AIDINFO: TOWARDS GREATER TRANSPARENCY IN THE DELIVERY OF AID

INTRODUCTION

In Rwanda the Ministry of Finance keeps records of donor funding on its Development Assistance Database (DAD). In 2006, there was a discrepancy of $96 million between what was recorded on the DAD, and disbursements for the same 16 donors to Rwanda recorded on another database – the OECD's Creditor Reporting System. The following year the discrepancy was almost twice as much, at $166 million[1]. A study in Bolivia found that five different donors funding the same programme did not share information or reporting systems, which meant that the team leader in the Bolivian institute receiving the funds spent nearly half her time complying with five different sets of rules[2]. And in Malawi a government official responsible for building clinics told researchers that she found it difficult to plan how to spend her limited budget because she lacked vital information about where NGOs, with funds from abroad, were putting up clinics[3].

These are all symptoms of the lack of transparency in aid affairs. Though there is an abundance of financial information published by aid organisations and programmes, often it is for their own specific purposes and a limited audience, and not in a form that makes it accessible and useful to the many others who might need it. Lack of consistent, comparable and accessible financial data is a major reason why the debate about aid is so polarised, with good economic brains on both sides arguing passionately that it is a good thing and it works, and equally passionately that it is a curse, undermining self-reliance in the developing world. With so many gaps in the evidence, these are matters of opinion. Nobody really knows.

> "*We do not know, even now, how much money arrives in any developing country as a result of aid*." Judith Randel, director of aidinfo

Today the issue of transparency is rising up the political agenda as everyone, from donors and recipients of aid, to the man and woman in the street whose tax money and individual donations provide much of the funding, is anxious to know where and how aid money is spent, and whether or not it achieves its aims.

This report describes the birth and evolution of one transparency initiative, aidinfo, set up in 2007, its motivation, vision and mode of operation. The report starts with a brief historical overview of the aid business, charting the changes in philosophy and attitudes that have guided aid to the developing world over the decades, and influenced the relationships between donors and recipients. It sets aidinfo within the general zeitgeist of aid effectiveness and transparency, and is intended for anyone interested in the debate about these issues, and particularly the part played by aidinfo, whether they be aid and development insiders or interested outsiders.

SIX DECADES OF AID

The international aid system has its roots in the period following the end of World War II, when the success of America's Marshall Plan in rebuilding a ruined Europe encouraged the belief that rich nations had a legitimate role to play in assisting the economic development of poorer nations in the interests of peace and trade. As Europe's empires began to collapse in the 1950s and 60s, western countries saw aid as a means of maintaining links with, and discharging their moral responsibilities towards, their former colonies. The emphasis in the early days was on large infrastructure projects like dams and roads, and the attitude of donor countries tended to be paternalistic.

During the Cold War years official development assistance was often used by the big powers as a strategic tool in support of allies among leaders of developing countries, no matter what the complexion of their regimes. Huge amounts of aid money went to prop up people like Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, and Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, for example. Though the alleviation of poverty and socioeconomic development have always been the primary concerns of non-governmental aid organisations, these became the more explicit focus again of official development assistance with the collapse of communism and the Berlin Wall in 1990, when geopolitical concerns were less pressing.

Since then there has been much debate in the aid community about how to make funding for development more effective, with the recipients of aid increasingly making their voices heard. Paternalistic attitudes no longer have a place, and today the principle of partnership between donor and recipient is widely accepted, if still unevenly practised.

In 2001 the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) set up a Task Force on Donor Practices, the main purpose of which was to identify where the modus operandi of donors might be causing unnecessary problems for recipient countries. Obvious examples are the burden imposed by the large number of official missions developing countries are required to host, and the excessive red tape involved in getting projects off the ground. In the first five months of 2002, for example, the planning division of the Ministry of Health in Bolivia received 14 separate donor missions[4]. And Task Force researchers doing a case study in Tanzania heard that delays of five to 10 years in turning pledges of aid from donors into practical projects were not uncommon, especially in the water and roads sectors[5].

The Task Force set out to document examples of good practice, particularly those where donors sought to simplify procedures and to ensure their priorities were in harmony with the recipient country's own development agenda.

> *One of the key lessons about development cooperation is that donor-driven initiatives rarely take root and that developing countries and their people must be at the centre of any effective system.*[6]

At the United Nations Millennium Summit of 2000, all member states committed to working together towards a set of eight Millennium Development Goals on issues such as poverty and hunger, health, education, and access to technology. The Guardian newspaper called this

"the greatest promise ever made" to the world's poor[7]. It greatly energised the international community and, together with popular movements such as Make Poverty History, stimulated aid spending, which has increased dramatically since the turn of the century. The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (OECD DAC) has expanded from 16 member nations in (??) to 24 today. And serious new players outside the DAC -- including China, India, Turkey, Russia, Brazil, Venezuela and South Africa -- have entered the field[8]. It is estimated that about $60 billion a year is raised also from private sources such as foundations, NGOs, churches and private companies.[9] A best guesstimate, given the lack of transparency in aid financing, is that total aid to developing countries in 2009 was about $200 billion[10], up from ??? in 1999. *(or else put the DAC figure for 2009 plus 1999, if that's all I can find.)*

Preoccupation with effectiveness

The pressing question raised by increases in funds is how effectively they are being spent: does more money translate into better results? In 2003 the OECD set up a Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, with members drawn from multilateral and bilateral donor organisations and developing countries, to work on improving the effectiveness of aid. And in 2005, a high level conference on aid effectiveness was held in Paris, bringing together key players in the aid community from north and south, including government ministers.

The Paris conference culminated in the Paris Declaration (*see box*) which describes a set of five key principles in the delivery and management of aid, together with a timetable for reaching specified goals. It was signed by more than 100 ministers, heads of agencies and other senior officials representing donor and recipient governments and multilateral aid organisations[11]. *(Is this figure for signatories still valid???Please advise)*

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

The five principles for guiding the delivery of aid and creating an enabling environment are:

Ownership: Developing countries will exercise effective leadership over their development
policies and strategies, and will co-ordinate development actions

Alignment: Donor countries will base their overall support on recipient countries' national
development strategies, institutions, and procedures

Harmonisation: Donor countries will work so that their actions are more harmonised, transparent, and collectively effective.

Managing for results: All countries will manage resources and improve decision-making for
results

Mutual accountability: Donor and developing countries pledge that they will be mutually
accountable for development results

Where does the money go?

Real progress towards any of the Paris goals depends among other things on greater transparency, and this has become another major theme in the aid debate and part of a much wider campaign for openness, freedom of information, and transparency in financial affairs.

