Evaluating Aid Transparency: *Cui Bono?*

Dr. Kate Weaver
Associate Professor, LBJ School of Public Affairs
University of Texas at Austin
Co-Director, Innovations for Peace & Development
ceweaver@austin.utexas.edu
www.ipdutexas.org
Twitter: @kateweaverUT @innovationsPD
Open Development: Transparency and the Politics of Aid Data

Driving Questions

1. What are the key drivers behind aid Transparency and Accountability Initiatives (TAIs)?

1. What are the factors that shape both the willingness and capacity for aid agencies to both signal compliance and actually implement TAIs, and how do we explain variation in diffusion and compliance patterns globally?

1. Closing the Loop – How do we understand the Demand for and Use of Open Aid Data to discern Impact?
Brief History of the Supply Side of International Aid Transparency

- Monterrey Consensus (2002)
- Accra Agenda (2008)
  - IATI (2008)
- Paris Declaration (2005)
  - World Bank AI policies /M4R (2009)
- Publish What You Fund first Aid Transparency Index (ATI) (2011)
- Busan (2011)
  - >200 Signatories to IATI, numerous country-level AIMs, donor level transparency policies and dashboards
Opening Data through Visualization: World Bank Mapping for Results (M4R)

Malawi Open Aid Map

“A game-changing map that shows Malawi’s funding gaps and more”

~ One Campaign
26 September 2012

Interactive map available at http://ccaps.strausscenter.org
Aid Information Management Systems (AIMS) and Donor Dashboards

Welcome to AMP

Welcome to the Foreign Aid in Nepal website from the Ministry of Finance. This site provides public access to the Aid Management Platform (AMP), the online system that the Government and development partners use to manage aid in Nepal...

Source: http://amis.mof.gov.np/portal/

Total Commitments: 10742.00 Millions USD
Total Disbursements: 6074.00 Millions USD
Total Activities: 1043
Aid Transparency’s Theory of Change

**Cui Bono?**

**Governments**: better financial management, oversight and ownership of aid

**Civil Society/Data Journalists**: empowered to participate in development interventions through planning, feedback, M&E

**Donor Agencies**: enhanced donor coordination, allocation, M&E

**Donor Governments and Citizens**: increased oversight and accountability; improved appropriations through evidence-based management
Aid Transparency
From Proof of Concept to Lessons Learned

**Supply**
- How are donors willing and capable of reporting data in timely, useful, accessible and comparable ways?
- How do we continue to refine, scale, validate and sustain robust data collection, coding, and publishing?
- Who should be providing or processing data?

**Demand**
- Who is aware of aid data?
- Who are the primary actors demanding better aid data?
- Who are the consumers of aid data?
- How are actors using aid data?
- Are systems developed to supply data meeting (or generating) specific demands for the data?

**Impact**
- How can we best demonstrate how aid data is used, by whom, and to what end?
- How do we evaluate aid transparency wrt:
  - Improving budget planning/predictability
  - Engaging citizens and empowering feedback
  - Improving donor coordination and efficiency
  - Improving aid accountability
  - Improving development outcomes
Open Aid 2.0: Evaluation Agenda

• Define the key questions on open aid use and impact

• Define the key participatory methods of evaluation to support awareness and demand

• Identify distinct evidence to show use/impact, especially among key stakeholder groups

• Publish impact evaluation results to sustain momentum for open aid work so we don’t “return to base camp” and to push transparency into results-based management
Is aid reaching those in need?

Mapping Aid to Evaluate Allocation

Using Maps for Evaluation: Early Examples
Using Maps for Evaluation: Early Examples

Seeing how aid project locations align with income, health, and livelihood distributions informs aid assessment, planning and coordination.
Using Maps for Evaluation: Early Examples

Is Climate Aid targeted to areas most vulnerable to climate change?

C. Peratsakis, J. Baker, C. Weaver (aid data); J. Busby, T. Smith, K. White (vulnerability data)
Using Maps for Evaluation: Early Examples

Mapping Evaluation Results

Source: AidData
Using geospatial data to enable rigorous impact evaluation of United Nations Peace-building

Source: Michael Findley and Susanna Campbell
In last two years, attention has turned to participatory, qualitative and case study methods to investigate the uses and impact of open data in developing countries.

- Web Foundation’s Open Data for Development
- World Bank’s Open Aid Partnership working paper series
- Making All Voices Count initiative (IDS, Sussex)
- Omidyar Network CFP to study “Open Data: Demand, Use and Impact”
University of Texas PRP Work:

• Prior work on climate finance and aid transparency (>200 interviews in 9 countries)

• Ongoing case study fieldwork on international donor use of open aid data in Nepal and Uganda (~ 75 semi-structured interviews)

• Fieldwork in Washington, DC, on Congressional use of open aid data (~ 35 semi-structured interviews)

• Survey experiment on aid transparency and US public opinion on foreign aid

• Systematic evaluation of literature on demand/use of open data (incl. government, extractives, contracting, budget and aid data)
Observed Impacts?

- Very low levels of awareness and use among donor communities
- Continued reliance on traditional data/information sources
- Low levels of trust in data and burdens of reporting/access inhibit use

+ Increased recipient government involvement in aid management (e.g. Nepal thresholds, sector allocation)
+ Increased awareness of donor activity (e.g. non-DAC donors)
+ Some improvement in efficiency of donor coordination
+ Some civil society participation and feedback
Early Lessons:

Increase Awareness

• Training workshop and civil society outreach

• Build feedback loops and auditing processes to overcome distrust regarding **accuracy** of data
Early Lessons:
Increase Access
(online and off)
Early Lessons: Build Capacity

Key constraints on Data Use:

- Technical capacity
- Analytical Capacity
- Political Capacity (ministerial level commitment)
- Staffing and Domestic Resources
Data Intermediaries

**Translator**
- takes disaggregated, complex information and distills it into the aggregate or narrative form requested by congressional actors, usually in shorter forms with rapid turnaround

**Advocate**
- uses data to shape and promote particular agendas related to aid and development

**Analyst**
- conducts and disseminates higher-level analysis of data behind topline trend/descriptive information. Includes longer research reports, evaluations and audits

**Producer**
- contributes directly to primary data through the collection and distribution of data on aid activities and financial flows

**Consumer**
- takes data from public available data for business purposes, including repackaging and resale of data in new form for identification of business opportunities/contracts
Data transparency will require changing political and organizational cultures as much as changing policy.

Aid workers balance roles as practitioners vs. diplomats.

Organizational learning around open data requires rebalancing information via personal networks and use of public data sources.
Early Lessons:

Quality drives use. Use drives quality.

- **Sustainability** of aid transparency will depend on those who produce the open data developing habits of consuming the same data for internal decision making and data management.

- Donors should "**eat their own dog food**" (Owen Barder, Center for Global Development)

Source: [http://www.owen.org/blog/4486](http://www.owen.org/blog/4486)