EyeOpenerWorks

Tell me and I will forget
Show me and I may remember
Involve me and I will understand
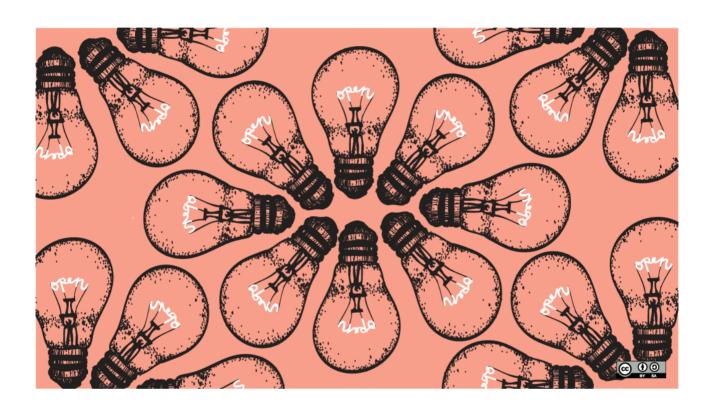
NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR IATI ADVISORY SERVICES AMONG UGANDAN CSOS

FINAL REPORT FOR CARITAS DENMARK

Kampala, December 19, 2018

Caritas Danmark

Introduction

In early 2017 Caritas Denmark published IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative) data for the first time, but one of the first obstacles encountered when publishing was related to the fact that Caritas Denmark implements programmes through local partner organisations. This means that the financial chains of Caritas's projects cannot be traced to the end receivers unless the implementing partners publish their data as well. Due to the high numbers of local partners, this would be very resource demanding and time consuming should Caritas Denmark accompany all partners through the process of publishing programme data through the IATI registry.

A particular concern in this regard is ensuring the quality of the data delivered from these many sources, as poor quality data might be an even less attractive option than no data at all. Hence, for Caritas Denmark to honour our international commitments, cost-efficient ways to support local partners in publishing their data are required. This is why Caritas Denmark commissioned EyeOpenerWorks to carry out a needs assessment among Ugandan Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) for IATI advisory services. Immediate objectives of this process were: A) to identify the motivation and expectations of selected CSOs towards publishing data through IATI, B) to describe potential gaps in the in-house capacity of selected CSOs for publishing data through IATI and consider the specific requirements raised for relevant approaches for IATI advisory services, C) to establish the concerns related to transparency in a context where space for civil society is shrinking and recommend solutions for concern free (though still meaningful) IATI publishing, and D) to list all ongoing efforts towards local IATI capacity development in Uganda. This report reflects the most important findings related to these objectives.

This needs assessment builds on sixteen semi-structured interviews with representatives of CSOs in Uganda carried out between November 15th and December 11th 2018, as well as a validation meeting of the draft version of this report on December 13th 2018. Most of the involved organisations (fourteen) are partners of the Caritas network, as they are funded (or have been funded in the past) by either Caritas Denmark, Caritas Belgium, CAFOD (UK) or Cordaid (Netherlands). Two other organisations involved in the assessment receive funding from Oxfam. Of these organisations, nine are located in Kampala, whereas the other seven are located in Northern or Eastern Uganda. None of the organisations has published IATI data before.

All interviews were carried out by at least 2 members of the EyeOpenerWorks IATI research team. A few times the EyeOpenerWorks team had an interview with only one representative of an organisation, but more often there were several representatives from various departments in an organization (management, M&E, finance, etc.) that took part. Of the fourteen CSOs coming from within the Caritas network, some had heard of IATI before, but none of the interviewees claimed to have any reasonable knowledge of what it entails. The research team therefore dedicated about 20 minutes of each interview to help the respondents in creating a better understanding of what IATI is – and what it is not - in order to allow for a more informed conversation after that. The two CSOs from the Oxfam network were selected because they had already participated in an introductory training on IATI and therefore had a higher knowledge level of the initiative. However, neither of them is (already) engaged in publishing data.

Consequently, the interviews with the CSOs served three purposes. As said, a part of the interview consisted of informing them what IATI is about. Secondly, the goal was to understand the perceptions of these CSOs towards the initiative: do they think transparency in the aid industry is desirable? Do they believe IATI has advantages in practice? Do they think IATI works in the Ugandan context, and for their organisations? Do they have any concerns? Finally, we discussed the ambition of Caritas Denmark

to set up a capacity-building facility for CSOs to publish IATI data themselves: how do the targeted CSOs value this idea, would they embrace it? Would they be willing to pay for an IATI related services? And what do they think would be the most effective set-up and structure of such a facility?

After the first draft report was created, a validation session took place on December 13th 2018 in Kampala. Four CSOs participated in this session. Some of the statements included in this report were made during that session.