"There isn't one of the Paris Declaration principles that isn't enabled by transparency. Ownership, alignment, harmonisation... All of these things: it's hard to see how you can achieve them without resource transparency between the partners." Tony German

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, for example, British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Formally launched in June 2003, the EITI is intended to strengthen public accountability of those who work in oil, gas and mining enterprises, and the governments who receive revenues from their activities. Its main purpose is to try to address the problems of exploitation, corruption and secrecy that dog the industry and ensure that the population as a whole reaps the benefits of a country's rich natural resources.

(Note: I still need to speak to Rufus Polak about Freedom of information campaigns worldwide – to put aidinfo in a wider context. We have had problems linking up, but have plans to speak next week or early October.)

In a number of countries, grassroots activists have put pressure on their leaders to open up the workings of government. In the UK, for example, Prime Minister Gordon Brown engaged Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the worldwide web, in 2009 as an expert adviser, and data.gov.uk – a programme to make government information and statistics freely available over the internet -- was launched in January 2010. Since then, a large number of individuals and groups have used the raw data to put together information on a huge range of specific issues, from council spending, housing and planning statistics, and the location of landfill sites, to lists of schools based on their Ofsted ratings, and real-time spending by the treasury. These information packages are known as 'applications', or 'apps' for short, and can be accessed over the internet.

"Today, the public expects not only more information about government, but also access to the underlying data so that they can draw their own conclusions," says aidinfo[12]. In the USA data.gov, launched in 2009, gives the general public access to databases created by the federal government. Its purpose is to allow popular participation in government affairs and to enhance efficiency among government agencies by opening them up to scrutiny[13].

Though the idea of greater transparency was already taking hold in the corridors of power, with Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, and President Barack Obama all personally championing it to some degree, a major stimulus for both the UK and USA initiatives was the activity of 'civic hackers'[14], who used their IT expertise to extract data from official websites and use it to shed light on the secretive workings of government.

Political commitment to greater transparency in domestic affairs, which is increasingly manifest in the developed world as a principle of good governance, set the scene for transparency in aid. As Carolyn Culey, senior policy advisor at aidinfo, observed in an interview: "It's been a very important factor because I think politically we're knocking at an open door."

AIDINFO: BIRTH OF AN IDEA

In November 2007, Judith Randel and Tony German, directors of the independent consultancy Development Initiatives, set up aidinfo with funding from the Hewlett and Gates Foundations. Aidinfo's aim is quite simply "to reduce poverty through improved aid transparency." The initiative has its roots in Randel's and German's own extensive experience of aid finance.

The most comprehensive source of bilateral aid statistics is the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which publishes data provided by its 24 member countries through the Creditor Reporting System (CRS). Every year the DAC publishes *The Development Cooperation Report*, which provides annual statistics on official development assistance and analysis of trends in international aid.

In ??? Randel, then working for the international agency ActionAid on the financial side, spent a week in Paris speaking with statisticians and learning how the CRS is compiled. This opened her eyes to the power of statistics to illuminate the workings of aid. In 1993, together with other like-minded people in the international NGO community, she launched *The Reality of Aid* – a 'shadow' of the DAC's annual *Development Cooperation Report* which looks at aid from the NGO perspective. An NGO in each of the donor countries takes responsibility for gathering specific information on how its government's aid budget is spent, and this is used to compile *The Reality of Aid.*

ActionAid was the lead agency in the beginning, and Randel and German, who had left ActionAid to set up Development Initiatives in 1992, managed and edited the report on a consultancy basis for the first 10 years. In 1996, *The Reality of Aid* network reached out to include southern NGOs, and in 2000 the arrangement was formalised with the creation of an international management committee and agreement that responsibility for producing the report would revolve between member NGOs, north and south. The secretariat today is within the IBON Foundation in the Philippines.

It has been a matter of policy with *The Reality of Aid* reports from the beginning that NGOs check their data with the relevant government departments before submitting them for publication. Not only does this avoid possible controversy over the figures becoming the focus of media attention at the expense of the real issues, but it helps foster personal

engagement and trust between government and NGOs. Importantly, too, it demonstrates respect for the statisticians within donor organisations whose work tends to be undervalued and voices rarely heard. They too are frustrated at times by limitations imposed on the data by OECD rules over which they have little influence.

Because of the multiple benefits from this approach, the principle of data being validated before they are published has underpinned aidinfo's work also from the start.

A major influence on Randel's and German's thinking about aid transparency that helped sew the seed for aidinfo, was the International Budget Partnership (IBP). Set up in 1997 by the US-based Center on Budget Policy Priorities "to nurture the growth of civil society capacity to analyse and influence government budget processes, institutions and outcomes,"[15] the IBP works with individual civil society groups mainly in developing countries. It is especially concerned with the impact of a country's budgetary spending on the poor, and with making budgets more transparent, accountable and responsive to their needs. (*see box*)

"It's our money. Where's it gone?"

In 2003, the Kenyan government set up the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), which gives each of the 210 members of parliament approximately US$1 million for community development projects expressly designed to fight poverty. With no meaningful oversight of the process, the scheme is open to abuse, and in a short video shot in 2009, the International Budget Partnership documents the action of a civic organisation it has partnered, Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), in calling the MP and CDF officials of Kenya's Likoni constituency to account.

The process started with members of MUHURI visiting the CDF offices to obtain records relating to community development projects – not an easy task since Kenya has no Freedom of Information Act. The next step was to train a select group of community members as activists, giving them a solid understanding of the CDF and how it should work. "It's interesting to see the reactions that come out of people the minute they have access to the information," says Sowmya Kidami, IBP's social audit trainer. "They immerse themselves in the files and get very excited."

The task of the activists was to educate and mobilise the public, and a street theatre group was particularly effective at getting the message across – that "this is your money and you need to get involved". Community members then visited the sites of projects, particularly schools that were supposed to have been renovated or newly erected, and found a host of discrepancies with the records. Besides a general complaint of sub-standard materials, they found a school with eight windows instead of the 12 specified in the budget, one door instead of two, and a painted wall instead of a blackboard. And in one community where 4.1 million shillings were supposed to have been spent on a new school, there was nothing on the site at all. Anyway, said the angry residents, no one asked us whether we wanted a school. What we want is a dispensary.

Armed with the evidence, community members attended a public meeting to which their MP and CDF officials had been invited to answer their complaints. The video tells how, the night

before the meeting, the MUHURI offices were raided by a gang of nine, and the security guard stabbed in the neck. This, they believed, was obvious intimidation by government officials who had things to hide. But it only added to the determination of the community who were bold in their questioning the next day. They demanded, for example, why no community groups got the opportunity to tender for the building contracts; and why the education bursaries seemed only to go to friends and family of the bursary committee?

