

## **Trust in International Digital Content: Open Access and Access to Information at the World Bank**

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### **Abstract:**

*Knowledge Management (KM) is an indispensable tool used by organizations to ensure digital repositories are credible, reliable, accessible and useful. The future can be made even more open and even more diverse based on genuine verified and dependable content which can be shared credibly as widely as possible for impact. One global organization has been progressively doing just that for many years. The World Bank's Access to Information (AI) and Open Access (OA) programs aim to share the Bank's information to the widest possible audiences in support of development around the world. While the policy on Access to Information is aimed at disclosing the Bank's documents, reports and institutional information including its financing in as timely a manner as possible, the Bank's policy on Open Access addresses itself to scholarly publishing at the institution including those it funds and published externally. Together these two policies form the Bank's Open Agenda. This efforts transparency can only be considered real and credible if anchored on trust of the information sources, trust of the processes used to acquire and process them and trust in the delivery channels. This paper will explore trust of digital content at the World Bank Group and how this trust can be used in pursuit of achieving the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and opportunity for all.*

**Keywords:** World Bank, Open data, Open Access, Access to Information, Transparency

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# INTRODUCTION

## About the World Bank Group

The World Bank Group is an international development organization headquartered in Washington, DC with field offices and staff in over 180 countries. Established in 1944, the organization started as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) also known as the World Bank and is currently the world's largest development institution. Its original aim was to help rebuild countries ruined by World War II. In 1956, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) was added to the organization to lend money to the private sector. Four years later, the Bank founded the International Development Association (IDA). IDA's primary role has been to eliminate poverty in the poorest countries. As a way of connecting global financial resources to the needs of developing countries, the Bank launched and added the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) in 1966 and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) in 1988 (The World Bank, 2018b).

Organizationally, the Bank Group is made up of the 5 aforementioned institutions. Summed up, IBRD provides financial development and policy financing to the Bank Group's member countries. Eligibility for IBRD financing is determined by a country's set GNI per capita threshold<sup>1</sup>, its institutional capacity and creditworthiness (Fantom & Serajuddin, 2016). IDA provides interest free and low-interest loans and grants to qualifying member countries. IDA financing eligibility is also determined by a predetermined GNI per capita threshold in combination with a country's creditworthiness (Ibid). IFC mobilizes private sector investments and offers investment advice to companies and governments. ICSID engages in the settlement of investment disputes. It does this through conciliation and arbitration. MIGA on the other hand encourages the progress of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through political risk insurance guarantees (Op Cit).

Composition wise, the Bank Group is like a cooperative, made up of several member countries.<sup>2</sup> Presently, 189 countries form the IBRD, 173 IDA, 184 the IFC, 181 MIGA and 153 ICSID.<sup>3</sup> These countries also form the World Bank's client base and are distributed across the World Bank Group's 6 regions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For fiscal year 2018, the GNI per capita threshold is \$1,005 or less in 2016 for low-income economies; \$1,006 to \$3,955 for lower middle-income economies; \$3,956 to \$12,235 for upper middle-income economies; \$12,236 and more for high-income economies (The World Bank, n.d.)

<sup>2</sup> Visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about> to learn more about the World Bank Group

<sup>3</sup> Visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/members> for a list of World Bank member countries; For qualification criteria for membership to IDA and IBRD, see Fantom & Serajuddin, 2016

<sup>4</sup> Operationally the Bank is divided into 6 regions: Africa (AFR), Europe and Central Asia (ECA), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), South Asia (SAR), East Asia and Pacific (EAP) and Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

The paper is arranged in 3 major sections: Introduction, scope and limitation and conclusion. After the introductory section, the paper discusses the role of the World Bank Group, then proceeds to talk about transparency and trust at the World Bank. This is followed by a discussion of the World Bank's Policies on Access to Information (AI) and Open Access (OA) rounded up by select Open data and information sources. The paper is concluded by discussing the linkage between Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While this paper is primarily about Access to Information and Open Access at the World Bank, it is not an advisory on the policies and practices of these policies at the institution neither should any part of it be construed to mean the official position of the World Bank Group outside the actual policy documents. Only select World Bank sources are covered. It is outside the scope of this paper to cover each and every Bank information repository or data source.

