



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

e-Newsletter

MAY- JUNE 2009 No. 48

Local Budget Democracy: Lessons and Tools

The Challenges of Institutionalizing Participatory Budgeting: Experiences and Lessons from Vitoria, Brazil by Marta Zorzal e Silva and Mark S. Langevin
Assessing Budget Democracy in Indonesia through the Local Budget Index by Yuna Farhan, Yeni Sucipto, Muhammad Maulana, and Uchok Sky Khadafi, Indonesia Forum for Budget Transparency (FITRA)

Impacts of Public Spending on Health and Rural Development

Revealing Health Spending Research in India and Kenya Response to IFPRI Policy Brief: Setting Priorities for Public Spending for Agricultural and Rural Development in Africa by Manyewu Mutamba and Leslie Nyagah, Idasa

CSOs Monitor Education Budgets

Civil Society Budget Work: Meeting the Right to Education by Victoria Turrent, Save the Children U.K.
CIPPEC in Argentina Creates Program to Monitor the Law on Education Funding by Alejandro Vera

Technology at the Service of Civil Society Advocacy

"Investigate Your MP's Expenses": Online Budget Monitoring Initiative from the *Guardian* by Delaine McCullough
Cell Phones: Transformative Technology for Civil Society Budget Work by Rocío Campos

Resources and Publications

The Missing Link: Applied Budget Work as a Tool to Hold Governments Accountable for their Maternal Mortality Reduction Commitments
Making the Money Work for the People in Nigeria

Forward to a Friend Campaign

Do you find the IBP newsletter informative and useful? Would you like to hear from a wider range of analysts, advocates, and policy makers about new initiatives and issues? Would you like to reach more budget work practitioners, researchers, and donors with your work? Then help us build the international network to strengthen the impact of civil society budget work— Forward this newsletter to five people within your organization and network today!

[SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE THE IBP NEWSLETTER! >>](#)

Dignity and Defiance, Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization
A Portrait of Egypt: The Squander of Socio-Economic Rights in the Implementation of the
Government Development Plan, 2002-2007
Freedom.org
The Accountability Initiative

OBI Trainings and Events

Azerbaijan and Yemen Launch the Open Budget Survey 2008
Open Budget Initiative 2010 Trainings

Announcements

Gender Festival in Tanzania. Making Resources Work for Women
Opportunity for Civil Society to Influence IMF Governance Reform
New IBP Staff
IBP Job Opportunity
French and Spanish Translations of *Our Money, Our Responsibility: A Citizens' Guide to Monitoring Government Expenditures*

The Challenges of Institutionalizing Participatory Budgeting: Experiences and Lessons from Vitoria, Brazil by Marta Zorzal e Silva and Mark S. Langevin

In recent years many have celebrated the Porto Alegre model for participatory budgeting (PB), largely a consequence of the Brazilian Workers Party "way of governing" that features direct democratic institutions for policy and budget making. In Brazil, the [participatory budgeting](#) process has grown from its initial establishment through Worker Party municipal administrations in the late 1980s, including those in Porto Alegre and Vitória (the capital of Espírito Santo), to over 6,000 municipalities by 2001. While Porto Alegre's participatory budgeting model evolved through successive Workers Party administrations from 1989 to 2004, Vitória's PB process was disrupted by turnover in the governing party, which resulted in efforts by newly elected mayors, often with different conceptualizations of PB, to institutionalize their preferred models. Hence, Vitória's experiences with PB are more representative of what might happen in multiparty Brazil as more jurisdictions adopt PB mechanisms for organizing direct consultations with citizens.

The [Political Studies Laboratory at the Federal University of Espírito Santo](#) (LEP-UFES) has conducted numerous research projects that track the different experiences with PB in Vitória and the cities of the greater metropolitan area, including Cariacica and Serra. Among the many publications of LEP-UFES, Euzineia Carlos' book, *Controle Social e Justiça Redistributiva no Orçamento Participativo*, and Marta Zorzal e Silva and Bajonas Teixeira de Brito Junior's edited volume, *Participação Social na Gestão Pública: Olhares Sobre as Experiências de Vitória-ES*, provide critical analyses of the uneven process of institutionalizing PB structures and processes in greater Vitória and its sustainability over time.