"When I look at the social audit process across the world, the response is the same: once people have access to those records there's a sea change in their attitudes," says Sowmya Kidami. "That's when they realise, ok, this is information I've never seen in my life, that I might not be able to access very easily...let me see what I can do with it."

Faced with mounting criticism, the Kenyan government agreed in June 2009 to review the Constituency Development Fund and its workings.

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2zKXqkrf2E

Another major influence on Randel and German's thinking was a 2007 report by the Center for Global Development (CGD) called *Following the Money: towards better tracking of global health resources*[16]. In 2004 the CGD set up the Global Health Resource Tracking Working Group to shed light on the factors limiting the effectiveness of development assistance for health. Their 2007 report revealed just how difficult it is for developing countries to plan effectively and to maintain their National Health Accounts – on which the World Health Organization relies heavily for monitoring activities at national level – without access to timely and accurate information on aid inputs and on prospective spending by donors.

Following the Money also revealed that at the global level, people working on particular health issues often make huge efforts to gather data to track resources in their particular interest area. But because these health data are not routinely disaggregated by type of disease or intervention, or published in a format that makes them easily retrievable, this puts a major strain on the people fielding their requests. "Information about health-sector resource flows resembles a poorly sewn patchwork quilt, with many essential pieces missing," observes the report.

All of this pointed to the pressing need for new ways of doing things – and in particular new ways of gathering and publishing data on resources for poverty alleviation to make them accessible and usable by anyone who needs them. In late 2006, Development Initiatives was approached by the Hewlett Foundation, which was also thinking along the same lines, to develop a proposal for how a programme to promote transparency in aid might work. Aidinfo was the result, and in November 2007 the first tranche of funding for an initial two-year programme was paid by Hewlett, and the Gates Foundation which had also come on board. Today, aidinfo employs 23 people who work out of Development Initiative's offices in Wells, Somerset, UK.

aidinfo: making the case

"We've been very lucky to be working on this at this particular time in history; a lot of things have worked in our favour – Obama coming to power, the MPs' expenses scandal, the financial crisis, all of this has made transparency really hot," Victoria Room, aidinfo policy and programme officer.

Demonstrating just how much need there is among developing countries for good quality, reliable information about the aid coming their way is vital to obtaining commitment from donors to provide it. Aidinfo has carried out detailed case studies in a number of recipient countries, including Malawi, Rwanda, Cambodia and Nicaragua. And because donor governments and international organisations are also important users of each other's information, they have done case studies also of the international NGO, WaterAid, a think-tank, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and a research organisation, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). This is the first time anyone has looked systematically at the needs of potential users of information, and during the course of their studies, aidinfo researchers have spoken to a wide range of people including parliamentarians, government ministers, donor staff, academics, NGOs, community organisations and individual citizens.

In Nicaragua they set out to discover what communities who were direct beneficiaries of aid, knew about the money being spent in their neighbourhoods – where it came from, with what conditions, how much was involved, and whether there was scope for pulbic participation, or channels for complaint. As a general rule they found that people's knowledge of these things was inaccurate, and donors' professed commitment to transparency was not apparent in practice[17].

The researchers themselves had huge difficulty in accessing information. "When a project implemented in a community is a small component of a national or regional programme, even the ministry or agency responsible for the project, does not know how much money is being spent in the community because programme costs are not disaggregated to this level," says their report. But "the greatest difficulty was in gaining access to national-level government officials, as well as some bilateral development missions and international NGOs. For the most part their staff treated our requests for information with great suspicion."[18]

In Rwanda the researcher found that USAID staff within the country used a different definition of 'disbursement' when reporting to the country's Development Assistance Database from that used by USAID headquarters staff in the USA when reporting to the Creditor Reporting System of the OECD-DAC[19]. He also found huge discrepancies between information in the DAD and the CRS about funding for projects. For example, 12 donors who appeared in the CRS as having spent a total of US$47.13 million in Rwanda in 2006/7 did not appear at all in the DAD. And eight other donors who appeared in the DAD as having spent nearly US$279 million in the same period did not appear in the CRS. Since project-level aid makes up 20-30% of Rwanda's budget, this makes planning and management of the economy a real headache for the government.

"What I found in quite some detail in Rwanda," says Rob Tew, economics and statistics advisor to aidinfo, who conducted the research, "was a whole confused spaghetti web of information, where senior civil servants will be getting their information from several different sources, and it doesn't necessarily match up with what they're hearing from some other source. They don't trust any source fully, so often they'll come up with a best guess based on their own gut feelings and these somewhat conflicting reports."

In Malawi Tew found that one of the Nordic countries had closed its mission in Lilongwe and stated that it would no longer send aid to the country because of alleged corruption. In fact, several million dollars worth of aid had continued to flow each year from the donor, but through NGOs and faith-based organisations, with the government of Malawi having no knowledge of these funds.[20]

The US-based IHME conducts research on global health-related issues to help inform policy making. In order to present a comprehensive picture of aid spending on health it has to mine for data from a wide variety of sources, including annual reports, tax filings, and personal correspondence, besides the larger databases of the CRS, foundations and voluntary agencies. Problems identified during the case study included the fact that the quality and completeness of data provided by donors are extremely variable, and that there are no central repositories for data on NGO spending, or on the spending of non-US foundations. The lack of standardised definitions also causes the IHME problems when trying to compare data across sources[21].

WaterAid too experienced extreme difficulty gathering data for an advocacy campaign about the importance for child survival of investing in sanitation projects[22]. Diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections kill more children under five in the developing world than any other diseases. Poor sanitation is a root cause of both conditions, and to make its case WaterAid wished to compare aid spending on sanitation projects in Zambia and Madagascar from 2004-2006 with that of spending on malaria and HIV/AIDS, two diseases that attract large amounts of donor money. But besides having to go to multiple sources for the information, a major problem for the NGO was that none of the data categorised under 'water and sanitation' were disaggregated.

The fact that large, well-resourced NGOs and research institutes could not access the data they needed has made a particularly powerful advocacy point for aidinfo.

"I've had face to face meetings with senior civil servants, finance ministries and people within national banks in a number of countries, and everywhere I go people are telling me they don't know as much as they need to about aid; the information isn't as good as it could be when they get hold of it etc. This seems to be a universal feeling across the developing world, frankly," Rob Tew, economics and statistics advisor to aidinfo.

These case studies, together with earlier research by Development Initiatives and detailed discussions with partners in the field, have revealed a set of clear priorities for making aid data more useful and accessible to the many different people who need it.