## **Role of the World Bank Group**

The World Bank Group's mission is to eliminate poverty around the world. Currently the mission is aimed at ending extreme poverty within a generation and assisting in further development of shared prosperity. Three priorities steer the World Bank Group's engagement: 1) Helping create sustainable economic growth, 2) Investing in people and 3) Building resilience to shocks and threats that potentially can undermine years of past development (The World Bank, 2018r).

The institution works in every major area of development to achieve these aims. It does this through project selection & design, knowledge sharing and partnerships. It provides financial products in the form of loans and grants and advisory services in the form of analytical and technical assistance (TA). It also aids countries in creating, sharing and applying inventive and transformational knowledge and solutions to their challenges. While the organization started as a reconstruction Bank, the priority has since shifted to development and today the Bank Group's work touches nearly every economic sector growing in stature, reach and accomplishments. "For perspective, the World Bank made four loans totaling \$497 million in 1947, as compared to 302 commitments totaling \$60 billion in 2015." (The World Bank, 2018s, para 5 line 2)

## **Transparency and Trust and The World Bank Policy of Access to Information**

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'transparency' as "the quality or state of being transparent." It explains "transparent" as "free from pretense or deceit," "easily detected or seen through: obvious," "readily understood" or "characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices."

On the other hand, it defines 'trust' variously as "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something," "one in which confidence is placed", "dependence on something future or contingent: hope," "a property interest held by one person for the benefit of another," "a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some

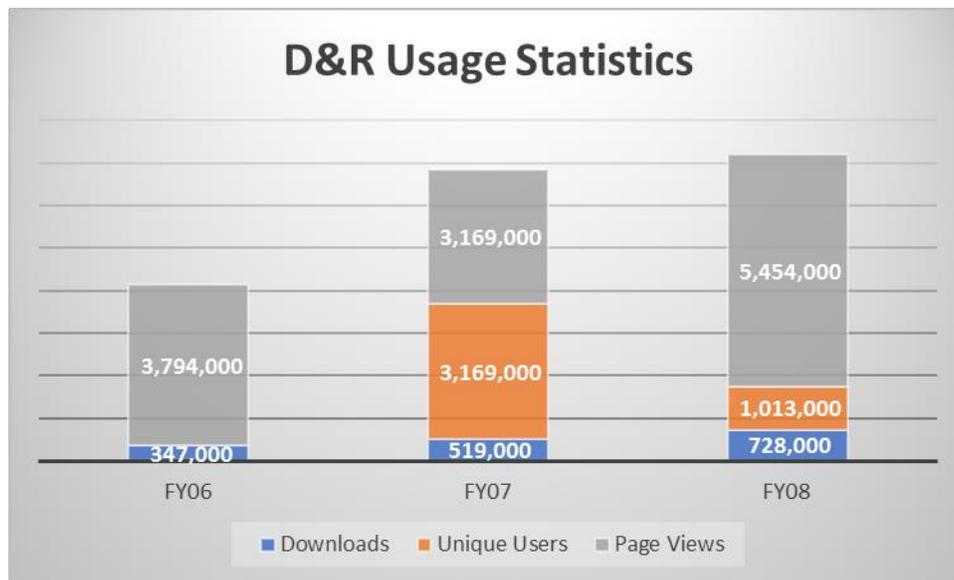
relationship,” “something committed or entrusted to one to be used or cared for in the interest of another etc.”

In the context of the World Bank, the definition that applies closely to its Policy on Access to Information (AI) in the context of “transparency” would be the last listed Merriam-Webster dictionary one, that is, “characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices.” But the Bank’s AI Policy goes further than visibility and accessibility of the Bank’s business practices. It also applies to the institutions publications, the publications and data it funds, finances, projects, procurement, statistics & data and even physical access through its just opened visitor center located in Washington DC where the public has unfettered access to the Bank’s physical building, history, milestones over the years and the work it does around the world (The World Bank, 2018q). In fact, the Bank goes even further. It actively promotes Open Access (OA) of non-personal public information among its member countries and is also proactively involved in building capacity for these countries to meet international best practice Open Data thresholds. The Kenya Open Government Data portal is an example (Centre for Public Impact, n.d.). See also Majeed (2012) and Mutuku & Mahihu (2014).

