Publish What You Fund is the global campaign for aid and development transparency

Who we are

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.

We work to ensure that all aid and development data is transparent and available, usable and used. We believe that this kind of data has the potential to be transformative and contribute to better development outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are an independent NGO with unrivalled knowledge and expertise in aid transparency. We combine robust research and technical expertise with targeted advocacy in order to make aid and development efforts more transparent and effective.

We have strong relationships with donors, partner country governments and NGOs and are uniquely placed to facilitate greater dialogue, awareness and understanding among and between key stakeholders in aid transparency.

Why we are here

Knowing who is spending what, where and to what effect is essential to making aid more effective and accountable. But this information is not always readily available. Without it:

- Donors are unable to harmonise their operations, leading to duplication and gaps in funding

- Partner country governments may be unaware of incoming aid and development finance when allocating their own budgets, hindering the effectiveness of their own efforts

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and policy makers in both donor and partner countries cannot be sure that promised funds are spent well

We have been central to the aid and development finance transparency movement since 2008.

What we do

Over the coming years our work will focus on three strategic areas:

1. Collaborating to ensure data is used to contribute to improved development outcomes and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

We are working to support donors, government representatives and CSOs to use aid and development information to make aid more effective and accountable.

We are experts in analysing, visualizing and presenting aid data and financial flow information. Using this as an advocacy tool, we ensure that such evidence is used for better planning, management and coordination of aid, and for improved development outcomes.

It is this practical application of data, in country settings and for specific issues, while simultaneously building feedback loops to inform and improve the wider transparency system that will ultimately produce the transformative change that aid transparency can deliver.

Examples of our work:

- US Foreign Assistance (US FA) - This project aimed to inform relevant debates around proposed cuts to US FA budgets. It combined a deep-dive into US FA data with research in key partner countries (Nicaragua, Cambodia, Liberia and Senegal). Our findings were fed into the FY19 congressional budget debates through our strong network of US partners. A key outcome was to demonstrate how better data on foreign assistance can be used to improve decision-making. We produced a set of recommendations on how the US and wider donor landscape might further improve its aid transparency.

- With Publication Comes Responsibility: Using open data for accountability in Benin and Tanzania - The main objective of this research was to explore what it takes to move from transparency to accountability. We identified barriers to using open data to make aid and development finance more effective and accountable, and suggested how the barriers might be overcome.

- Open Agriculture Funding (OpenAg) - We supported this InterAction-led project to ensure donors have the timely, comprehensive, and comparable information they need to make smarter agricultural investments, and tackle food insecurity. We led much of the data-use elements, including consultations with in-country and HQ-based stakeholders, data-use training, and piloting the use of IATI in programme design. We found the available data was useful for higher-level analysis but not detailed enough to properly inform decisions on how and where programmes should operate. To meet some of the identified user needs, OpenAg produced a series of tools to support donors to enhance their data. One such tool automatically extracted granular information, such as locations and crop type, from project documents.

2. Making all aid and development finance data transparent and available

We have constructive relationships with a broad range of donors; supporting them in their efforts to increase aid and development transparency levels while concurrently holding them to account via the Aid Transparency Index process.

The donor landscape is changing dramatically, and we are adapting accordingly.

We are using our research, data analysis and evidence-based advocacy to continually unlock aid and development information across a broader range of aid and development financing vehicles.

Examples of our work:

- Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) Review - Building on the success of a number of DFIs in the 2018 Aid Transparency Index, we have begun research into varying DFI models, approaches and missions, and how these might support or challenge the push for aid transparency. We aim to identify how the work of these bodies can be harnessed— or at least guided— to support more effective development outcomes.

- Towards Climate Finance Transparency - We assessed the gaps and potential synergies between aid focused and climate finance focused transparency mechanisms.

- Transparency of Chinese Aid - In this paper we explored how well individuals are able to track Chinese foreign assistance. The report primarily centred on the lack of information available but does make some estimations.

3. Strengthening and extending our research, advocacy and technical expertise to improve the usability of aid and development finance information

We combine effective research, evidence-based advocacy and technical knowhow to improve the quality and usefulness of the data that donors share. We continue to campaign, to amplify and extend the benefits of aid transparency for better development outcomes and achieving the SDGs. We engage with transparency-related initiatives, such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), to support progress and highlight areas in need of improvement particularly data quality and usability, and the interoperability of data standards.

Examples of our work:

- Aid Transparency Index - Our flagship publication tracks and measures donors' progress towards transparency. This public comparative ranking of donor agencies, based on a robust methodology, enables us to identify changes needed and galvanise major donors to progressively increase and improve the aid and development information they make available. Since 2011 the Index has raised the profile of aid transparency and enabled us to effectively influence some of the largest aid donors in the world to 'publish more and publish better'.

- Aid Transparency Tracker - We've developed and maintained an online data collection platform that provides the main, underlying dataset for the Aid Transparency Index. The Tracker includes an automated data quality assessment tool (for indicators where comparable and timely data is available via IATI).

- Data Quality Tester - We've developed a free to use tool which allows organisations to test the quality of their data before publishing to the IATI Registry. This self-assessment tool applies a series of tests to a data set based on the Aid Transparency Index methodology and identifies areas where data quality is lacking. It is useful for donors who currently or are planning to publish their data, whether or not they are included in the Index.

- Technical Solutions - On a day to day basis we write, test and share fixes for the core IATI systems and interfaces, responding to technical questions and striving to better understand the needs of users. We have so far provided over 250 fixes for IATI software.

Publish What You Fund

You can find more details of our three areas of work and plans for the future in our 2018-2021 Strategy.

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