- Data need to be more timely. For realistic macroeconomic planning, in particular, real-time data are essential. But for very many users the time-lags in publishing data are a serious frustration.
- Better information is needed on future aid flows to allow for forward planning by all those who depend on aid funds
- There needs to be consistency in how data are presented, and in the definitions used
- Comprehensive, accurate and comparable data are required that cover all donors
- Data need to be disaggregated at least by country, by sub-national level, and by sector
- There is a need for greater clarity on how, when, and through what channels aid is delivered, and more detailed information on projects and the conditions attached to funding
- Aid data need to be delivered in a more user-friendly format that makes the information truly accessible

Underpinning all aidinfo's work is a straightforward belief in transparency as a moral imperative: that people have an inalienable right to know what is being spent in their name. And though transparency has traditionally been equated with efforts to tackle corruption, for aidinfo it is primarily about accountability and effectiveness of aid. They believe, moreover, that transparency is transformative in that access to information opens the way for dialogue between people at all levels -- often changing the power balance in relationships, as exemplified by the IBP project in Kenya. "Among other things, [transparency] starts to challenge -- or it makes it easier to challenge -- the really fundamental things about extremes of poverty and wealth," observes Randel.

What makes aidinfo unique among the burgeoning number of aid transparency initiatives is that it goes beyond advocacy to propose practical steps for achieving this ideal. These do not involve setting up yet another database, nor do they involve donors having to report separately to many different users of their information. Aidinfo's proposals involve aid organisations agreeing to common standards of reporting, and the use of cutting edge technology that will allow them to publish information once, wherever they wish, and potential users to retrieve the information they need without difficulty over the internet -- and, importantly, to reuse it in any way they choose. (The technical aspects of aidinfo's programme will be discussed in detail later in this report.)

"*The last thing anybody wants is another database. But it doesn't matter how many times we say IATI is not a database, we sit in meetings where people believe it* is *a database. It seems very hard for people to understand that this* isn't *a database!*" Carolyn Culey, senior policy advisor to aidinfo

In this initial phase, the programme has focussed on aid simply because that is where their experience lies. But aidinfo's original vision was to be able to track any resources that could be spent on reducing poverty, whether they be ordinary donor funds, domestic resources or military flows. The technical solutions they propose are relevant beyond the field of aid, and tracking all resources remains the ultimate goal. "We've been very clear that we're starting with aid but we're not finishing with aid," explains German.

Power to the people

In 1996 researchers looking at the effectiveness of a large educational grant programme in Uganda found a very different picture on the ground from that suggested by central government documents. Though the ministry responsible was disbursing the funds regularly to the 18 regions involved in the study, the tracking initiative discovered that only about 20% of the money was reaching the schools to which they were allocated. In the poorest communities in particular, some schools received none of the funds to which they were entitled: they were being siphoned off by politicians and local government officials responsible for disbursing the money.

Experimenting with ways to curb such corruption, the Uganda government ran a newspaper campaign to inform parents and teachers about the grant programme and their entitlement under it, with the intention of empowering them to hold the local officials to account.

In 2002 Ritva Reinikka and Jakob Svensson returned to Uganda to analyse the effects of the campaign[23]. They revisited the 250 schools in the initial public expenditure tracking survey as well as some others, and found dramatic results. By 2001 the schools were, on average, receiving over 80% of their annual entitlement – and that included the schools which had been receiving nothing in the mid 1990s.

However, one third of the schools were still receiving less than two-thirds of their entitlement, and the study revealed that those schools closest to a newspaper outlet – and therefore where parents and teachers were most likely to be well informed – experienced the best outcomes. Enrolment figures and grades were both higher than in schools not so easily reached by the information campaign.

"These findings suggest that experimentation and evaluation of the processes... that improve voice and accountability, and thus indirectly enhance the learning environment in schools by ensuring that entitlements actually reach their beneficiaries as intended, should be high on the policy and research agenda," concludes Reinikka and Svensson's report.

ACCRA – A DEFINING MOMENT

In September 2008, a High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness was held in Accra, Ghana, for the purpose of reviewing progress on the Paris principles. The conference was attended by key decision-makers from governments north and south, international development agencies and multilateral organisations, as well as by more than 80 civil society organisations from around the world. During discussions the concept of 'ownership' of the development process contained in the Paris Declaration was broadened to include a role for civil society and parliamentarians as well as government ministries. Furthermore, delegates made a commitment not only to publish more and better information about aid, but to publish the conditions attached to aid agreements also, and to provide forward-looking information as far as possible, to help with planning.

But the most important development at Accra was the launch of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, IATI, brought to the table by a group of donors (???) led by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). Modelled loosely on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, IATI's mission is simply "to make information about aid spending easier to access, use and understand."[24] Aidinfo has been intimately involved in developing the initiative with DFID, seeing it as a vehicle for turning the ideas they advocate about aid transparency into practical reality. They had not intended to launch IATI so early in the life of their organisation, but Accra presented a sudden, ideal opportunity, since the dominant theme in discussions leading up to the conference was transparency, and here was a gathering of influential people who could carry it forward.

Following the Accra conference, aidinfo was commissioned to fill in the details and work out exactly how the programme might work. They started with a detailed look at current reporting practices, to identify shortcomings. These included lack of common standards and definitions; tardiness in reporting so that much information is out of date by the time it is available; and lack of information on conditions attached to funding. They also noted frequent opportunities for errors creeping in as data are requested and delivered in ad hoc fashion and often entered into spreadsheets or databases by hand – a costly, labour intensive operation.

Then aidinfo set about designing a system that would overcome these limitations. This has been accepted by IATI, whose immediate task is to develop a set of common standards including:

- exactly what information donors will put in the public domain as a matter of routine;
- common definitions of aid terms
- a common electronic format for publishing data;
- a code of conduct.

All IATI standards are put before members for agreement, and at a meeting at the OECD offices in Paris in July 2010, phase one – setting common standards for what information will be published -- was agreed by donors who have joined the initiative. To date, 18 donors have signed up[25], and 13 partner countries have also endorsed the initiative[26], which is managed by a steering committee made up of representatives from donor organisations, partner countries, civil society organisations and experts in information. Aidinfo co-hosts the IATI secretariat together with DFID and the UN Development Programme, as well as hosting the Technical Advisory Group which is responsible for developing the IATI standards.

The standard concerning what information will be published as a matter of routine stipulates that donors must identify the immediate recipient of their funds. The code of conduct in turn obliges the donor to ensure that the person to whom funds are passed also reports what they did with the money, and so on down the chain, so that funds are traceable through the system. But this is a long-term ideal, since some of the smaller organisations and sub-contractors in the chain lack the capacity to comply with IATI reporting standards.

Besides setting standards, IATI's role is to act as the central 'hub' for the exchange of information. It will maintain a registry of information available and where to find it on the

internet. The IATI registry is not a database, but a huge library or catalogue of links to the worldwide web. Potential users subscribe to the registry in much the same way as subscribing to a blog. They specifying their area of interest, and the registry automatically advises them when new data become available.