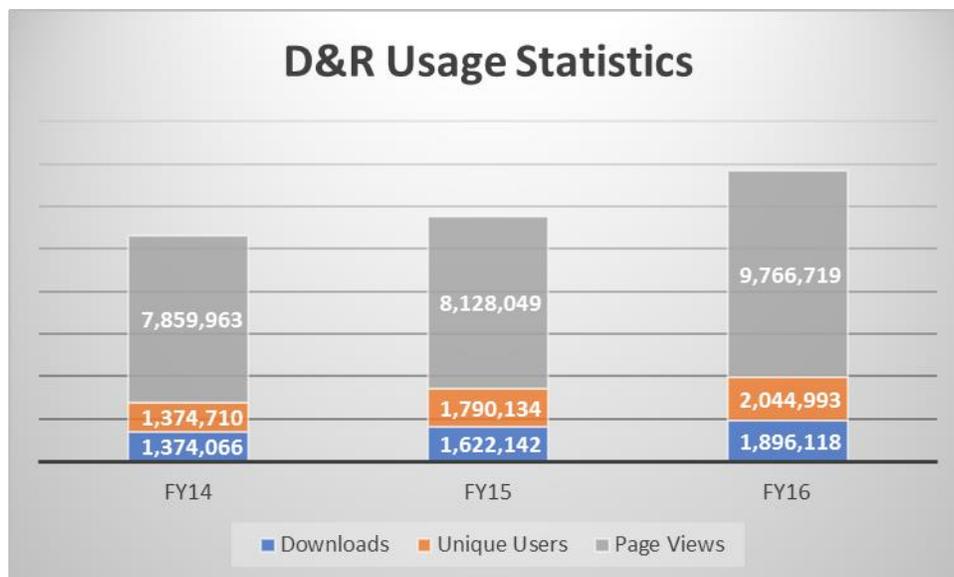
In terms of “trust” the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition that would be the most relevant would be the first one referenced above, i.e. “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.” The following section will explain transparency and trust of the World Bank Group’s information sources as set out above.

### **Credibility and Integrity**

The World Bank is already a player of unparalleled global reputation. Countries and organizations rely on the Bank resources to further their competitiveness since World Bank action and resources impact investments and countries development (Reuters, 2018). Academics and think tanks around the world depend on the Bank’s content as a trusted source of information and exemplary practice. In fact, the Harvard Business School regularly features World Bank programs in its best practice case studies for its MBA program. McFarlan (2003) is an example. Oppenheimer & Laurence (2011) is another. Many universities seek to partner with the World Bank in sourcing their scholarship beneficiaries (The World Bank, 2018u). Development agencies and countries seek World Bank partnerships in trust funded arrangements to expand their development reach and enhance their development engagement outcomes (The World Bank, 2018a). Indeed, the World Bank business model is one that is based on its trust as a global leader. Without this reputation, the Bank would not be so sought after and it would not be able to operate as a premier leader in international development. In sum, without trust that the organization has built over the years managing its reputational risk through prudent information management helping in covering its reputational, operational and financial risks all at once, the Bank would not be operational today and its information sources would not be so much sought after either. To put this in context, comparing Documents & Reports (D&R) usage statistics going back about 10 years, page views grew by nearly 160 per cent from fiscal year (FY) 2006 to FY16 while downloads grew by over 440 per cent for the same time period. Figures 1 and 2 below provides the details.



*Fig. 1*



*Fig. 2*

Operationally on the data side, the Development Data Group of the World Bank Group working closely with the Bank’s regions and Global Practices<sup>5</sup> has overall responsibility for data collection, compilation and dissemination guided by international professional standards, methodologies, norms and practices to ensure quality and integrity of the process and to ensure that the data produced is consistent, reliable and a relevant and dependable source of information (The World Bank, 2018c).

<sup>5</sup> The Global Practices (GPs) represent the sectoral and thematic areas that the Bank works on

Because a lot of World Bank data comes from member country statistical systems, the institution also works to strengthen the statistical capacity of its member countries to further enhance the credibility of these data sources (The World Bank, 2018o).<sup>6</sup>

The institution also works very closely with other international statistical agencies including the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donors to develop internationally accepted frameworks and standards of good practice for statistics, build consensus around data, streamline internationally agreed indicators and establish standard data exchange processes and methods (Op Cit).