The statements of the CSOs on the following pages are anonymized and cannot be traced back to individual respondents. We were happy with the openness and honesty displayed by all interviewees in their sessions, and wouldn't want them to experience any negative consequences because of the potential sensitivity of some of their statements.

Analysing all data, in many cases it proved to be difficult to draw conclusions that are shared by all of the interviewees. Hence we have therefore focused on creating a report that represents the internal variation of ideas and opinions expressed by the group of interviewees. Nevertheless, there are some important general lessons to be learned from the feedback of the CSOs. In the last chapter a number of recommendations is therefore included, that can be made on behalf of the entire group of CSOs involved in this assessment.

The EyeOpenerWorks IATI team
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1. Perceptions, expectations & motivations towards IATI

Almost all CSOs involved in the assessment value the ambition and vision behind IATI. Although most of them have some serious concerns of how to implement the system, the vast majority of the CSOs consider the initiative a good idea, as it increases transparency and accountability. These organisations all want to embrace the initiative, although some of them are still a somewhat hesitant. Reactions to the question whether to embrace IATI ranged from a "yes, but…" in most cases, to an outright "yes!" in a few. The hesitation most often has to do with the practical aspects of IATI, as for most of the CSOs the need for transparency is clear. Only one of the involved organisations expressed grave concerns in terms of moving forward with IATI for their CSO. The respondents of this CSO mostly emphasised the negative consequences of transparency and the undesirable side-effects embracing IATI would have for them. However, when learning more about IATI, also this organisation became more positive about its potential later on in the interview.

1.1 Need for transparency
IATI has been launched to improve the transparency of the development industry and the accountability of the different actors working in it. In each interview this was recognised as something important, and it was the key motivation for almost every organisation to express interest in the initiative. When further discussing transparency, the involved CSOs mentioned various groups to be transparent to, in their view. Most of them focused on tax payers in donor countries having the right to know how their money is being spent, but transparency was also placed in a broader perspective, as something of importance to beneficiaries, governments, donor organisations, partner organisations and own staff members as well. An interviewee stress that transparency is already a core value in their organisation and that even without IATI a lot of effort already goes into being as transparent as possible. In that sense IATI is not something new, it builds upon the broadly accepted notion that CSO transparency is of importance.

Some organisations highlight their role in keeping public institutions accountable as a motivation to embrace transparency. If they want to do so, CSOs need to be transparent themselves as well, as explained by one interviewee: "Transparency is not about the government alone. It is about every type of institution, as every institution can be corrupt, including CSOs." Comparable statements were made by others, as interviewees often mentioned that particularly in Uganda, not every CSO or NGO has 'clean hands': "There is definitely corruption among NGOs! But the question has to do with the magnitude of it." One interviewee explained that "A positive fear, that is the fear of being watched, may prevent you from being corrupt."

"In the past, NGOs could try to get funding for the same activities over and over again, while nobody would notice it. The current focus on transparency and impact measurement is changing that. You can no longer work in circles", said one of the interviewees to describe the current shift towards more transparency in the sector.

As many of the interviewed CSOs are faith-based organisations, many respondents made the link between transparency and religion. A number of interviewees explained that transparency is a central goal of their organisation because of its Christian values, urging the need to 'practice what they preach' and set a good example as Christians. An interviewee highlighted that since the Christian religion is ultimately about full transparency, not embracing IATI as a faith-based organisation would be contradictive. One of the interviewees was very outspoken in this regard, stating that any organisation sceptical about publishing data (through IATI) will have a hidden agenda and something to cover. This was echoed by a number of other respondents, such as in the following statement: "Well, I first tried to phrase it a bit more diplomatic, but yes, I think it's true. You know, there are dishonest NGOs: many

raise double funding from different sources for the same activity. But there are also many good ones who have clean books." Others were less outspoken when asked about the hesitation of other organisations to publish data. They explain it as something that mainly has to do with people not being used to a culture of openness and are convinced that it mainly needs some time before these CSOs start appreciating transparency as well.

1.2 Disadvantages of transparency
Next to the positive implications of being transparent most interviewees also mentioned unwanted consequences that may occur as a result of the initiative. For example, one of them explained that if organisations completely reveal all their budgets, subcontractors may increase prices for their services or may cheat as they can anticipate on the budgets. Also, as one interviewee expressed, staff members may become demotivated if they realise how little of the entire budget is spent on their salaries and they may look for jobs at organisations with larger pockets.

Another negative effect related to transparency mentioned by interviewees relates to the involvement of beneficiaries. One respondent explained that in his experience many beneficiaries believe that all NGO work is based on voluntary work. Consequently, some beneficiaries are surprised when they find out that NGO workers actually earn a salary for their work. This could lead to decreased involvement of beneficiaries, and demands for more handouts and incentives, as they believe that every single shilling of project funding should be directed to the beneficiaries themselves. IATI may worsen these dynamics. Therefore, this interviewee called for more sensitisation of beneficiaries on transparency and accountability when further promoting IATI. This sentiment was not widely shared, other interviewees did not voice the same concern.

