & country selection

Apr 2019:
- Desk analysis, literature review & preliminary phone calls
- Launch of online survey, analysis of findings & development of key informant interview questions

Jun 2019:
- Bangladesh field trip
- Reports production (data analysis, writing, design)

Aug 2019:
- Iraq field trip

Sep 2019:
- Data analysis and dissemination of initial findings
- Reports production (data analysis, writing, design)

Oct 2019:

Nov 2019:
- Start of key stakeholder engagement

Dec 2019:

Feb 2020:

Mar 2020:

Apr 2020:

May 2020:

Jun 2020:
- Public launch of humanitarian transparency series
Research Methodology

• Desk based research
  o Literature review
  o Phone interviews (50+ stakeholders)
  o Country selection (Iraq and Bangladesh)

• Online survey
  o 187 responses from 100+ organisations
  o 109 responses from 63 organisations in Iraq
  o 78 from 54 organisations in Bangladesh

• Key Informant Interviews (in-country)
  o 66 interviews
  o 32 interviews in Iraq
  o 34 in Bangladesh
• **Research Brief 1**: Publication of humanitarian funding data

• **Research Brief 2**: Data collection, analysis, and use in protracted humanitarian crises

• **Research Brief 3**: The use, challenges, and opportunities associated with digital platforms

• **Research Brief 4**: Data use capacity in protracted humanitarian crises
Headline Findings: Research Brief 1

Finding 1a: Funding data is of greater relevance to “coordinators”, while “implementers” need management information.

Finding 1b: Funding data, and the auxiliary data that accompanies it, is relevant to coordinators in the field but quality needs to be improved.

Finding 1c: Awareness of IATI data on the ground is low.

Finding 1d: Awareness of FTS is higher, but the completeness of data is a challenge.

Finding 1e: Other sources of financial flow data face the same quality and timeliness challenges.
Finding 1a - Funding data is of greater relevance to “coordinators”, while “implementers” need management information

- Financial flow data mainly used by coordinators.

- 17% of survey respondents in Iraq and 15% in Bangladesh reported using financial flow data frequently.

- In Iraq 30% of respondents, and 35% in Bangladesh need more financial aid flow data.
Finding 1b - Funding data, and the auxiliary data that accompanies it, is relevant to coordinators in the field but quality needs to be improved

- Concerns about the quality of data from IATI and FTS
- Questioned data comprehensiveness, timeliness, relevance and accuracy.
- Unable to find any use cases of IATI or FTS data for decision making.
- Coordinators stated a need for results and evaluation data.
- Opportunity regarding non-financial data the IATI Standard can accommodate.
Finding 1c - Awareness of IATI data on the ground is low

- Awareness of IATI globally has increased.
- Awareness remains low at country level.
- 5% of survey respondents aware of IATI.
- IATI use is very low at the field level.
Finding 1d - Awareness of FTS is higher, but the completeness of data is a challenge

- Awareness and use of FTS was higher.
- Challenges with quality and comprehensiveness of data.
- Undermines trust stakeholders held in it.
- Inhibits use of data for decision making.
Finding 1e - Other sources of financial flow data face the same quality and timeliness challenges

- Stakeholders mentioned other financial data sources.
- Not used for on the ground decision-making.
- Data lacks timeliness.
Headline Findings: Research Brief 2

**Finding 2a:** The quality of data is a concern to on the ground “coordinators” and “implementers”.

**Finding 2b:** Information management capacity is more of an immediate issue for “implementers” than “coordinators”.

**Finding 2c:** Data sharing practices are inconsistent and limited.

**Finding 2d:** Data sensitivity presents another challenge that stakeholders need to overcome when collecting, analysing, and using data.

**Finding 2e:** There is a need for clear and robust methodologies with minimum quality control standards for data collection.
Finding 2a - The quality of data is a concern to on the ground “coordinators” and “implementers”
Finding 2b - Information management capacity is more of an immediate issue for “implementers” than “coordinators”

- Lack of information management functions.
- IM functions are essential across the responses.
- IM positions are not adequately funded by donors.
- Absence of guidance for effective exchange of information.
- Timely collection, analysis, and sharing of data made difficult.
Finding 2c - Data sharing practices are inconsistent and limited

- On the ground data sharing practices are inconsistent and limited in reality.
- Resulting in a lack of trust while limiting data sharing.
- Decisions are being made without having access to all the information needed to make them.