### **Reliability and Accessibility**

The World Bank is renowned for its good-quality statistical data (Ngo & Flatt, 2014). In fact, the Bank believes that improvements in development data quality and quantity are paramount in its fight to improve livelihoods. Dependable data are needed to set thresholds, goals and targets against which progress can be tracked and impacts monitored, evaluated and critiqued. Good data is also needed to identify effective public and private actions as an essential tool of accountable and good governance, providing means for people to assess government action and enhancing their citizen engagement directly in the development process (Op Cit).

The World Bank's Access to Information policy created the impetus for several World Bank OA initiatives (The World Bank, 2018r). These initiatives include the World Bank Policy of Access to Information previously known as the World Bank Policy on Information Disclosure, the World Bank Open Access, the World Bank Open Data, the World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, the World Bank Open Finances and the World Bank Open Financial Information.

An array of data publications is also produced by the World Bank that make its data more available and accessible, including through the use of maps, charts and graphs. Among these are the World Development Indicators (WDI), a time-series data for 217 economies, with indicators going back more than 50 years, International Debt Statistics (IDS), the World Bank's annual report on the external debt of developing countries with a broad spectrum of data for 125 developing countries, and the Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is built around World Development Indicators 2017. For each of the 17 SDGs, the Bank has established selected indicators and enabled visualizations to help in the analysis of SDG trends and challenges, and to foster discussion on progress and measurement issues (The World Bank, 2018m).

### **The World Bank's Open Agenda**

According to the Open Access Scholarly Information Sourcebook (OASIS) (2009), Open Access is the immediate, online, free availability of research outputs without the severe restrictions on use commonly imposed by publisher copyright agreements.

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<sup>6</sup> Visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/data/statistical-capacity-building> for more on World Bank statistical capacity building

The Bank's Access to Information (AI), an all-encompassing access program that goes beyond conventional Open Access because it includes documents other than scholarly publications and their accompanying metadata predates all the major international OA initiatives - Budapest (2002), Bethesda (2003) and Berlin (2003).

Below is a summary of the Bank's far reaching Open Access initiatives:

- “June 1997 – Launch of [Documents and Reports](#) (D&R). Previously known as World Development Sources (WDS), D&R contains more than 145,000 publicly-available World Bank documents and enables the sharing of the institution's extensive knowledge base and operational documents.
- April 2010 – Launch of the [Open Data portal](#), making World Bank flagship databases and hundreds of other datasets freely available to the public.
- July 2010 – Launch of [Access to Information Policy](#) (AI), a landmark shift regarding how and which information the World Bank makes available to the public. By setting the default classification to one of maximum disclosure (with a limited set of exceptions), tens of thousands of previously undisclosed information – including projects under preparation and implementation, analytic and advisory activities, and Board proceedings – are now available to the public through D & R. And there is an **App** for that too (the [World Bank InfoFinder](#))!
- April 2012 – Launch of the [Open Knowledge Repository](#) (OKR), the Bank's official Open Access repository that contains Bank publications since 2000. Prior publications are available to the public through [D&R](#).
- July 2012 – Launch of the [Open Access Policy](#). The policy mandates Bank's publications and their associated research data to be made freely available, with no restrictions on use and reuse. It governs works published or funded by the Bank and works written by Bank staff and published externally.
- July 2012 – Adoption of [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](#) license allowing the public to freely share and adapt Bank publications with proper attribution to the Bank.
- December 2013 – Adoption of the newly created [CC BY 3.0 IGO license for use by intergovernmental organizations](#) to share research, data, and educational materials they produce.” (Liberatori-Prati, 2016)

### **World Bank Policy on Access to Information (AI Policy)**

The World Bank AI policy was launched on July 1, 2010. In practice, public Access to Information had been in place for over 20 years.<sup>7</sup> The AI policy built on this nearly quarter century of actual practice. It has 5 guiding principles: Maximizing access to information, Setting out a clear list of exceptions, Safeguarding the deliberative process, Providing clear procedures for implementing the policy and Recognizing requesters' right to an appeals process (The World Bank, 2015).

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<sup>7</sup> See Liberatori-Prati, 2016

Under the policy, the World Bank discloses all its information that is not on its list of exceptions<sup>8</sup> provided for under section III of the AI policy. The policy has enabled the organization to become a global leader in transparency. It grants the public access to virtually all of the World Bank information including its projects (under preparation & implementation), analytic & advisory activities, and Board proceedings (Ibid).