A number of interviewees articulated that, while acknowledging some of the negative effects of transparency, it is crucial to stay away from cynicism in this regard. One interviewee exemplified on this point by referring to the Oxfam-related sex scandals in Haiti. If the whistle-blowers in that case had not believed in transparency, these practices would still have been under the radar, he explained. For him, transparency was therefore a modus that you just have to choose for, since the alternative – compromising on transparency – has much more negative consequences. One interviewee explained it as follows: "it is therefore not a question if we should embrace IATI. It is more of a question how we should embrace it."

1.3 Advantages of IATI
For the interviewees, the necessity of transparency is clear, but it is a matter of exploring whether IATI is be the best solution. As stated by one: "We would be the first to share these data, because we believe it is very important to be transparent. But we can only do this if we know for sure where we are heading to."

Next to increasing transparency, a number of other advantages of IATI are mentioned by the interviewees. These advantages can be categorised into two: on the one hand, benefits related to navigating and using IATI data, and on the other hand, benefits related to publishing and communicating IATI data. In the first category one can think of advantages such as: having the possibility of learning from best practices in projects elsewhere; knowing which innovations are being made; being able to compare own activities with others; knowing which donor organisations are active in Uganda and being able to identify new funding opportunities. Advantages that link to the second category include: strengthening the visibility of organisations; being able to showcase activities on a bigger stage; being able to create synergies with other organisations because of being better informed; being able to refer to a neutral platform when having to convince donor organisations of reliability and trustworthiness and linking results at a beneficiary level to the initial tax payer through storytelling.

Other motivations to embrace IATI expressed by the interviewees were more pragmatic in nature. As a representative of one Caritas partner put it: "If Caritas as a whole embraces the initiative, who are we not to do so?" Another interviewee anticipated a future in which embracing IATI would become a prerequisite for any development funder. Therefore, if promoting transparency through IATI is part of the future of development interventions, it would be strategic for any implementing partner to already get used to it.

One of the participants who already engaged in a crash course provided by Oxfam explained that he at first was sceptical about IATI but became way more positive about it during that course.

1.4 Fundamental concerns
On a fundamental level, many interviewees raised some concerns about whether IATI is the best way to actually achieve the purpose of more transparency and accountability in the aid industry. Many of their questions related to the role of government organisations in this regard. Will donor organisations also stimulate transparency among (local) government organisations? Will they try to convince them to embrace IATI as well? Can IATI be used to also improve the accountability of public organisations? Given the special – and in some cases tense – relationship between Ugandan CSOs and government institutions, these concerns are discussed more in detail in the next chapter.

One interviewee believed the key focus of the IATI initiative should – at first - be on advocacy at the policy level, instead of at the small organisations in the field. According to him "transparency begins at the top. Often it is those organisations higher up that lack transparency and accountability. You should not be too hard on the small organisations that are actually doing the real work in the field, but rather on the organisations higher up." In another case, an interviewee that was more familiar with the initiative wondered whether it makes sense in general to expect small organisations to become capable of publishing IATI data: "IATI is like cassava. It is highly nutritious, but that doesn't mean you should give it to babies, as they cannot digest it. Give it to the adults instead."

A concern shared has to do with the potential of IATI to improve the position of beneficiaries. Will beneficiaries also be enabled to voice their issues in the system? In fact, during the validation session, one respondent explained that "IATI of course requires investments. How can we know whether it is indeed a good idea not to spend that money on the beneficiaries directly but on IATI instead? If IATI makes our work more efficient it is a good thing, but if it increases overhead costs it is not." Another interviewee wondered whether the platforms could also be used for story-telling, sharing testimonies of how the beneficiaries are actually benefitting from various projects. This, rather than abstract numbers, would make impact of development aid way more tangible various stakeholders, she believed.

1.5 Practical concerns
Next to the more fundamental issues, the interviewees also raised a number of practical concerns related to IATI. For example, there were questions about the effect of the initiative on the relationship between donor and recipient organisations: what if the donor organisation doesn't want some of this information to be published? Some philanthropist funders don't want their names to be known publicly. Can these be kept out of the reports in the system?

Another concern raised by some has to do with potentially unjust accusations of corruption. IATI data on finances could cause the suspicion of corruption, due to variations in budgets and actual spending, while these variations may have a different nature in reality. Mostly these variations can be attributed to changes in operational planning or currency fluctuations. Does IATI allow for a way to prevent these

unclarities from occurring? Is there space to provide more background details on some of these financial variations? How will this be dealt with?

