

Statement from Development Initiatives: Response to FFD3 elements paper in relation to 'Data, Monitoring and Follow-up'

Delivered by Cordelia Lonsdale, Engagement Advisor, on Jan 30 2015 at the First Drafting Session held in preparation for the 'Third Conference on Financing for Development'.

Development Initiatives works to end extreme poverty by 2030 by making data and information on poverty and resource flows transparent, accessible and useable. We help decision-makers use information to increase their impact for the poorest people in the most sustainable way. We work at every level: supporting local partners in East Africa and Nepal to use data; informing national and regional decision-making through analysis and presentation of information; providing technical and political support that can help improve international systems.

We welcome the inclusion of **data** as an issue which must be considered in relation to the monitoring of finance for development. This is a critical issue, and one that has already been explored at great depth in the post-2015 process. We would urge all stakeholders who have not already done so to engage with the work of the UN Independent Advisory Group on the data revolution and their report.

Better data are only a means to an end, and data are only useful if it is accessible and open to all stakeholders who need it. Data must be useable, relevant, timely, and in an open and preferably machine-readable format. Our views on these issues are informed by our work strengthening use and understanding of financial resource data in East Africa and Nepal, where we provide capacity building for civil society, parliamentarians, journalists, and sub-national level decision-makers, and support policy and advocacy at national level for data access, analysis and use.

As a reflection on the FFD3 elements paper, we have four pieces of feedback which we hope are helpful for ongoing discussions and consideration.

1. Transparency, participation and accountability should be essential principles which underpin an effective FFD outcome and which are essential for deliver on the vision of both FFD and post-2015. We recommend that transparency, accountability and participation are explicitly recognised in the preamble of the Addis Ababa outcome document as cross-cutting systemic issues of critical importance. The Joint CSO response gives detail on this and recommends some language.
2. We do, as the elements paper recognises, need much better data on financial flows so that we know how much there is, who is spending it and where it is going. In this regard the outcome document could usefully recognise the many initiatives already ongoing to shed light on the use of public money and development finance, which are of extreme relevance to the FFD process. Many stakeholders this week have already mentioned IATI (the international Aid Transparency Initiative). The Addis Ababa conference could also be instrumental in strengthening EITI, Open Contracting and the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency.
3. It's important not to conflate the conversation about data with the conversation about monitoring and follow-up. In order for data to inform the follow-up mechanism, we first need to agree what that follow-up mechanism needs to look like and who the stakeholders are, and then ensure that the data which is needed to inform that process is available and can be used, understood and analysed by those stakeholders. If we are to stick to the principles of transparency, participation and accountability, then our first priority in FFD must be meeting the needs of data users, not data producers. Clarifying the follow-up mechanism and who the stakeholders are within this should therefore be our first step.

4. If domestic public finance is as the elements paper says, the crux of delivering development outcomes in FFD, it then follows that the focus of financing efforts related to data should be in strengthening domestic capacity to collect, use and analyse statistics, to help domestic governments develop sound data on which to base budgeting decisions. The elements paper could emphasise this point more strongly, and we perhaps need a conversation about what financing mechanisms or commitments at the Addis Ababa conference could underpin this need for better national statistics. We also need much better, subnationally detailed and disaggregated data on poverty, needs and human development indicators, as an essential first step to enable targeting of development finance flows, particularly ODA.

We have explored these issues in more depth in our recent report, 'Improving ODA Allocation in post-2015', which recommends the targeting of ODA at the poorest 20% of people in developing countries, and redefining ODA's mandate to focus more specifically on poverty eradication. The report also emphasizes the need for much better data on poverty and needs to inform decision-making.

Thank you.

Key documents:

Joint CSO response to the elements paper: <https://csoforffd.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/cso-response-to-ffd-elements-paper-28-jan-2015.pdf>

Development Initiatives, 'The Data Manifesto: 12 Steps to a Data Revolution'
<http://devinit.org/#!/post/data-manifesto-2>

Development Initiatives, 'Improving ODA Allocation for a post-2015 World'. (independent study commissioned by UNDESA for the 2016 [Development Cooperation Forum](#), as part of a UNDESA research project funded by UKAID on development cooperation in a post-2015 setting.)