Below are the major timelines of the evolution of the World Bank Access to Information (The World Bank, 2018l).

1985: World Bank issues first instructions to staff on information disclosure. These instructions established a “presumption in favor of disclosure” unless there were compelling reasons not to disclose.

1993: World Bank creates a Public Information Center (PIC) in Washington, D.C. and a network to disseminate information through the World Bank’s country offices.

1997: World Bank establishes The InfoShop in Washington, D.C, a one-stop shop for information about the World Bank’s work.

2002: Unprecedented surge in demand for information leads to significant adjustments in World Bank facilities to cope with increased demand for information during the first year implementing the revised information disclosure policy approved in 2001.

2003: The Board of the Executive Directors of the World Bank (EDs) adopts a Translation Framework that broadens access and dissemination of information to stimulate interest and encourage participation in the World Bank’s work.

2009: The Board approves a new AI policy. The new Policy includes clear procedures for making information available to the public and provides an appeal process in case access is denied to certain information.

2010: World Bank implements new Access to Information Policy, replacing the World Bank’s Information Disclosure policy.<sup>9</sup>

### **Simultaneous Disclosure**

To showcase its seriousness about Access to Information, the Bank operates on a policy of simultaneous disclosure of selected Board papers as well, i.e. the public may have access to such documents before the Board has met and discussed them. Country Assistance Strategies (CAS), Project Appraisal Documents (PADs), and Program documents (PDs) qualify under this framework as long as the client has given written consent for early disclosure. Also qualifying are Operational policy papers and sector strategy papers if they meet 3 conditions: They have had

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<sup>8</sup> Visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/ai-exception> for more on the list of exceptions

<sup>9</sup> Visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/access-to-information/overview#3> for a full timeline

public consultations, the Executive Directors (EDs) have already reviewed their drafts and the Board has approved their early release even if the EDs have not previously reviewed the paper (The World Bank, 2018i).

After Board discussion the final version of these documents are finally posted in [Documents & Reports](#) and the initial versions removed from the early disclosure list. However, they remain available upon request. The public can subscribe to an Email Alert for the Board Calendar of simultaneously disclosed documents (Ibid).

### **Development Projects, Bank Documents and Access to Information**

Since its creation, the World Bank Group has funded over 12,000 development projects using a range of financial instruments, tools and channels including conventional loans, interest free loans otherwise known as credits and grants - funds given to countries for a specific purpose or project and not required to be paid back (The World Bank, 2018r). Thanks to the World Bank's AI Policy, the public can access the Bank's lending portfolio at the Group's Projects and Operations portal - <http://projects.worldbank.org/> (accessed May 5 2018). This access includes current and historical data since 1947 (Ibid).

The World Bank has also published over 200,000 documents. These include its project and institutional information. They also include its scholarly publications. These documents are made available to the public in accordance with the World Bank's AI policy which go beyond its Open Access policy. They help to increase the public's understanding of the Bank's development policies and programs. They also allow the public to use them for the public's own private benefit including for commercial purposes. These reports, working papers, and documents, along with their metadata (the primary data on which they are based) are available online to the public for free at the Bank's Documents & Reports portal - <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/home> (The World Bank, 2018h).

### **The World Bank Policy on Open Access**

The World Bank is committed to Open Access. The Bank believes that for authors, OA enables the widest possible dissemination of their work. For readers, it increases their ability to discover timely information of value. As such the Bank "supports the free online communication and exchange of knowledge as the most effective way of ensuring that the fruits of research, economic and sector work, and development practice are made widely available, read, and built upon" (The World Bank, 2012, p. 1).

In practice, the Bank's information has been open for over 30 years. The formal OA policy was however launched in 2012, 27 years after the Bank opened up its information.<sup>10 11</sup>

### **The World Bank Open Data**

According to various sources, Open Data is non-personal online data that anyone can access, use or share freely with little or no restrictions (The EU, 2013; U.S. Government, n.d., Open

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<sup>10</sup> Visit <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/992881468337274796/World-Bank-Open-Access-Policy-for-Formal-Publications> for details of the World Bank policy on Open Access

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 9 for the evolution of the Bank's disclosure policies.

Knowledge International, n.d.). In other words, Open Data is publicly available online data that can be freely used, modified, and shared by anyone for any purpose at little or no cost.