While much research and commentary has focused on who leads and participates in PB processes, LEP-UFES has explored how political parties and coalitions, mayors, appointed executive branch policy leaders, and community leaders and associations erect and then

navigate the institutional frameworks through which this form of direct democracy unfolds. While mayoral leadership and social contestation may interact to produce specific PB outcomes in distinct jurisdictions and junctures, LEP-UFES identifies institutional development as a prime indicator of vitality and sustainability of PB for those citizens historically marginalized from the representative institutions of public policy making. In particular, such factors as territorial divisions, institutional support and resources, and oversight of the PB process may play critical roles in empowering citizens to effectively participate in such forms of direct democracy.

The composition of the territorial bases (neighborhoods, entire cities, or greater metropolitan areas) for PB deliberations may extend social control over marginalized communities or empower them to confront the unequal distribution of public services and resources. LEP-UFES has observed and analyzed how variation in the territorial bases that frame PB deliberations (neighborhood, citywide, etc.) and their relationships to executive branch power in Vitória since 1989 affect the extent to which the public can truly participate in the process. During the first Workers Party (PT) municipal administration of Mayor Vitor Buaiz (1989-1992), the structure of the initial PB process reflected an emphasis on the neighborhood, establishing a council with two representatives from each participating neighborhood. This council became an integral part of the structure of Buaiz's administration and was supported by the Secretariat of Social Action and its Division of Popular Support.

Because of the novelty of this model, Buaiz's Workers Party administration focused on refining the process and providing participants with trainings and "popular" education to increase the effectiveness of members of the public in the PB process. In 1991 the administration further defined the process, developing PB commissions to work on the budget by addressing various issues, including outstanding policy challenges, infrastructure needs, development of the seven regions composing the city, and the average family income of each region.

The subsequent administration of Paulo Hartung (1993-1996) of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) continued to embrace the PB process but added several distinct institutional reforms. First, the Hartung administration changed the name of the process to *Popular Budgeting* to better reflect the new mayor's vision of a participatory process that offered a comprehensive approach to city planning, not just the tallying of neighborhood and regional public works preferences. Hartung transferred PB coordination to the Secretariat of Planning and established a very refined process for measuring the quality of life for each neighborhood and region. The administration developed the *Public Works and Actions Indicator* that judged projects, in part, according to whether they were of (citywide) or concentrated (neighborhood/region) value, allowing for a more integrated approach to decision making through PB.

Ironically, the next administration, that of Luiz Paulo (1997-2005), continued the Brazilian Social Democratic Party's rule over the city but derailed the progress of PB as a form of direct democracy. Although Luiz Paulo voiced his support for the PB system, he quickly moved to reform it and eventually control the deliberations. Paulo established seven regional administrations for the city, each with its own mini-mayor who would be responsible for the PB process, and organized PB structures and deliberations so that the mini-mayors could control and even impose their prerogatives upon the process. The Paulo administration also abolished the system of the *Public Works and Actions Indicator* in order to implement its own planning strategy for the city, while making sure that each Regional Forum (structures established to regulate regional PB deliberations) arrived at compatible policy preferences.

The results were twofold. Through the two terms of Luiz Paulo the PB process was discredited, and participation rates fell as a consequence. Second, the city council moved to counter the administration's efforts by adopting the *Italo Batan* law, enthusiastically supported by community groups, which sought to institutionalize the PB process, protecting it against the administrative fiat.

In 2005 Mayor João Coser of the Workers Party assumed the administration of Vitória and worked to restore the vitality and credibility of the PB system. In 2008 he was re-elected, in part because of his work to revitalize the PB process and ensure that open deliberations occur at every territorial base (neighborhood, region, and city wide) in order to develop a comprehensive budget plan that is truly participatory and advances the aspirations of all citizens of the city. Moreover, the new mayor appointed a Budget Council that is held accountable for ensuring that the budget is carried out with transparency and accountability to the PB process and participants.

The level and nature of institutional support and resources can empower or hinder the participation of marginalized communities. With the exception of the Luiz Paulo municipal government, Vitória's mayors have attempted to support the PB process by linking it to a key administrative secretariat that reinforces the mayor's support for the process with the resources needed to finance and structure popular deliberations involving thousands of citizens and dozens of community organizations. Under the current administration of João Coser, the PB process is now coordinated by the Strategic Administration Secretariat, indicating the high level of support within the administration. The administrations of Buaiz, Hartung, and Coser have all invested substantial resources to guarantee that participants are trained in PB and have access to the information and data necessary for developing and presenting projects, defining preferences, and holding the administration accountable to the outcomes of the process.