“**There is competition between agencies over the information being shared**”

*Working Group Coordinator, Bangladesh*
Finding 2d - Data sensitivity presents another challenge that stakeholders need to overcome when collecting, analysing, and using data

- Disjointed policies around data sensitivity.
- Confusion about what data can be shared.
- Difficult to access sensitive data at all.
- A quarter of survey respondents said data sensitivity is a challenge.
Finding 2e - There is a need for clear and robust methodologies with minimum quality control standards for data collection.

- Limited quality control of data collection methods.
- Beneficiaries expected to participate in multiple assessments.
- Lack of oversight on needs assessment methodologies and tools.
Headline Findings: Research Brief 3

Finding 3a: Awareness and use of platforms tended to focus on a few specific platforms.

Finding 3b: The number and usability of existing platforms is sufficient for accessing data but users want transparency of raw data and collection methodologies.

Finding 3c: While platforms for uploading reporting data are sufficient, agreement on which to use, and data sharing concerns, create challenges.

Finding 3d: Inconsistency in reporting and underlying data quality issues inhibit use.
Finding 3a - Awareness and use of platforms tended to focus on a few specific platforms

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Highest awareness and/or use
Lowest awareness and/or use
Not applicable
Finding 3b - The number and usability of existing platforms is sufficient for accessing data but users want transparency of raw data and collection methodologies.

- Ability to download raw data in easily accessible formats.
- Ability to download underlying data collection methodologies.
- Number, type, and usability of existing platforms was sufficient for users’ needs.
Finding 3c - While platforms for uploading reporting data are sufficient, agreement on which to use, and data sharing concerns, create challenges.

- ActivityInfo and ReportHub most popular platforms for uploading data.
- Issues in three areas:
  1. The sensitivity of data
  2. Data quality
  3. Understanding of the reporting platforms
Finding 3d - Inconsistency in reporting and underlying data quality issues inhibit use

• Data landscape in both countries is characterised by:
  o Inconsistent reporting
  o Patchy data
  o A sense that much of the data is untrustworthy

• Donors and clusters face challenges with the timeliness of data they receive.

• Untimely or incomplete data risks the creation of data gaps.
Headline Findings: Research Brief 4

Finding 4a: Current funding models and reporting requirements inhibit data use capacity building.

Finding 4b: Transparency of how data is collected is as important as the data itself.

Finding 4c: Lack of localisation and data management capacity inhibits even basic data use and creates a two-tiered system.
Finding 4a - Current funding models and reporting requirements inhibit data use capacity building

• Limited contribution to indirect costs.

• Local NGOs receive a very small proportion of response funding.

• Impacting the collection, analysis and sharing of data in a comprehensive and timely manner.

• Responsibilities are being shifted to staff who do not have the necessary skills.

• Insufficient funding explicitly for needs assessments.
Finding 4b - Transparency of how data is collected is as important as the data itself

- Lack of transparency around data management processes.
- Perceived quality/reliability of data is linked to the transparency of the methodology.
- Risk of unethical data collection.
Finding 4c - Lack of localisation and data management capacity inhibits even basic data use and creates a two-tiered system

• Smaller organisations frequently reported data capacity challenges.

• Unwillingness to prioritise capacity development in local partners.

• Technical capacity of local NGOs eroded by bigger organisations.

• 68% of online survey respondents said that they help manage and create data.
Conclusion

• Positive movement in global publication efforts.
• Data quality is a serious impediment to better use.
• Users struggle to trust the data.
• Issues of coordination, effective data sharing, information management functions, and roles and responsibilities inhibiting data use.
• Need to improve local engagement with data users, data governance and data leadership in-country.
• A more concerted effort to address structural issues.
Recommendations

- To improve the quality of funding data stakeholders need to improve timeliness of reporting and enhance validation processes.

- Consider options for establishing an inclusive data coordination entity.

- Data quality needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

- Consider capacity building for data users.
Thank you for listening

Please take a look at the downloadable versions of the reports via our website at https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/

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