## Breakout group on Accessibility – Workstream 5 led by Danila Boneva

**Action Points**

* Danila to draft a letter to ministries to ask them to provide a link to IATI website on their own website.
* Suggest that an IATI Facebook group is started and make more use of social networking to spread the word about IATI
* Consider allowing Partner Countries to contribute to the IATI communication strategy
* Add Partner Country information to the IATI website to highlight the progress in country.
* Ask Partner Countries for further inputs and to formalise involvement in this workstream through virtual discussion.

**General Discussion**

* Narayan Dhakal from Nepal: Asked how IATI can improve accessibility, especially as translation to local language is so important.
* Kawusu Kebbay from Sierra Leone: End users are governments, CSOs, parliamentarians – have a DAD, but the challenge is internet access. If you want to improve access you need good internet access which is beyond IATI’s mandate. They are looking at other means of dissemination like local meetings. How can IATI help with these issues.
* Claudia Schwegmann from OpenAid: need to distinguish between accessibility and access (people being able to use, feeling safe to do so, knowing the information is there). Not clear if IATI’s mandate is the latter as well as the former.

Went to all IATI members websites and searched for ‘IATI’ - DFID had lots, but others had little or no mention. Also looked at NGOs in Europe – nothing or very little. This is an issue for access because people don’t know that it’s even happening. This is a northern perspective and imagine it is even worse in south.

* Danila Boneva from UNDP: Agrees there is little information even within the donor signatories. In UNDP IATI involvement is managed through the aid effectiveness team. But most people outside of this do not know anything about UNDP’s involvement, despite regular updates.

The IATI secretariat is very aware that they need to do a lot of communications work to raise understanding of IATI especially with parliamentarians’ groups and to deal with misperceptions about IATI, especially within signatories.

Picked up on previous comments about access issues such as translation and internet access issues and confirmed that IATI will not be able to tackle these issues; these will need to be tackled by recipient countries and local organisations.

Aid information at the country level – all current generation aid management systems are web based however it is only a partial solution as in many countries it is regional governments that need access to this information and therefore providers are working on ways to provide systems in an offline mode.

Databases contain data not information which needs a human to create the information in a meaningful way through any type of media. Key is to provide access to these groups offline which is a big challenge.

Everyone has the right to access – but how useful is it for them to enter the database and retrieve the information. Perhaps it is information that is needed rather than the raw data.

* Riwa Nasreddine from Lebanon –For IATI to be relevant and to have the support, accessibility is a key issue. If people are using the information then donors will see the relevance and continue to provide the information in an IATI format.
* Ernest Misomali from Malawi– the bigger issue is the issue of awareness. It is amazing how little people know about the AAA. Most people do not understand issues of transparency. We have supported the government to set up the AMP therefore the system is in place through the use of the spreadsheet. Malawi Aid Atlas provides good information and their information on where donors are involved and in which sector with good visuals. This is between MoF and donor governments. This needs to be spread with other line ministries. Aid that goes to single societies is not captured in the report.
* capacity building is key for Malawi
* System must be automated and then rolled out to other line ministries perhaps online
* Need to raise awareness of key stakeholders
* Danila Boneva: There is now a communication strategy including a regular newsletter and a revamp of the website. Outreach is limited due to budget and therefore need to rely on partner countries to inform their own constituencies. Need to be aware of the development of the standard. In Bogotá there is a round table discussion on IATI, explaining the value added to southern providers of information
* All - It is necessary to contribute to the communication strategy.
* Ernest Misomali from Malawi - If the local beneficiary is aware of the information then they can make use of it. It is important to facilitate linkages between systems. If these could be linked better then this would limit redundancy of information. Brazil’s presentation at the IATI conference was a very good.

In the paper are some of the concrete proposals that the conference came out with such as ensuring comparable information. Produce user guides in multiple languages for donors and infomediaries on how they can access and use the IATI registry. Support infomediaries who can improve accessibility.

* Riwa Nasreddine from Lebanon: Will there be a link to the IATI website registry on the donor’s website from this point forward, this could include the endorsees?

***Action***: Danila to draft a letter to ministries to provide a link on their website.

***Action***: Add PC information to the IATI website to highlight the progress in country.

* There could be ambassadors who could promote accessibility. Make the use of social media such as Facebook in the communication strategy.

***Action***: No IATI Facebook group – perhaps Neil McKie could set one up?

* Danila Boneva: The registry will act as an index that will guide users to where the information held. It will not be an end user sat in ministry who will access info as well as a beneficiary/local government. Therefore how do we communicate the end information to end users in a meaningful way and who are the important actors?

Infomediaries can transform data into information, governments will not be able to provide this service. Instead need separate stand alone providers. Cannot expect governments to respond to each individual project or request for information. Accountability is carried down the chain of information and this can be assisted by infomediaries. Also need people to find other ways of spreading the information in local communities i.e via radio, newspapers etc. IATI can identify the needs of different users and the role of these users. Also this would provide information on the gaps in existing areas.

* Ernest Misomali from Malawi– more work to be done through ambassadors. Need to motivate people to use the IATI registry.
* Riwa Nasreddine from Lebanon– issue with motivation. Not IATI’s job. People need to know that the information exists and then it’s down to users and other organisations e.g. CSOs.
* Arshak Hovanesian from Synergy: Need to know that’s its available, but this is necessary, but not sufficient. Need to have someone who can distil it for users needs. If people can use then it will create more demand
* Victoria Room from DI – work on intermediaries to explore the incentives and challenges to use the data.
* Narayan Dhakal from Nepal: incentives, demand will be created by improved accessibility. Also need to use the media.
* All agreed that the media are a major stakeholder at the global and local level. But they have both incentives and disincentives.
* Yvon Mombong from DRC: motivation for the public to look for information is the fact that so much aid is coming into the DRC, but poverty is increasing. People want to know about impact.
* Kawusu Kebbay from Sierra Leone: we need intermediaries to translate data to information. Most of the people that will use the data will not be able to access raw data on internet. How do we ensure that we identify potential intermediaries.
* Arshak Hovanesian from Synergy: Most people in most developing countries don’t have access to internet, but many have cell phones and they use regularly. In the future aid information must be made available through cell phones. We have not yet linked the IATI system to cell phones.
* Kawusu Kebbay from Sierra Leone: but must bear in mind that cell phones still require literacy. Radio is a possible medium to access these people.
* Riwa Nasreddine from Lebanon: we need to distinguish the different kinds of users and then look at incentives and try to understand how to motivate them.
* Danila Boneva: summary – covered the need to raise awareness and the need to identify user groups and intermediaries and consider incentives.
* Yassar Al – Dughmai from Jordan: donors have a role in making aid accessible because they’re reluctant to be held to account by parliamentarians because they don’t have oversight of aid.

Donors also have a role to play in holding them to account for their spending in countries

* Danila Boneva: will send a summary of the key points made during the session to participants and ask for further suggestions and ideas. And from this we can build a plan for how to deal with the accessibility issue. So there will be a continuation of this discussion by email.
* Narayan Dhakal from Nepal: having non-DAC donors also report to IATI standards would be very helpful.
* Danila Boneva: Bogota meeting – IATI engaging in this process and hopes that some of them will become leaders of this agenda amongst southern providers.
* Ernest Misomali from Malawi: IATI could also do more case studies and share this learning
* Danila Boneva: CDDE – if there s interest from partner countries in the region then CDDE could organise an event to share information from e.g. the pilots

Next steps: circulate summary of discussion, ask for further inputs and to formalise involvement in this workstream through virtual discussion.