A number of interviewees raised questions on who would be in charge of publishing when projects are implemented by a consortium. What if partner organisations don't want their data published? And who publishes data in the case of subcontractors?

Other concerns had to do with the required investments: as IATI is relatively new in the Ugandan context, is there any way of finding out what resources (money, time, human resource) need to be invested for successful implementation of IATI? How much initial investments are required and how much to keep it running? That knowledge is essential for a credible cost-benefit analysis.

Lastly, some other concerns shared were related to workload ('How much time will the implementation of IATI cost us?') and safety and validity of the data. Interviewees wondered how easy is it to manipulate data; who is responsible for verifying the data; whether - given the self-descriptive nature of the data - there are scientifically sound measures taken to improve the validity of the data; how long the data will stay online; whether there are measures or mechanisms to make sure that people cannot publish on behalf of an organisation they don't work for; how blackmailing can be prevented and who has access to the 'back-end' of the IATI data.

Since publishing IATI data is a relatively new phenomenon for recipient organisations in Uganda, the research team was often asked to provide examples of other organisations in Uganda who have already engaged in it for some time, to find out what their experiences are so far. Many interviewees expressed that such example cases would probably help in addressing their practical concerns.

1.6 Comparable initiatives
In the interviews, many CSOs asked how IATI is different from other initiatives. Especially QuAM was often mentioned as a reference. QuAM (Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism) is a Ugandan platform launched by the Uganda NGO forum in 2006. It is "a self-regulation initiative developed by NGOs and for NGOs in Uganda; to promote the adherence by NGOs and NGO Networks to generally acceptable ethical standards and operational norms", and according to some interviewees it is currently experiencing a silent death. One interviewee suggested to learn from the QuAM case: "Many CSOs didn't like QuAM because it was pretty strict. If they don't want QuAM, they probably don't want IATI either."

Another initiative mentioned by interviewees as one that could be compared to IATI is the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). CHS is a certification standard whereby an external auditor assesses the operations of organisations in the humanitarian sector in order to improve accountability. Due to these other comparable or overlapping initiatives, a number of interviewees wondered whether IATI is in fact 'the right horse to bet on' in order to make aid more transparent. IATI is promising, but are there any guarantees it will be effective and relevant in the long run? IATI is already operating, but who is investing in its continuation? How reliable are those intentions? And how can CSOs know whether time invested in IATI is a sustainable effort in the end?

For some interviewees, the negative effects of IATI are serious enough to doubt whether IATI is a good initiative at all. They question the added value of the system in comparison to the current practice. Is the current level of transparency between them and their donor organisations not solid enough? Other interviewees opt for a certification system, but one where only a few organisations (the donor, an independent certifying agency, etc.) would have access to the data instead of the general public.

2.   Ugandan CSOs & the Government

2.1 An 'unfertile' environment

Key concerns that arose in every interview had to do with the relationship between the government and civil society in Uganda. This relationship is described in various ways, ranging from statements like "there will always be an unease" to "government officials believe NGOs do nothing, jeopardise them or compete for the same resources." In this regard it is important to emphasise the variety in the way the interviewed CSOs consider the relationship with the government, and to nuance the sole image of CSOs and the Ugandan government being hostile to each other. Yes, some interviewees described a very difficult relationship in some specific cases, yet they also acknowledged that not every government department is the same, neither are their representatives.

Nevertheless, many interviewees are concerned about how publishing IATI data may help the government to impose restraints on CSOs. Their concerns mainly have to do with the potential level of detail in the shared data. One interviewee said: "We have an approach that is 'rights-based': we identify right holders and duty bearers. In many of our activities we emphasise that our work should actually be done by the government. In that way we create civic engagement and awareness." It is that type of 'civic consciousness' which is often considered harmful by government organisations, another interviewee explained. As a result, activities that stimulate 'civic consciousness' and 'civic advocacy' are not appreciated, or even considered 'anti-government'. If future activities could be traced, with exact dates, names and other details, it could potentially harm the activities of the organisation as the government may try to stop them.

The recent incidents in Uganda concerning ActionAid (in 2017 bank accounts belonging to ActionAid Uganda were frozen as a result of – unjust - accusations of money laundering) were often given as an example of what may happen if a CSO becomes too visible and articulate. Also, recent developments in Tanzania were mentioned when describing the increasingly hostile environment for CSOs in East Africa. One organisation explained that ever since they were mentioned as anti-government in a letter that circulated in 2012, they have become more nervous and aware of the risk of being shut-down.

