

Geocoding

Mapping Aid for Greater Impact

The Challenge

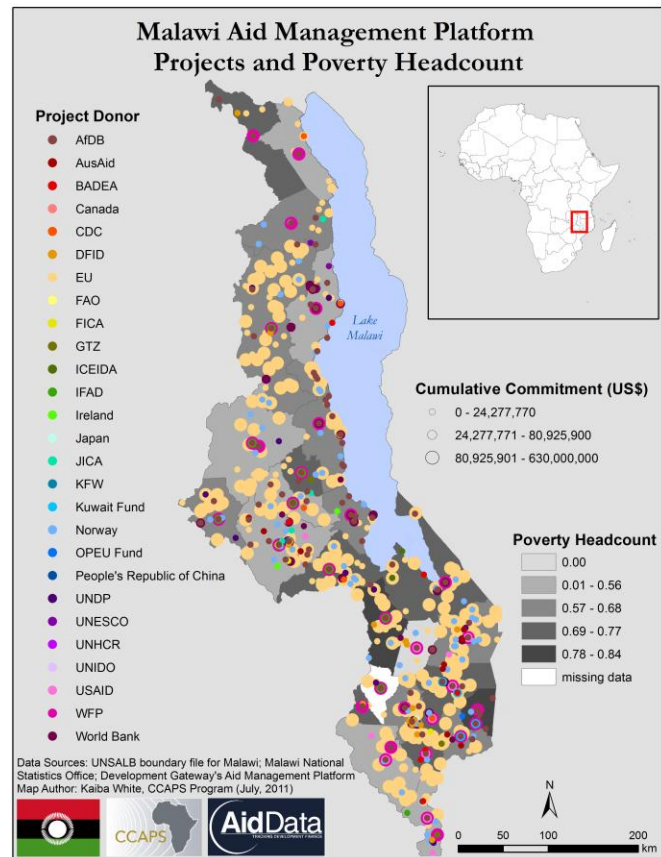
Making aid and global poverty reduction a success story depends on involving stakeholders in aid-funded work, strengthening accountability of donor agencies and partner governments, and building country ownership. Yet sometimes even basic information such as the location of an aid project is difficult to find. Information on project locations is critical for determining whether aid is reaching areas of greatest need, as well as for avoiding duplication of effort within a country. Geocoding, or recording the location of aid projects at the sub-national level, enables visual tracking of where the money is flowing and traces what kind of aid each area is receiving.

Geocoding Solutions from AidData

AidData, in collaboration with Uppsala University, has developed a comprehensive way to geocode aid projects. By defining multiple levels of geographical precision, AidData is able to accurately identify the locations of all types of development projects. Using this rigorous yet flexible methodology, teams of trained researchers work with donor and country agencies to determine the precise location of development activities. The methodology is compatible with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data standard and can be downloaded for use by any organization at open.aiddata.org.

The UCDP/AidData methodology has several advantages. First, each project is coded twice. The two codes are then reconciled into a final data set that has been triple-checked for quality assurance. Second, it captures geographic information at several levels—coordinate, city, and administrative divisions—for each location, allowing the data to be visualized in different ways depending upon the geographic unit of interest. Third, the methodology provides guidance to coders for locations that are vague or ambiguous, allowing for higher coding certainty. Finally, the coding system also records the precision with which the location is available, e.g. exact coordinates versus near a landmark.

Recent work includes the Mapping for Results partnership with the World Bank, through which more than 2,700 activities were geocoded using these methods (maps.worldbank.org). The methodology has also

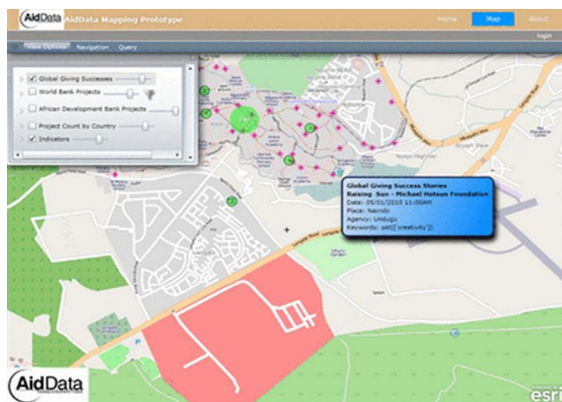
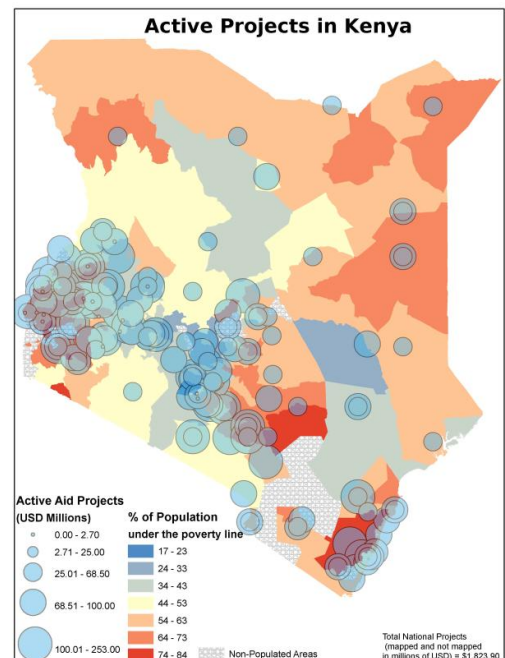


been used to geocode a subset of African Development Bank projects. In addition to work with individual donors, the AidData team joined forces with the Climate Change and African Political Stability Program (CCAPS) at the University of Texas to do a country-level geocoding pilot. In summer 2011, AidData and CCAPS worked with Malawi's Ministry of Finance to geocode aid activity information captured in the government's Aid Management Platform. This will enable a view of the distribution of all donor activities across the country, rather than just a single donor, helping government and donor staff to ensure that resources are targeted to areas of greatest need.

The Power of Geocoding

Mapping aid information enables a better understanding of the allocation of aid within a country, highlighting any potential financing gaps, and displaying inequities of aid distribution. Once mapped, geocoded aid information presents development stakeholders with a simple platform to assess current performance and to plan future projects. Geocoded aid project data can be overlaid with a variety of other geographic data, including poverty rates (as in the graphic at right), environmental vulnerability, income, social statistics, infrastructure, and real-time incident reports.

With geocoded aid data, donor organizations will have a clearer picture of the distribution of aid within a country. Mapped sub-national data can provide partner countries with a better understanding of how and where aid should be working for their benefit. Geocoded data will also allow donors, countries, auditors, and citizens to verify that projects are being implemented in their intended locations, thereby decreasing opportunities for waste and corruption.



To demonstrate the power of geo-enabled aid information, and with support from Esri (a leading provider of interactive mapping platforms), AidData created Development Loop (graphic at left). This prototype web application incorporates data on projects funded by the World Bank and African Development Bank, overlaid with regional development statistics and project success stories reported by GlobalGiving, to produce a visual story of aid, need, and impact. Future versions will employ crowdsourcing tools, allowing development professionals and aid beneficiaries to create or update project data from anywhere in the world via web and mobile applications.

AidData is a joint effort of Development Gateway, the College of William and Mary, and Brigham Young University