The current Coser administration has deepened institutional support and expanded resources for the PB process in Vitória. Aside from placing the coordination of PB within a key executive agency, creating a Budget Council responsible for ensuring accountability, and guaranteeing deliberations at the local, regional, and city wide levels, the government has created eight policy issue areas for framing PB deliberations: Children, Youth, Afro-Brazilians, Culture, Business, Women, Security, and Solidarity Economics. According to PB participant Cosme Santos de Jesus of the neighborhood Jaburu, "the construction of our neighborhood preschool was a necessity and dream. Nobody believed that one day the construction would take place, but today the project is almost completed. 400 children will be served that previously had to go to the neighborhoods of Ilha de Santa Maria, Consolação and Santa Helena. Today, we have both a voice and vote, and this values each citizen because they now believe that their participation is meaningful."¹

The monitoring of the PB process and measures or rules to hold government jurisdictions accountable to both the process and its outcomes are essential to the sustainability of this form of direct democracy. The lessons learned by Luiz Paulo's administration are clear—institutions matter and can either preclude meaningful deliberations or generate them. Under Paulo, the PB process was under the authority of the regional mini-mayors and controlled so as to produce results that supported the mayor's municipal planning strategy. After several years, participants found less meaning in the

¹ "Conselheiros analisam obras do Orçamento Participativo." Diário de Vitória. April 10, 2006 and accessible at: <http://www.vitoria.es.gov.br/diario/2006/0411a/op.asp>.

deliberations, ultimately turning to representative democracy to protect the direct democracy institutions of PB both through the passage of the Italo Batan law and in their support for a mayoral candidate who embraced the process. According to one of the recent PB participants, Aurenny Scheidegger Amaral of the neighborhood Estrelinha, "I have really enjoyed this form of accounting for public monies because for many years we did not have real Participatory Budgeting."²

Participatory budgeting in Vitória did not evolve in a progressive, linear fashion as is the case of Porto Alegre under the Workers Party. Rather, successive mayors and parties offered contrasting approaches to this form of direct democracy and experimented with different institutional structures to facilitate the process, or in the case of Mayor Luiz Paulo, to subordinate it to his planning preferences. The lessons are clear: participatory budgeting requires committed administrations that provide the resources to support the process and develop and preserve institutions that promote participation, provide essential training and resources to assist all participants, and structure a variety of forums to discuss neighborhood, regional, citywide, and a set of diverse planning issues that provide vitality to the process and sustain it for all citizens and communities.

Bibliography

Carlos, Euzineia. *Controle Social e Justiça Redistributiva no Orçamento Participativo*. Vitória/ES. EDUFES. 2007.

Zorzal e Silva, Marta and Bajonas Teixeira de Brito Junior. *Participação Social na Gestão Pública: Olhares Sobre as Experiências de Vitória-ES*. São Paulo. Annablume Editora. 2009.

Marta Zorzal e Silva, Ph.D. is Director of Political Studies Laboratory and Professor of Political Science at the Federal University of Espírito Santo.

Mark S. Langevin, Ph.D. is an Associate Researcher at the Political Studies Laboratory/UFES and adjunct Associate Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland-College Park.

Assessing Budget Democracy in Indonesia through the Local Budget Index by Yuna Farhan, Yeni Sucipto, Muhammad Maulana, and Uchok Sky Khadafi, Indonesia Forum for Budget Transparency (FITRA)

The budget advocacy movement in Indonesia began to surface soon after reforms were implemented in the wake of the downfall of the Soeharto regime in 1999. The public began to realize that the budget is one of the state's most important policy instruments and requires advocacy throughout the budget process to ensure participation, transparency, and accountability. Furthermore, advocacy is needed to help align budget outcomes with the needs of the public. Democracy and decentralization in Indonesia have shifted the focus of public service management to the local level. This shift is an effort to improve public service delivery and, ultimately, the people's overall welfare. Thus local governance reform is essential for strengthening the ability and will of local authorities to appropriate budgets openly and with the interests of their constituents in mind.

Ten years after the initiation of national budget reforms, reforms at the local level have remained rather stagnant. One of the major problems identified with local budget processes is that there has been little attempt to translate the concept of participatory budgeting into practical and operational terms, making it difficult for the government or members of the public and civil society to monitor and evaluate these local processes. In an effort to

² Ibid.

measure and address this problem, the Indonesia Forum for Budget Transparency (FITRA) supported by The Asia Foundation, has formulated an instrument to measure the principles of open and accountable budgeting: the Local Budget Index (LBI).