A number of interviewees is afraid that IATI may worsen their position vis-à-vis the government, as they believe that CSOs often perform better than government institutions. Therefore publishing data on their activities would expose the government as less effective. Their presence alone may already be uncomfortable: "Sometimes the government is not comfortable with our work as they don't work with their hearts. They don't give the beneficiaries the love we give them. Our presence allows beneficiaries to compare us and realise that the government is not doing their work in the best way possible", one interviewee explained. Another interviewee described a situation where CSOs are potentially squeezed by the government as a result of publishing IATI data. By giving a good example through being transparent, they could automatically reveal the lack of accountability among government organisations.

As mentioned in almost every interview, the influence of IATI on this CSO-government relationship is greatly influenced by the type of work a particular CSO is doing. The common stance among the respondents was that especially CSOs that (mainly) focus on human rights or government accountability should probably be more cautious when it comes to the implementation IATI. Given the, what was described by one interviewee as 'unfertile' environment in which many CSOs operate in Uganda, interviewees urged the need for provisions to protect advocacy groups that do sensitive work from certain government institutions.

Although advocacy was mentioned as an important aspect of the work of most of involved CSOs, none of them described such topics as their main focus. Most of the CSOs we talked to, had a focus on agricultural development, service delivery or humanitarian aid in refugee camps. Some of the more sensitive topics in their work (from a government perspective) included land rights and accountability in the mining sector.

The majority of the interviewees also described situations in which local governments claim the positive impact of CSOs as results from their own work. They mention cases where, for example, as officers from the central government come in on a monitoring visit, and local government officials show them boreholes and schools built by CSOs and claim those as their own. Other interviewees explained that they often work with the local governments in consortia, whereby the majority of the actual work is done by the CSOs. At the end of a project the local governments nevertheless often paint a picture towards donors wherein they did all the work. Some of them state that IATI could actually improve this situation by making activities more traceable.

Another concern mentioned related to the this CSO-government relationship has to do with the government perception of especially INGOs as being very rich. Given that the Ugandan government "is desperate for money," many interviewees believe that having their budgets exposed could lead to extra taxation. One interviewee explained that after they were involved in the construction of a new building, the local government wanted to know where they got their funding from, so that they could impose additional taxes on the organisation. Learning from this experience, they were now reluctant and kept their transparency - especially regarding their finances - to a minimum, only meeting the basic legal requirements.

2.2 Not all that bad
At the same time, other interviewees' statements regarding the relationship between CSOs and the Ugandan government paint a somewhat different story. One interviewee calls the narrative of the government trying to limit the space for civil society in Uganda "a bit exaggerated." He believes that IATI can help to show the government that their work is actually in line with government policies and objectives and could help to further normalise the CSO-government relationship. Another interviewee mentioned that although there may sometimes be some problems, as a CSO they have tried to diffuse these by stimulating dialogue. By engaging in a real conversation and not only holding the government accountable and focusing on what they are not doing well, their relationship with various government institutions has greatly improved.

Also in the case of IATI, one interviewee emphasised the importance of talking with the government, rather than talking about the government. According to him, for a successful introduction of the initiative in Uganda, the perspective of both the national government as well as district governments should be included in the data. Another interviewee went even a step further: capacity-building initiatives should not only focus on CSOs, but also on local government officials as they need to realise that IATI is a harmless initiative and could help to improve the relationship between the government and CSOs by promoting transparency.

When being asked whether they believe IATI will generate more government suspicion, interviewees gave various answers. "Yes, it would help the government to be better informed," said some. "No, the government will probably not just navigate IATI data: they will need to have some initial reasons to be suspicious before they dive in financial details," said others. Many expressed concerns as the origins of funding and how it is spent become much more tangible through IATI.

Nevertheless, many interviewees agreed that, although publishing IATI will of course have its effects, embracing the initiative will not change the rules of the game completely as CSOs under the current NGO act already have to share their budgets. The act requires all CSOs and NGOs to publish annual budgets, strategic documents, sources of funds and planning. In addition, they need to provide insight in various financial details. Along the same line, one interviewee explained that some of their funding even comes from the government and that they are therefore morally (as well as legally) already obliged to be accountable and open about their financial expenditure.

In general, most interviewees appreciate the idea of exchanging of information on budgets and planning with government institution. Harmonisation of projects with the government and other NGOs avoids duplication and increases the impact. In the words of one of the interviewees: "If you are going to buy a car and your wife is thinking of the same thing, it is good to have it discussed in advance or else you may end up buying a car at the same time." Budget conferencing is considered a good practice by most of the respondents, and in this perfective IATI can contribute to preventing future duplication of efforts.