AIDINFO: THE TECHNICAL FIX

"*We need to get away from the idea that what the world wants is a bigger and bigger data warehouse, to the idea that if all the data are available in a common format, then you'll just take the data you need for your particular purpose*." Owen Barder

Aidinfo's baseline research has confirmed that a huge amount of aid information is already published on the internet. But it is not in a form that is useful to very many people who need it, is widely scattered across a myriad websites, and is extremely difficult for most people to search out. Furthermore, it is impossible to track the course of funds through the system to show where money starts and ends up, and to link this to results. One of the biggest challenges therefore has been to find a technical solution for these problems that is feasible, affordable, simple and user-friendly enough to be accepted as the common standard.

To understand the system aidinfo is proposing it is necessary to look briefly at how the worldwide web – invented by Tim Berners-Lee in 1991-- has evolved over the last two decades. In the early days the web was just a vehicle for publishing things, such as press releases, photographs, stories, or statistical data, online. This was web 1.0, and it was essentially passive.

Web 2.0 was a much more interactive system of information sharing. It brought us social networking, and allowed people to post comments on sites such as TripAdvisor, and to review books and other items for sale on Amazon, for example. Now we are moving towards web 3.0, a far more sophisticated model based on what Berners-Lee calls 'the semantic web'. With this model, search engines are able not only to recognise key words when looking for information on the web, but to 'understand' the concepts and ideas contained in the web pages we are interested in – to interrogate the underlying data, in effect -- and create links to related things. Thus with web 3.0 our computers are no longer just passive recipients of our instructions and enquiries, but are able to engage with our search, and actively help us find things we might want by linking related data.

**What's the difference between the internet
And the worldwide web?**

The most common — and still surprisingly widespread — misconception is that the internet and the web are the same thing. They're not. A good way to understand this is via a railway analogy. Think of the internet as the tracks and signalling, the infrastructure on which everything runs. In a railway network, different kinds of traffic run on the infrastructure — high-speed express trains, slow stopping trains, commuter trains, freight trains and (sometimes) specialist maintenance and repair trains. On the internet, web pages are only one of the many kinds of traffic that run on its virtual tracks.

From: "The internet: Everything you ever need to know", by John Naughton, The Observer, Sunday 20 June 2010

This is not just the future; it is already beginning to happen. "An obvious example would be the way you get your weather data," explains Owen Barder, director of aidinfo. "You probably don't go to the Meteorological Office website and look at the weather; you get it when you log into the BBC website, or when you log into your Google homepage. It's intermediated: somebody else is getting that information from a government website – from the UK Meteorological Office, for instance – and making it relevant to you, perhaps putting it into your language because you've logged into that website before, and perhaps knowing where you live."[27]

Another example is when you book a holiday online through Expedia. Their website will come up automatically with information about what the weather is like in the place you will be visiting, Barder explains. "Expedia knows that you're flying to the South of France next weekend, because you've booked a flight. So it's connecting a piece of weather info that it's got from the Meteorological Office with a piece of personal info about you that it's got from you, and it puts those together and provides you with a service.

"That notion of the data being available in a structured way, so that it's actually useable by a third party organisation that wants to do something with it, as opposed to just present it, is potentially as big a revolution [in communication] as the worldwide web has been in the last decade," says Barder.

This is the cutting edge of the worldwide web, and it is where aidinfo is working. Their technical system for IATI is based on the principle that is central to the 'semantic web': that people don't just want to be able to access information more easily, they want to be able to re-use it for their own purposes, to create their own narratives, or provide a tailored service for customers. Aid donors therefore are being asked to provide the raw data, and the technology is designed to search out these raw data. For this to happen, all data must have an identifying 'tag', analogous to the bar codes found on grocery items that the shop assistant runs past the electronic eye on the till, or to the ISBN on books. The tag will give the data a unique web address that makes them traceable by web browsers. And with aidinfo's system, the web address will automatically be communicated to the IATI registry.

Donors or other providers of information who sign up to the IATI standard can continue to publish wherever, and in whatever format, they wish, but they will need to export that information to a data file, and create a tool that enables them to 'convert' it from their own format into the IATI format at the click of mouse. The process would be similar to using the "save as" facility in a Microsoft programme, which allows you to save information in a variety of different formats, explains Simon Parrish, technology solutions advisor to aidinfo.[28]

By making the raw data available to anyone who wants to use them, donors are released from the obligation or necessity to repackage their information for multiple purposes, such as for reporting to the OECD-DAC, as well as to the aid information management systems of developing countries, or other development partners, or to individual researchers – all of which have their own styles and rules for reporting. This approach is summed up in IATI discussion papers about the technology as: "publish once, use often".

Pilot testing the new technology

Aidinfo have already produced prototypes for both the technical data format – the computer language and structure for publishing the information – and the IATI registry. They have tested the technology with six donors (DFID, World Bank, UNDP, the Global Fund, Netherlands and Spain) and five developing countries (Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Colombia, and Burkina Faso), to see whether they are able to get the raw data from donors' websites, convert them into the IATI standard, and import them into the aid management systems of the recipient countries.

For the pilot study, aidinfo had to develop a conversion tool able to work with raw data from any source. They worked also with the people running the aid management systems to develop import tools that enable each developing country to import data directly into their system from any donor, provided they have been converted into the IATI format. "The tests were successful in each case, and have provided practical proof of concept," says Simon Parrish.

"What this means for DFID, for example, is that they only need to concentrate on one thing – publishing their data in IATI format. They don't need to worry about what Malawi wants and what Rwanda wants and what Colombia wants. And what it means for Rwanda is that they don't have to worry about what DFID's data format is, or the Dutch system looks like – they just have to worry about the IATI format as well. If we were trying to create this system without the IATI standard, we'd have to create lots of point-to-point relationships. So IATI is like a 'hub'."

THE "SUPPLY SIDE": BUILDING POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Common standards -- underpinned by laws -- are already part and parcel of the accountancy world because they are needed, among other things, for tax purposes and public stewardship. Standardized definitions and electronic formats for publishing business accounts mean that

all kinds of interested parties – banks, stock exchanges, tax offices, for example -- can access and extract the data they need automatically on their computers, and work with them. But the whole concept is new to the development community, and aidinfo's challenge is to build the political commitment that will make it eventually a matter of routine, as it is in the accountancy world.

"There's a fundamental question that people ask: 'Who wants raw data? Why would we spend our increasingly limited admin time worrying about publishing data as raw data? Who could use that?' So there's sort of a credibility gap." Simon Parish, technology solutions advisor to aidinfo.