The Local Budget Index is expected to make it easier for the public to assess local governance in their own districts, particularly with regard to the budget. From the perspective of the government, the LBI has simplified self-evaluation and improved its ability to manage the budget by helping to identify weaknesses in their budget processes and practices. Furthermore, the LBI could be used as either an incentive or a punishment to the districts, helping to strengthen the political will to have open and accountable budgets.

The Local Budget Index measures principles of participation, transparency, accountability, and gender equality in the budget development process. Many standards in the LBI instrument are based on the legal framework of local budgeting in Indonesia and to international standards of budget management found in the International Monetary Fund's *Code of Good Practices on Fiscal Transparency*, as well as those measured in the International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Index (OBI).

Indonesia was one of 85 countries included in the Open Budget Survey 2008—a comprehensive analysis and survey that evaluates whether central governments give the public access to budget information and opportunities to participate in the budget process. The Open Budget Index 2008 (OBI) is a comparative measure of the overall commitment of the governments surveyed to budget transparency based on a subset of the Survey's 123 questions.

Indonesia scored 54 out of a possible 100 on the OBI 2008, which placed it among those countries that provide *some* information to the public. The United Kingdom scored the highest of all the surveyed countries at 88 out of 100. The unit of analysis used for the Survey was the national budget, known as the APBN in Indonesia. Though the OBI was designed to measure budget transparency and accountability at the national level, the LBI was able to incorporate those components that could be used in the local context, including elements that measure the legal framework of local budgeting and opportunities for public participation.

In formulating the LBI, it was difficult to identify appropriate indicators for open budgeting, in part because of interconnectedness of such principles as transparency and accountability. Another challenge was deciding how to weight the various indicators. Thus all of the indicators and questions in the LBI were given the same weight and value.

The Local Budget Index is currently being field tested in 47 districts in Indonesia. The midterm review found that assessors who had come from NGOs had difficulties verifying answers to the questions used for the index. To address this problem, these assessors carried out in-depth interviews and held multi-stakeholder focus group discussions to gain consensus on the appropriate answers.

In addition to implementing the LBI, FITRA is carrying out an analysis aimed at measuring the correlation between levels of transparency, accountability, and public participation in the budget process (as measured by the LBI) and actual budget allocations. This budget trend analysis also looks at the alignment between planning and budgeting, the responsiveness of the budget to issues of gender equity, the impact of revenue and policy on budget allocation for the social sectors, and budget efficiency.

For more information, contact Yuna Farhan at sekretariat@seknasfitra.org.

Revealing Health Spending Research in India and Kenya

The Transparency and Accountability Program (TAP), a project of the Results for Development Institute (<http://tap.resultsfordevelopment.org>), provided financial and technical support for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to conduct research and related advocacy on social sector public spending. Here, we present summaries of the findings of two projects on health spending. The first one was conducted by the [Institute of Policy Analysis and Research](#) (IPAR) in Kenya. The second one was conducted by the [Indo-Dutch Project Management Society](#) (IDPMS) in India.

The [Institute of Policy Analysis and Research](#) (IPAR), an NGO in Kenya whose aim is to develop, implement, and evaluate constructive public policy ideas, was compelled to research the recent decline of Kenyan health and public health care. Even though public spending on health care has been rising recently, there has been no corresponding increase in health outcomes. Significant increases in Kenya's health budget, from 16 billion Kenyan shillings (Ksh) in 2003-2004 to 27 billion Ksh in 2006-2007 (which represents 7.92 percent of total government expenditures and two percent of GDP for that year) have coincided with decreases in a number of health indicators, such as infant mortality and life expectancy. Between 50-54 percent of health expenditures between 2002 and 2007 went to public health care workers' salaries, which are significantly lower than those of private sector health workers, especially for doctors and pharmacists.

Budget analysis showing that a significant portion of health expenditures was being allocated to salaries, coupled with the mention in the 2005-2020 National Health Sector Strategic Plan that personnel management needs to be more efficient, led IPAR to conduct a study of public health care facilities in the Machakos district of Kenya to determine the extent and causes of health care provider absenteeism. IPAR hypothesized that absenteeism was a problem contributing to a leakage of public funds. Upon visiting 40 health facilities unannounced, researchers found an average absenteeism rate of 25 percent. According to IPAR's estimate, employee absenteeism costs the district of Machakos 6,659,832 Ksh (approx. US\$107,000) per month. [1] Estimates show that over the course of a year, the accumulated cost, over \$1 million, would be enough to build a fully equipped mid-level health care facility. In response to its findings on the causes and fiscal implications of absenteeism, IPAR has offered a number of policy recommendations to begin to remedy the situation, including decentralizing the control of hiring and firing to the local level so management can better assess job performance in relation to employment decisions; monitoring absenteeism more closely; and disciplining frequently absent workers.