3.　How to successfully implement IATI?

3.1 Sticks or carrots?

After being provided with more information on IATI, some of the interviewees questioned to what extent the initiative is completely donor-driven, or even imposed. In that regard, they questioned what is really in it for them as a recipient organisation and whether local organisations are able to have a voice in further developing the platform. One interviewee mentioned that IATI will only work in the Ugandan context if recipient organisations really feel the intrinsic urge to embrace it. However, this is not a sentiment shared by all respondents. Others state it is necessary to focus on a stick instead of a carrot, claiming that the only way for IATI to work would be by donor organisations making it a prerequisite for development funding. "Voluntary engagement doesn't work here!", one of them pointed out.

One of the CSOs with a link to Caritas is of the opinion that the decision on how to continue with IATI should be part the ongoing conversation about project focus and implementation between the partners in Uganda and the team in Denmark: "This (discussion about IATI) should be part of a larger conversation we have with Caritas Denmark. We hope to invite them in the dialogue and explore the need for IATI together."

3.2 Shape of advisory/service facility

All the interviewees applaud Caritas Denmark's ambitions to cater for a IATI capacity-building facility. They all express the need for capacity-building, as none of the fourteen CSOs from the Caritas network has staff members with any previous experience in IATI. The two CSOs from the Oxfam network also stressed the need for further capacity-building. The CSOs did not express a clear preference for the set-up of this capacity building (e.g. private sector-led, provided by Caritas Denmark). Since not many NGOs in Uganda have experience with publishing IATI files at the moment, a number of the respondents believe that private sector experts are probably the best position to play a productive role in building more capacity related to IATI. At the same time many of the interviewees feel that it is very hard to judge the delivery of a service they are not fully conversant with yet.

In the interviews, three clear recommendations were made regarding the focus of the proposed capacity building support:

First of all, it was often voiced that it wouldn't be a good idea to focus on the capacity-building for publishing IATI data only. Instead, it was suggested to first pay attention to expanding the understanding of what IATI really is, and what practical implications embracing IATI has in the Ugandan context. As mentioned before, the EyeOpenerWorks team was able to give a 20-minute introduction to IATI at the beginning of each interview. For the interviewees this was often the first real introduction into IATI. At the end of that introduction, the interviewees were able to develop a first idea of what the initiative entails, but further deepening their knowledge is still considered essential. The need for awareness-raising was echoed during the validation meeting, as one respondent of an umbrella organisation explained: "I have six directors. None of them have heard of IATI before. Your report won't be enough to convince them. So awareness-raising and sensitisation really are key."

Secondly, it is suggested by many interviewees to allow for the skills development part of the capacity-building to also focus on how to explore and use IATI data for the advantage of CSOs themselves, and to not only focus on publishing data. During many of our introductions of IATI, we were able to briefly show D-Portal (d-portal.org), and many interviewees were fascinated by the platform. Respondents indicated that it could be used to navigate the development industry in Uganda, identify new funding

possibilities and learn from other organisations, but that it would need more training for them to benefit from these opportunities.

Finally, most CSOs indicated that an in-house capacity building process would be ideal. A one-size-fits-all, centralized training would not account for the different sizes, focus areas and contexts of each organisation. Moreover, for the sustainability of the activity it is important to have the capacity built of more than just one staff member. In fact, many interviewees suggested a situation wherein a collective introductory training would be provided to the entire staff, after which a few staff members (e.g. the M&E manager, financial manager and/or executive director) would continue with a more extensive training. An interviewee explained that such a design would also be instrumental for the transparency within the organisation itself. A few interviewees opted for different training set-ups: one interviewee believed a central training would allow organisations to learn from each other, whereas another interviewee believed that as they are member of an umbrella organisation, having a training at that level would strengthen their ties with other members.

3.3 Resources

Many interviewees of the interviewees underlined that for them a localized approach to capacity-building would make most sense. A training provided by an IATI training provider that is based in Uganda and is aware of the local dynamics would probably be most effective, also cases where follow-up support on ground is required.

When it comes to resources and their own contribution to such a process, most organisations believed to be able to allocate staff members to work on IATI, although they still had difficulties picturing how much time implementation of the system will cost. When it comes to financial co-investments, the situation for many respondents becomes a bit more difficult. On the one hand, most of them appreciate that if embracing IATI is in their advantage, it makes sense for them to make a financial contribution. On the other hand, the interviewees stress that their organisations have to work with very little resources and that attracting funding – especially for administrative purposes - is often difficult. Therefore, most interviewees express the wish for donor organisations to budget for most of the costs related to building their capacity in IATI, also stressing their mutual interests in this regard.

4.   IATI Advisory Services in Uganda

To avoid duplication and coordinate with other relevant initiatives a much as possible, the research team also attempted to identify all ongoing efforts towards local IATI capacity development in Uganda. The majority of the interviewees did not have any links to share in this regard. Only two of them mentioned the series of IATI workshops as conducted by Oxfam US. No other initiatives were mentioned.