They face a number of barriers, political and psychological. Donors are used to controlling the message, controlling the way information is used, and some are reluctant to let go. Statisticians, typically preoccupied with the quality of the information they put out, may be particularly protective of their raw data. They may be wedded to their own way of doing things, and baulk at the idea of having to publish more speedily and frequently and to collect the additional information required by the IATI standard. Getting support for the transparency initiative from those working on the frontline of data gathering is very important, and aidinfo has worked intensively with the statisticians of the DAC and with their counterparts in the developing world. "They are the gatekeepers to a lot of what we want to do," explains Randel. But winning them over is only half the battle, since the statistics people typically have tight budgets, little voice in departmental affairs, and no authority to change the way they do things.

So aidinfo does intensive advocacy also with the decision-makers. They have held special meetings on aid transparency at the party conferences of the three main political parties in the UK, and given presentations at all the relevant international conferences, including Paris, Accra, and an international parliamentarians conference on aid effectiveness held by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of the UK in 2008. They have also made concerted efforts to bring other major donors such as the big US-based foundations on board. "We have spent time talking to them and trying to understand that philanthropic world, because the incentives to be transparent are very different," says Victoria Room, policy and programme officer with aidinfo.[29] "It's not public money, and they have their own agendas, and there are a whole lot of issues there that need to be thought through." Aidinfo has recently drafted a strategy for engagement with the foundations, which are growing in number and influence and already have their own transparency initiative, Grantsfire.

A number of NGOs are already committed to the idea of transparency and have initiatives of their own. Oxfam, for example, has done work with Malawi on the provision of basic services. In Myanmar, ActionAid has been working since 2008 with the victims of cyclone Nargis in a programme that openly documents exactly who has been paid what and for what purpose. And the advocacy organisation Publish What You Fund (PWYF) was set up just before Accra specifically "to work to increase the availability and accessibility of timely, comprehensive and comparable information about aid." [30]

Since the beginning, aidinfo has played a coordination role for the aid transparency movement in the NGO community, bringing like-minded people together in a monthly teleconference. At first the 'meetings' involved just aidinfo's regular partners – PWYF, the

Development Gateway, and PLAID (a research partnership between the Institute for Theory and Practice of International Relations at the College of William and Mary, and the Political Economy and Development Lab at Brigham Young University)[31]. But the group soon expanded to include up to 30 other organisations. Participants share information and advice, brainstorm over hot topics, and update each other on their activities. Besides providing mutual support and encouragement, the purpose of the regular teleconferences is to avoid duplication and enhance cooperation.

The NGOs with transparency initiatives are valuable allies since they help to amplify aidinfo's messages. But many are resistant to the idea of opening their own affairs to scrutiny – signing up to the IATI standard that will require them to make their own information and raw data available and accessible to anyone who wants it.

This underlines what aidinfo is up against in advocating for the IATI standard to become routine practice. For all players in the development field who are served well by the status quo – including also the private companies and academic institutions who benefit from aid budgets – IATI represents a potential threat because it exposes vested interests and raises awkward questions about fees and salaries and spending priorities.

The costs and benefits of IATI

An important way to win support from donors is to demonstrate the advantages of the system, and in August 2008 aidinfo published a painstaking analysis of the costs and benefits of joining IATI in a consultation document, "Better information: better aid". [32]

The extra costs donors will incur in implementing IATI include the investment in new IT systems, or in adapting their existing systems, in training their staff to use them, and in collecting and recording the extra information required by the standard. The authors calculate that if all DAC donors were to sign up to IATI, the collective costs of implementing the standard would be between $8.2 million and $18.1 million. But these would be one-off costs, with 'negligibly small' costs of maintaining the system thereafter – and they would be speedily offset by the savings to be made in streamlining the provision of information.

At present, members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee report to the DAC database and to the Creditor Reporting System as well as to approximately 50 different country-level aid management reporting systems (AIMS). The authors estimate that each one of a donor's country offices spends about seven staff days a year reporting to the AIM of the country in which it operates, and a further 24 staff days a year responding to individual requests for information. If these averages are applied to the estimated 2,300 donor country offices around the world, then the DAC donors have between them the equivalent of between 120 and 570 full-time staff working on reporting aid information.

"Our central estimate is that donor country programmes spend approximately $22 million a year providing information to country aid management systems and meeting other requests for information about aid," says the report. It suggests that by eliminating the need for duplicate reporting, they could save approximately $7 million a year if they signed up to the IATI standard.

Our central estimate is that investment in greater aid transparency might lead to improvements in aid worth about $1.6 billion a year, which would justify the costs [of implementing the IATI system] *in less than one day.*[33]

The authors estimate substantial savings too – of around $1.3 billion a year for all DAC donors -- in curbing corruption. But they explain that greater transparency alone is not enough to prevent diversion of funds: it must empower people to demand accountability.

To underline the huge cost savings for users of donor information the report takes the example of the resource tracking organisation, PLAID (Project Level Aid Database). An estimated 40% of PLAIDS's operating budget is dedicated to requesting and searching through documents for data, and entering them manually into databases. If these data were openly available and easily accessible as per IATI, PLAID could save roughly $1.2 million per year.

"Mapping for Results"

In the summer of 2010, the World Bank, a signatory to IATI, undertook/decided to "geocode" their projects – that is to map the latitude and longitude of all their activities in the field so that they can be precisely located. Working in collaboration with the international NGO Development Gateway, the Bank engaged a team of 13 interns to do the work. Combing through thousands of documents to find the names of towns and villages, then working with maps to find their geographical reference points, the team managed to geocode all the Bank's active projects in Africa and Latin America, as well as in Indonesia and the Philippines – a total of 1,216 projects in more than 71 countries/12,000 locations – in just seven weeks.

Information about exactly where donor funds are being spent is typically extremely hard to find, with the location of community projects, schools, clinics, wells and sanitation projects often buried deep in donor documents. Geocoding as a means of making this information readily accessible is a valuable exercise for a host of reasons. Not only does it make it easier to monitor the effectiveness of projects when people know where to look for results, but it enables donors to coordinate their activities, avoid duplication and, when used in conjunction with poverty distribution maps, to ensure aid is going to where it is most needed. Furthermore, says Bjorn-Soren Gigler, Senior governance specialist, World Bank: "Once you geocode you give access to information to people to see that this particular education or health project works in their community, so then they can hold their governments and donors to account."

The World Bank has plans to use standardized location data in all its project documents in future. But, says Michael Findley, Professor of Political Science at Brigham Young University, "If this is going to be a real game-changer, other donors have to get on board."