The second budget analysis project was conducted by the [Indo-Dutch Project Management Society](#) (IDPMS), which is dedicated to fostering the values of economic and social justice and empowering the rural poor in India. Recently IDPMS conducted a study of public health service delivery in the State of Karnataka, India, which has a vast rural poor population. The study aimed to assess the quality and accessibility of Public Health Centers (PHCs) in two districts of Karnataka, Bellary and Chamaraja Nagar, by looking at the budget flows and the organizational structure of local PHCs. The study also examines Karnataka's three-tiered governance system that resulted from the devolution of financial resources and administrative powers to local government—the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) at the district level, the Taluk Panchayat (TP) at the taluk level (a taluk is a subdivision of a district), and the Gramma Panchayat (GP) at the village level. These Panchayat Raj institutions (PRIs) were

created to improve the quality of life for all Indians by promoting more accessible feedback mechanisms for locals to express their needs and formulate policies around them. Assessing public healthcare service delivery and the success of these PRIs requires an understanding of the budget processes of these government institutions.

The Zilla Panchayat is responsible for healthcare purchases for the lower level PRIs. All lower level public health sector employees report to the District Health and Family Welfare Officer, who reports to the CEO of the ZP. After the state makes allocations in the annual budget enacted by the legislature, a "Link Document" is then drafted, which further allocates funds for all activities of all departments under administrative control of the ZP. While the ZP is the repository of all funds that flow from the State to the lower levels, PHCs are able to provide some input on the purchase of pharmaceuticals. The budget for pharmaceuticals is divided into two components, with 60 percent going to centralized purchases of standard drugs for the entire system, while the remaining 40 percent goes to purchase pharmaceuticals specific to local PHCs' needs.

IDPMS used Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS), Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys (QSDS), interviews, questionnaires, and some legal and economic data in their analysis. The questions to PHC personnel focused on duties, availability of pharmaceuticals, availability and functioning of equipment, and life amenities provided by the PHC and Health and Family Welfare Department. For patients, the questions focused on their perception of and preferences for healthcare provision, the adequacy of public health facilities, doctor availability, waiting time, and costs. Several understaffing and underfunding problems were identified, as well as irregularities in obtaining and distributing pharmaceuticals at the PHCs. (Although the budget processes for pharmaceutical purchases allows for local-level feedback, PHCs and Gramma governments do not directly receive any funds for purchases.) All of these factors make people opt for private healthcare, even when they cannot afford it.

IDPMS's preliminary findings document challenges on both the demand and supply sides of public healthcare service delivery in Bellary and Chamaraja Nagar. Supply-side problems discovered generally fall into one of three categories: 1) availability of qualified medical personnel in the PHC; 2) availability of pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies; and 3) a facility's infrastructure.

The IDPMS study identifies four key policy actions needed to address the underlying problems of the public healthcare system in the districts of Bellary and Chamaraja Nagar: 1) increase the allocation to health and family welfare to two percent of the Net State Domestic product; 2) capture and classify all relevant data on budget flows, jurisdiction, and management of the procurement process at all levels and periodically present them to the public in accessible formats; 3) widely disseminate and increase the accessibility information on service delivery and budget needs, thereby increasing transparency and accountability at the local level; and 4) aggressively promote medical education to ensure a greater supply of medical professionals that will fulfill the demands of the system.

For more information, contact Courtney Tolmie at ctolmie@resultsfordevelopment.org.

[1] According to more recent exchange rates, 6.6 million Ksh is approximately \$85,000.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) recently published a brief titled “[Setting Priorities for Public Spending for Agricultural and Rural Development in Africa](http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp012.pdf)” (see <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp012.pdf>), in which it draws on case studies from both Africa and Asia to reflect on the contributions different types of public spending make to poverty reduction, growth, and welfare outcomes. Manyewu Mutamba and Leslie Nyagah, agriculture sector researchers at the Economic Governance Program at Idasa, a civil society organization based in South Africa, use the brief as a starting point to discuss the impact of agricultural spending on poverty reduction and growth.