The series of Oxfam-led workshops supported participating CSOs in using information about aid projects, funding, and development indicators in Uganda, and one of the data sources explored and utilized in this regard was IATI. The Oxfam workshop was facilitated by an international facilitator and did not focus on the publishing of IATI data. As highlighted by an Oxfam representative: "We are focused on active citizenship and holding the powerful accountable so being able to use aid data from donors is an important part of that. Additionally we believe the more the data is used the more evidence there will be for what information in-country actors need, hopefully resulting in data and a transparency portal that fits their needs. For us, publishing at this time there is no sense of value add, just a huge investment in time and resources that are in very short supply for our partners."

Besides the Oxfam workshops, IATI capacity-building support to CSOs in Uganda has been provided by EyeOpenerWorks in Kampala. From 2016 onwards they have been supporting a number of CSOs in creating and publishing their IATI files. They have worked, among others, with 10 partners of the Dutch embassy in Uganda to increase awareness around open data, data transparency, IATI publishing and the use of data for lobby, advocacy and accountability. EyeOpenerWorks also indicates that, through a number of introductory sessions, they have been able to build a small group of IT-specialists that has an interest in learning more about IATI, potentially leading to a mini-network of private sector service providers in this field in Uganda.

As stated, no other initiatives in Uganda were mentioned specifically focusing on local IATI capacity development. Inquiries on twitter and through the global IATI online discussions board also did not result in the identification of other IATI-related initiatives focusing on Uganda. However, two of the interviewees did mention the annual IATI Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings as quite beneficial when it comes to learning more about the initiative. Both the recent meetings in Tanzania (2017) and Nepal (2018) were attended by a Ugandan delegation. After attending the TAG, participants that were part of these delegations have been actively looking for ways to activate IATI use within their organization.

Lastly, one should note that Uganda has representations of a number of agencies that – at an international level - support either the publication of IATI files (AKVO) or the analysis and use of the data (Development Initiatives). So far, the local branches of these agencies have not been very vocal and active when it comes to the development of local IATI capacity development in Uganda, but their international organizational structures could potentially allow them to have access to relevant resources and training manuals in this regard.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions

The sixteen CSOs included in this research are all interested in further exploring IATI – although they consider it too early to fully commit to the initiative. The vast majority of the organisations involved emphasised that it is of fundamental importance to pursue transparency and accountability in the development industry. Transparency is considered important not only towards tax payers in donor countries, but also to beneficiaries, governments, donor organisations, partner organisations and own staff members.

The involved CSOs consider it crucial to embrace initiatives that stimulate transparency. Their main question is, whether IATI can be considered as the right initiative to serve that purpose. With a few exceptions, most interviewees are hesitant to give a final answer to it as they consider it necessary to become better informed of the practical implications of embracing IATI for their organisation. Nevertheless, they are optimistic. The interviewees realise IATI may help them to be better-informed about funding opportunities and will provide them a stage to showcase their activities. Many practical concerns regarding the system are still raised, especially when it comes to the required level of detail of the data, the workload involved in publishing, and data safety and security.

Although many CSOs express that their domain of work can be precarious given the often sensitive relationship between CSOs and the Ugandan government, there is a huge variation when it comes to the perceptions of how embracing IATI will influence this relationship. Some CSOs are sceptical, but many others are optimistic. Whereas some interviewees believe IATI data may be used to limit their manoeuvrability, others believe it will help them to show that they have nothing to hide and make a positive contribution to the actualization of government policies.

All the interviewees stress the importance of capacity-building, yet this should go hand-in-hand with further deepening their knowledge of what IATI is and how it might affect their organisation. The CSOs are therefore interested to continue the conversation about IATI: within their organisation, amongst each other and with donor organisations, including Caritas Denmark.

Recommendations

Successfully embracing IATI
- When embracing IATI, every CSO (in accordance with their donors) should find a level of detail that is acceptable for them: if certain information is so sensitive that it may harm the very activities for which funding is allocated, a CSO should be able to decrease the level of detail.
- To make IATI a success in Uganda, more information should be dispersed on how IATI differs from other initiatives, particularly QuAM.
- Feedback from donor organisations on the quality (depth and length) of an IATI report should always be given once recipient organisations publish their data. This will help, motivate and reinforce the publishing habit.
- Currently the IATI community is international in nature. For the sake of sustainability at a national level, it is key to invest in a community of IATI flag-bearers in Uganda. Doing so will help to increase a shared understanding of how to implement IATI in the Ugandan context and it will increase a sense of local ownership.

Government involvement
- It is important to create a dialogue with (local) government institutions on what IATI is and how it may help to improve the relationship with CSOs. Inviting local government officials to take part in IATI workshops could be beneficial in this regard.
- In order to bring about equilibrium on the publication of open data via IATI, donor organisations that fund both government institutions and CSOs should, at the time, also require funded government institutions to embrace IATI. This would help avoid suspicions or even allegations about one party exposing the other, and the feeling to avenge; but strengthen the supplementary relationship that exist between the government and CSOs.