Source: http://blog.aiddata.org/2010/08/mapping-for-results.html

THE "DEMAND SIDE": WORKING WITH THE END USERS OF INFORMATION

Encouraging the donor community to commit to greater transparency is only half the equation. Aidinfo works intensively also on the demand side, with end users of information. "We have found that there are big inhibitions to people using aid data," explains Randel. "Often they don't know information exists, and when they do get access to it, it's very intimidating."

To try to overcome the inhibitions, aidinfo has held statistics workshops in a number of locations north and south. These include one in Dublin with the international NGO Trocaire, one with WaterAid in Somerset, and one in London to which a big variety of NGOs working on poverty eradication were invited. A statistical workshop in Kampala, Uganda, attracted a wide range of participants, also, from NGOs and CSOs, to officials from central and local government and the central bank. Hosted by Development Research and Training (DRT), a Uganda-based NGO with which aidinfor has worked extensively, the workshop looked not only at what data were available and how to find them, but how the information could be used in practical terms – for advocacy, planning, or demanding accountability, for example.

"I remember participants coming out of there extremely fired up; they said everything was demystified," observes Charles Lwanga-Ntale, executive director of DRT. "It was exciting and surprising to note that even people from the central bank felt they had things to learn. It shows one the challenges faced even by institutions that one would expect to be on the ball."[34]

This suggested, said Lwanga-Ntale, that rather than seeing the task of transparency as being to empower CSOs to hold their leaders to account, it should be seen as empowering people at every level, right up to central government, by teaching them to access and use data to improve effectiveness.

> *"Exercises to demystify aid are extremely valuable. People say, 'We wish we'd known this earlier. We'd have challenged our leaders...'."* Charles Lwanga-Ntale, executive director of Development Research and Training (DRT), Uganda

Aidinfo is working also with the International Budget Partnership (IBP), PWYF and TIRI, another NGO with similar interest in tracking resources, whose main focus is on ensuring integrity in public and business affairs, or curbing corruption. The four have agreed to work together in areas such as training workshops, taking advantage of each other's networks and contacts, and they are currently pilot testing some of their ideas for cooperation.

With IBP, aidinfo is also engaged in "The Six Questions" campaign, which involves asking a set of standardised questions of 85 governments, in both donor and recipient countries.[35] The questions, developed by aidinfo in consultation with Oxfam US and PWYF, cover the topics of maternal health, environment and aid transparency. Partners in each of the 85 countries are putting in Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to their governments to find the answers. The principal purpose is to test FOI laws, and how well resourced governments are to respond to requests. But the partners also want to test how much governments actually know about aid to their countries.

Aidinfo has worked also with parliamentarians in a number of African countries in collaboration with the Brussels-based Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa. AWEPA has set up an ODA Oversight Programme aimed at helping African parliamentarians to monitor the performance of government ministries in handling donor funds. The programme is working in five pilot countries – Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa, Benin and Ghana – and aifinfo's main input has been to provide them with a set of statistics for each country describing how much aid flows in annually, from which donors, and to which sectors. AWEPA uses these statistics at workshops within the countries to show parliamentarians what kind of information is available and how to access it, and to stimulate debate about transparency and accountability.

"We found that most parliamentarians are completely in the dark about all this," says Rob Tew, who attended the workshops in Mozambique and Tanzania, each attended by about 30 people. "Being parliamentarians with constituencies, they are very keen on knowing about the aid that gets into their constituencies. But one of the shortcomings of the data is that the geographic breakdown often stops at country level, so you can't see further where it has gone."[36]

Infomediaries: making sense of raw data

As a general rule, parliamentarians do not have the time, even if they have the capacity, to search out data, no matter how useful. It has become clear that, as IATI begins to take off, parliamentarians and many other potential users of aid information will depend on the services of "infomediaries" – individuals and organisations with specialist technical skills – to process the raw data and turn them into information that is relevant and meaningful to different clients/audiences.

"What we're asking the donors to provide is in effect wholesale data. Most people will still need a retailer to enable them to use that information." Owen Barder

One such organisation, African Monitor, based in South Africa, publishes an annual report, *The Development Support Monitor*, which attempts to track aid entering countries across sub-Saharan Africa to see what it has achieved. Aidinfo has been working with them for some time, strengthening their capacity to access date. "Aid effectiveness is a hot topic among CSOs and NGOs in Africa. We are advocating for more aid and better aid, but demanding more effectiveness is meaningless without transparency," says Yared Tsegay, editor of *The Development Support Monitor.*[37]

Recently aidinfo started working with another infomediary organisation, the UK-based Aids Portal, which provides data services to people working in the field of HIV and AIDS. Together the two organisations are running a pilot project to test their ideas about the use of technology to improve the availability and accessibility of aid information.

While Aids Portal is providing the technological support, ainfo is responsible for designing the project, known as Aidlink, to answer a number of questions and to identify the barriers

and incentives to people engaging with the technology. They have partnered with the Foundation for Professional Development, a South Africa-based NGO dedicated to building capacity for the health sector, who will manage the pilot phase. Aidlink is intended as a web-based database on HIV-related information, and the partners are particularly interested in testing out the possibilities for making it collaborative – allowing interested parties to add data and information and provide feedback.

This is an important aspect to test, since interactivity is to be a key feature of the IATI system. The intention is that the beneficiaries of aid and infomediaries of all sorts will be able to enhance other people's data with their own input, as long as they too are using the IATI format, in much the same way as many different people make an input into Wikipedia.

Bar camps: brainstorming for new ideas

As described earlier in relation to freedom of information movements in the UK and USA, there are already many people and groups working as infomediaries of all kinds in the developed world, but in field of aid things are only just beginning to happen. Aidinfo is keen to stimulate this fledgling movement, and one of their strategies has been to get involved in "bar camps".

Defined as "open, participatory workshop-events whose content is provided by participants"[38], bar camps began in California in 2005. Their purpose is to stimulate innovation: to generate ideas and practical ways of implementing them. Aidinfo has so far held two such camps. One, hosted by the World Bank in Washington DC, focussed mainly on development policy issues. The second, hosted by The Guardian in London, was billed as "the aid information challenge" and attracted about 100 participants. Aidinfo worked with DFID to provide data on their own aid programme in a machine-readable format, and then invited the bar camp participants to build their own applications. "These techies got together and they built a whole range of applications – all sorts of weird and wonderful things -- just because they loved the challenge of seeing what they could find out from the aid data; seeing if they could spot patterns; seeing whether they could find funding anomalies etcetera, etcetera. It was fascinating," says Simon Parrish.

Aidinfo intends to use the same strategy to stimulate the infomediary movement in the south too, with plans to hold bar camps in Kenya and Nepal.