According to Open data charter, a collaboration between governments and experts working to open up data, there are 6 Open Data principles for data to be considered open. The data should be:

- i. Open by default, that is everything should be open and anything that is kept closed needs to have a justification for non-disclosure e.g. for security, personal privacy etc.
- ii. Timely and Comprehensive meaning published quickly and in a comprehensive way as much as possible in its original, unmodified form.
- iii. Accessible and Usable, being machine readable, easy to find, free of charge, and under an open license (e.g. by Creative Commons).
- iv. Comparable and Interoperable relying on international commonly-agreed data standards.
- v. For Improved Governance & Citizen Engagement. In other words, citizens need to have a better idea of what officials and politicians are doing.
- vi. For Inclusive Development and Innovation, i.e. enhance economic development for governments and private entrepreneurship for individuals.

The World Bank's Open Data meets all these criteria. Available at <http://data.worldbank.org>, the public can perform keyword searches, and browse data by country and by indicator (The World Bank, 2018t).

### **The Data Catalog**

The Data catalog provides a listing of available World Bank datasets: databases, preformatted tables and reports (The World Bank, 2018d). It contains time series data, microdata (unit-level survey data) and Geospatial (geographic positioning information data). Select databases and details are outlined below.

The Global Economic Monitor provides daily country economic updates including exchange rates, equity markets, and emerging market bond indices. Monthly data coverage provides information on consumer prices, high-tech market indicators, industrial production and merchandise trade. The World Development Indicators (WDI) provides sectoral indicators such as education, energy, health, water and sanitation. WDI also has all external debt and financial flows data even though Global Development Finance (GDF) is no longer part of the WDI.<sup>12</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators are drawn from the WDIs, and reorganized according to the goals and targets of the SDGs. The Economic Fitness (EF) measure both a country's diversification and ability to produce complex goods on a globally competitive basis.

Other datasets in the catalog include:

Universal Health Coverage Global Monitoring Data which has information on health service coverage and on financial protection indicators at country, regional and global level. It contains

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<sup>12</sup> The GDF publication has been renamed International Debt Statistics (IDS) and has its own separate database, the IDS

the underlying data used to produce the 2017 joint World Bank-World Health Organization global monitoring report in universal health coverage (The World Bank, 2017c).

Health Nutrition and Population Statistics covering major health and related issues such as global surgery, health financing, medical resources and usage, nutrition, population dynamics, water and sanitation.

Identification for Development (ID4D) Global Dataset which provides a global estimate for the number of individuals without proof of legal identity split by country, region, and income level as well as qualitative data on the entities charged with identification & civil registration.

Jobs with indicators on labor-related topics, covering over 200 economies from 1990 to present.

Poverty and Equity Database with international and national indicators on poverty headcount ratios, poverty gap, and number of poor. Inequality indicators include the Gini index and income or consumption distributions.

GDP ranking including GDP ranking based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

Global Financial Inclusion (Global Findex) Database which provides over 850 country-level indicators on financial inclusion for more than 140 economies summarized for all adults and disaggregated by gender, age, education, income, employment status and rural residence. These indicators also measure how people save, borrow, make payments and manage risk.

Remittance Prices Worldwide with information on the cost of sending and receiving money internationally.

### **The DataBank**

DataBank is a customizable analysis and visualization tool with topical time series data. Users can create own queries, generate tables, charts, and maps, save, embed, and share them.

### **Microdata Library**

The Microdata Library is a collection of survey data and censuses (and their supporting documentation), conducted or supported by the World Bank, other international organizations or statistical agencies.

### **AidFlows**

AidFlows visualizes development financing flows around the world. Users can select individual donors and beneficiaries to track the sources and uses of development financing of interest.

### **Global Consumption Database**

This is a one-stop source of data on household consumption patterns in developing countries.

### **Open Data Toolkit**

The Open Data toolkit is a statistical capacity building program meant to aid governments in starting their own Open Data programs drawing from lessons learned to create best practices while avoiding common pitfalls. (The World Bank, 2017b).