Capacity-building
- CSOs express a lack of knowledge about IATI in general, how to navigate IATI data, how to showcase their projects using IATI, what the potential costs and benefits are, and the practical implications for their organisations. In order to fully embrace IATI, Ugandan CSOs need to develop this knowledge. Therefore the EyeOpenerWorks team, as a first step in the process of building capacity among Ugandan CSOs suggests to invest in further awareness-raising and sensitisation to explore these issues.
- The process of capacity-building could include the following strategic components:
  - Sessions with CSOs/ NGOs top management or leadership: this step should focus on raising awareness of IATI among the board members of the CSOs with the aim of informing and convincing them to embrace IATI.
  - Introductory workshops at the individual organisation or umbrella organisation level, to allow for the majority of staff members to develop a general sense of what IATI is about and how the organisation can benefit from exploring and publishing IATI data.
  - A few representatives being selected by each organisation to continue in consecutive trainings on feeding and publishing data. These trainings can be provided in a collective set-up with representatives of different organisations joining in.
- It is recommended to apply active learning instead of a purely theoretical approach. Navigating and publishing IATI can be a very abstract process that is difficult to imagine. Actually engaging with the system and the available data is often most effective to really develop an understanding of the initiative and its potential.
- None of the interviewees consider themselves currently able and willing to cover all costs related to an IATI capacity-building process on their own. Investment from donors seems to be a prerequisite to make this work. Yet a - symbolic - investment (commitment fee) of the Ugandan CSOs in terms of money, venue and/or human resource is recommended to create effective commitment from all stakeholders.
- During the capacity-building, Ugandan organisations that already work with IATI (such as AVSI, Defend Defenders, Solar Now, DGF and IFDC) should be invited to share their experience and act as a case study.

Annex 1: List of respondents and involved CSOs

Date	Organisation	Interviewee(s)	Location
November 15	Caritas Uganda	Msgr. Ndamira Francis (National Director) Mr. Ntwali Abbott (M&E Officer)	Kampala
November 15	CIDI	Dr. Fulgensio Jjuuko (Executive Director) Mr. David (Program Coordinator) Mr. Anthony (Head of Finance)	Kampala
November 19	EADEN	Mr. Muhwezi Godfrey (Executive Director) Ms. Nabisinyo Winnie (M&E Officer)	Mbale
November 20	Caritas Moroto	Mr. Ngoya John Bosco (Executive Director) Mr. Omerileng Samuel (Head of Finance)	Moroto
November 21	Caritas Kotido	Dr. Lochap Paul J. (Executive Director)	Kotido
November 26	TPO	Mr. Onyango Patrick (Country Director)	Kampala
November 27	PFCC	Ms. Kaaya Christine (Coordinator)	Kampala
November 27	ECO Uganda	Mr. Kabongo Isaac (Executive Director) Mr. Kabiswa Charles (Head of Programs)	Kampala
November 28	Caritas Arua	Msgr. Primus Asega (Executive Director) Br. Drakere Erminio (Deputy Director) Mr. Ronald (Financial Coordinator)	Arua
November 29	Caritas Nebbi	Rev. Fr. Ocanda Denis (Director) Mr. Masendi Alfred (Program Officer) Ms. Fuambe Jamira (Accountant)	Nebbi
November 30	Caritas Gulu	Mr. Aludi John Bosco Komakech (Executive Director) Ms. Lalam Vicky (Finance & Admin. Manager) Mr. Ogwang Along (Program Manager) Mr. Oneka Richard (Deputy Director)	Gulu
November 30	SOCADIDO	Fr. Opio Silver (Executive Director)	Soroti
December 4	PELUM	Ms. Akia Josephine (Head of Programs)	Kampala
December 4	CAPCA	Mr. Ssebulime Allan (Programme Manager)	Kampala
December 7	SEATINI	Mr. Kiiza Africa (Program Officer, Trade Policies & Negotiations) Mr. Apuru Kenneth (Programme assistant, trade policies & negotiations)	Kampala
December 11	CSBAG	Mr. Walakira David (Budget Policy Specialist) Mr. Magara Siragi (Budget Policy Specialist)	Kampala

About EyeOpenerWorks

EyeOpenerWorks is an international business with offices in The Netherlands and Uganda that supports organizations to create social and sustainable impact. EyeOpenerWorks provides services in five domains: 1) Active Learning, 2) Creative Monitoring and Evaluation, 3) Social Business Incubation, 4) Organizational Development, and 5) Personal Development. Over the past years EyeOpenerWorks has supported over 50 clients in more than 10 countries.

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