"People say to us: 'What will people do with these data?' and our answer is, 'We don't know! That's the fascinating thing – we know that the best thing you can do with your data will be thought of by somebody else'," says Simon Parrish

LOOKING AHEAD

How might the world look if aidinfo's vision for greater transparency in aid were to become reality? Here are some scenarios[39]:

- As a British taxpayer, I am sceptical of aid. I write to my member of parliament. She writes back pointing me to a website which shows how aid money is spent. I can drill right down to how my money has been used to contribute to schools and roads and pay for teachers. I can see that in schools supported by British aid, real people have reported that the teacher is nearly always there, and that their children are getting a better education as a result.
- There are 10,000 water points in Tanzania, each with a unique serial number. Whenever someone goes to a water point and finds it is broken, they can send a text message. If they have a smartphone the message automatically includes GPS coordinates. A Tanzanian NGO receives the text messages and so tracks which water points are well maintained. They organize the information by district, and publish league tables of effectiveness, which they send to all the locally-elected representatives. They also send press releases to local radio stations. Local councillors come under pressure to ensure that the water points are properly maintained. The local NGO accesses information published under IATI to discover who constructed and funded the water points. Many were provided by France: they work well. But the water points provided by a British NGO are twice as likely to break down. The British NGO comes under pressure at home to build water points to better standards, or lose future funding.

- My church in Alabama would like to support an AIDS project in Kenya. Turning to AIDSPortal, I find there are 2,600 AIDS projects in Kenya. Information has been entered by NGOs working there, describing what they do and what they achieve. Other people have added pictures, videos and descriptions, and have rated the projects (e.g. responsiveness to local needs, sustainability, efficiency of administration, etc). There are anonymous comments by employees of the aid agencies themselves, sometimes critical. My church wants to fund a project with low administration costs, so I have the website rank the projects on this measure. Three have very low admin costs, but only one gets particularly good reports from the people who use the service. We click the "donate now" link and donate the proceeds from today's collection plate.

Aidinfo's vision, however, goes beyond a preoccupation with aid funding to include transparency of all resources that can have an impact on the poor. It would like to see common information standards like IATI's more widely adopted, so that everyone with an interest in poverty alleviation can put together a more complete picture and keep track of resource flows. Two areas in particular aidinfo hopes to focus on in the near future are funds for climate change activities, and military spending. In both cases the organisation intends to investigate what information is available and from what sources, and to assess its strengths and weaknesses. And it will promote the application of its own principles and IATI standards to the provision of data. "We've already dipped some toes in the water of non-aid resources," says Tony German.

"Aidinfo happens to have started with aid, because that's our home turf. But when IATI is up and running efficiently and we've achieved good monitoring of aid, we've still got a big agenda, which is all of the other resources in countries that could or should be spent on poverty reduction".

ENDS

Author's name removed.
September 24th 2010

REFERENCES:

[1] Aid Information in Rwanda, an aidinfo project case study, prepared by Rob Tew, April 2009.

[2] Bolivia -- A Country Case Study. Prepared for the OECD DAC Task Force on Donor Practices, September 2002 by Andrew Nickson, University of Birmingham,UK.

[3] Interview with Rob Tew 5th July 2010.

[4] Bolivia -- A Country Case Study. Prepared for the OECD DAC Task Force on Donor Practices. September 2002. Andrew Nickson. International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK

[5] Tanzania — A Country Case Study. Prepared for the OECD DAC Task Force on Donor Practices. September 2002. Andrew Nickson. International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, UK

[6] Shaping the 21st Century: the contribution of Development Co-operation. Prepared by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, Paris, May 1996.

[7] "It was the greatest promise ever made. But can we keep it?" Guardian newspaper special report on UN Millennium Development Goals. Tuesday 14th September 2010.

[8] "Aid – where have we come from, where are we, and where are we likely to go?" *(This is a paper by Owen on historical overview of aid, but I don't have details of the original document – please advise.)*

[9] [11] Kharas, H. (2009), *Development Assistance in the 21st Century.* See: http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/11_development_aid_kharas.aspx (*cited in historical overview paper by Owen et al – again, I can't find where it came from)*

[10] Tanzania — A Country Case Study. Prepared for the OECD DAC Task Force on Donor Practices. September 2002. Andrew Nickson. International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, UK

[11] From article in IPS news, Beyond Doha: http://ipsnews.net/new_focus/ffd/index.asp

[12] Aidinfo: phase 2 proposal, September 2009.

[13] Hogge, Becky. Open Data Study. Commissioned by the Transparency and Accountability Initiative. May 2010

[14] In her Open Data Study, Becky Hogge provides an excellent description: Although the word "hacking" has, in the context of computers, evolved in meaning so as to attract broadly negative connotations among the general public, among software engineers "hacking" simply means the experimental development of software and systems to solve particular problems. "Civic hacking" is therefore understood to mean deploying information technology tools to enrich civic life, or to solve particular problems of a civic nature, such as democratic engagement.

[15] International Budget Partnership website

[16] Following the money: toward better tracking of global health resources. Report of the Global Health Resource Tracking Working Group, May 2007. Center for Global Development.

[17] Bottom-up tracking of aid resources – Nicaragua. Aidinfo case study.

[18] Personal communication, 5th July 2010

[19] Tew, Rob. Aid information in Rwanda. aidinfo case study. April 2009.
Development Initiatives

[20] Interview with Rob Tew

[21] Institude for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Case study by Aidinfo.

[22] Personal communication with Victoria Room, plus aidinfo case study on Water Aid, available at: http://www.aidinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Case-Study-Wateraid.pdf

[23] Reinikka, R & Svensson, J. "The power of information: evidence from a newspaper campaign to reduce capture," Policy Research Working Paper Series 3239, The World Bank, 2004.

[24] IATI website

[25] Australia, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, The Global AIDS Vaccine Initiative, Germany, Hewlett Foundation, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank

[26] Burkina Faso, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Syria and Vietnam

[27] Personal communication. 23rd June 2010

[28] Personal communication. 13th July, 2010

[29] Personal communication. 13th July 2010

[30] www.publishwhatyoufund.org

[31] In March 2010 PLAID (the Project Level Aid Database) merged with Development Gateway's own aid database to form AidData – a new facility for tracking aid finance.

[32] "Better information: better aid", aidinfo Consultation Paper, August 2008. Available at: http://www.aidinfo.org/files/better-information-better-aid_eng.pdf

[33] "Better information: better aid", aidinfo Consultation Paper, August 2008. Available at: http://www.aidinfo.org/files/better-information-better-aid_eng.pdf

[34] Personal communication. 15th July 2010

[35] Personal communication with Victoria Room. 13th July 2010

[36] Personal communication. 5th July 2010

[37] Personal communication. 14th July 2010

[38] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BarCamp

[39] Aidinfo. Phase 2 proposal, September 2009