## **Open Financial Data**

The public can get IBRD and IDA financial statements dating back to 1946 and 1961 respectively.<sup>13</sup> All previous and current Trust Funds financial statements are available in the Single Audit.<sup>14</sup> The World Bank Group financial statements are also available in summarized form under the World Bank Finances. These can be accessed via iPhone, iPad, and Android devices as well. Open Financial Data also has the World Bank Financial strength information. This covers financial policies and liquidity, quality of the loan portfolio, profitability and shareholder base in addition to the credit ratings reports (The World Bank, 2016a).

The public financial disclosure program includes the financial declarations of the interests of the World Bank Group senior managers. These go back to 2010 (The World Bank, 2016b).

## **Open Finances Data**

Currently Open Finances contain 84 datasets. The major ones are Loans and Credits (key financial datasets of the IBRD and IDA), Financial Reporting (IBRD, IDA, IFC & MIGA datasets from their respective quarterly financial statements), Shareholder Equity (member countries are allocated votes at the time of membership and subsequently for additional subscriptions to capital), Corporate & Project Procurement datasets, Project data, and World Bank Administrative budget datasets (The World Bank, 2017a).

## **The International Comparison Program (ICP)**

ICP estimates PPPs for use as currency converters to compare the size and price levels of world economies (The World Bank, 2018k).

## **Debt Statistics**

The International Debt Statistics (IDS) is a source for annual external debt as reported by World Bank country borrowers. The Quarterly External Debt Statistics (QEDS) provides quarterly external debt data broken down by sector, maturity, instruments and currency. Quarterly Public Sector Debt (QPSD) has comprehensive public sector debt data of participating countries both high income and developing (The World Bank, 2018g).

# **CONCLUSION**

## **Open Access and the SDGs**

The SDGs is a United Nations development agenda with 17 goals and 169 associated targets to be met by 2030. The goals range from ending poverty in all its forms to strengthening partnerships to achieve the set targets (The United Nations, n.d.).

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<sup>13</sup> Visit [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTABOUTUS/Resources/29707-1280852909811/IBRD\\_Dec\\_17.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTABOUTUS/Resources/29707-1280852909811/IBRD_Dec_17.pdf) for the 2017 financial statement

<sup>14</sup> Visit <http://financesapp.worldbank.org/en/summaryinfo/overview/> (accessed May 20 2018) for details on the single audit

The specific goals are:

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (Ibid).

The World Bank Open Data with its proven reliability and credibility can be used to monitor and measure the progress of the implementation and achievement of the SDGs using the Bank's select datasets since the institution's data already covers the SDG goals and targets. For example, SDG's first goal of ending poverty is in fact the mission of the Bank which the Bank proactively already tracks (The World Bank, 2018b). Its 16<sup>th</sup> goal of promoting access to justice and institutional strengthening itself is a core pillar of the World Bank's governance program (The World Bank, 2018j) and a top priority of the Bank Group client countries (Guo, 2017). In fact, the Bank's data is well poised to monitor the SDG progress by Country (The World Bank, 2018e) and by Indicator (The World Bank, 2018f). Already, the Bank has its own set of SDG indicators that it puts out to help monitor the SDGs (The World Bank, 2018m & p). Indeed, to further underline the importance of access to meaningful, credible, reliable, transparent and trusted information in meeting development outcomes, and the convergence of this thinking, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in conjunction with the University of Washington Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) have independently empirically outlined how Access to Information can be used to promote the achievement of SDGs

in a report that will be used as a baseline for monitoring future SDG progress. The report is unequivocal in its conclusion: the world needs to capitalize on the strengths of the information society to realize success with the SDGs; the SDG gains are expected to have a bidirectional relationship, i.e. Access to Information will advance the SDGs, and achieving the SDGs will advance Access to Information); finally, access is critical for all countries and regions, regardless of their GDP (Garrido & Wyber, 2017). It is instructive that this report primarily sourced indicator data from the World Bank and many of the international organizations that the Bank collaborates with in its data programs such as the ILO, the ITU, the UNDP and UNESCO and independently arrived at these compelling conclusions. While this article is not a critique of the IFLA report, and cannot pretend to be, it is further instructive that the report exclusively used these international sources in 75 per cent of its Development and Access to Information (DA2I) dimensions baseline measurements (3 out of 4).<sup>15</sup> Though future studies might yet confirm this, it is not an exaggeration to infer from the foregoing the central role that Access to Information at the World Bank already plays and is poised to play in the future realization of the SDGs.

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<sup>15</sup> See Garrido & Wyber (2017), Table 2, p. 16

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