The IFPRI brief finds strong positive effects of agricultural spending on growth and poverty reduction. This is not surprising as strong backward and forward linkages with other sectors ensure that investment in agriculture results in high economic and social returns that often filter beyond the sector itself. A number of studies conducted by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in Eastern and Southern Africa show high benefit-cost ratios for agricultural research and technology improvements. Even at the local level, improved food security and increased agricultural incomes often lead to a suite of positive socio-economic outcomes that include reduced school drop-out rates, reduced household healthcare costs, and lower rates of out-migration. In many countries on the continent, investments that boost agricultural output have generated positive growth and development outcomes, except in circumstances where infrastructural constraints are severely limiting, undermining integration with other economic sectors.

Issues of access, transaction costs, and flow of information are central to the success of agricultural investment and rural development. Due to remoteness and major infrastructural weaknesses in many rural areas in Africa, tackling these bottlenecks is one of the most pressing development challenges. However, rather than being treated as stand-alone investment initiatives, returns from support for agriculture are higher when it is integrated into broader investment projects with more direct and immediate income flows. Otherwise such returns are more likely to occur after a time lag and may mostly benefit the elite segment of the rural population, who are already engaged in economic activities that can take advantage of any improvements in infrastructure.

The IFPRI findings also emphasize the need to target different types of spending geographically to ensure a high return on investment. Despite the difficulty of this approach in practice due to the aggregate nature of national planning and budgeting processes, geographical targeting presents opportunities for a more responsive expenditure regime that addresses the greatest constraints on the sector. The challenges facing smallholder farmers are diverse and often location specific; even similar problems may call for different solutions depending on local circumstances. Levels of poverty also correlate with geographical variables and a more targeted spending regime is better placed to achieve pro-poor outcomes.

In addition to the effects of infrastructure and geography on the outcomes from agricultural spending the IFPRI brief also explores how non-agricultural spending, such as that on education, that can expand income earning opportunities impacts the farming sector and rural households. For example, in the case of Ghana, the brief notes negative growth returns from education spending, which seems to be out of the norm, considering the well documented spin-offs that are associated with rural households that gain access to off-farm income earning opportunities. Studies in a number of sub-Saharan African countries suggest that remittances from family members in off-farm employment often offset costs for addressing labor bottlenecks (e.g., through hiring replacement workers or mechanization) that are associated with out-migration and cash constraints on the purchase of inputs,

leading to improved agricultural performance. Asset accumulation and other household investments driven by remittances also create conditions for sustained economic activity at the household level that provides real prospects for escaping poverty. Again, it needs to be noted that these processes play out in a lagged fashion, and returns from investment in education may not be immediately apparent and may even seem to be negative. Furthermore, the already high unemployment rates in many countries may dampen prospects for new income-earning opportunities usually associated with improving levels of education.

Many African governments continue to treat agriculture as a way of life for peasant families, such that concrete commitments for transforming rural livelihoods are few and far between. With only 19 percent of African countries meeting their commitment to allocate more than 10 percent of their national expenditure to agriculture, it is clear that a seismic shift in thinking across the continent will be required before changes start to happen.

Unfortunately, the lack of effective farmer organizational systems and limited support from civil society groups has undermined the ability of smallholder farmers to put pressure on governments through sustained lobbying for adequate share of public expenditure. The paradox of declining budget allocation to agriculture despite its continued high contribution to GDP in most African countries is a significant example of this skewed balance of power. A key gap is the lack of accessible information on budgets and budget processes and analyses of how these affect the welfare of smallholder farmers. Unless they engage with concrete alternative proposals based on empirical evidence, farmer groups, and civil society in general, will remain marginal to processes of public expenditure and priority setting, without an effective voice to influence political decisions that affect the sector. Unless the information imbalances are addressed, the fate of African agriculture will continue to depend on political goodwill rather than the needs and aspirations of the smallholder farmers themselves.

To read the IFPRI brief, visit <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp012.pdf>
You can contact Manyewa Mutamba at mmutamba@idasa.org.za and Leslie Nyagh at lnyagah@idasa.org.za.

Civil Society Budget Work: Meeting the Right to Education by Victoria Turrent, Save the Children U.K.

Civil Society, Budgets, and Education for All

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) was established in March 2002 to promote civil society participation in the move toward achieving Education for All (EFA). The goals of CEF were to increase public debate around education goals, bring about greater transparency in the education budget, and focus on the needs of children outside the education system. The CEF supported partners in 16 countries to empower communities to monitor spending on education at local and national levels. This involved building the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to influence budget and education policy decisions. This article considers the work of CEF partners in Pakistan and Zambia and outlines the principal lessons learnt from the CEF experience of budget monitoring in the education sector.

Civil society budget work in the education sector has been used to examine whether expenditure is disbursed as planned, whether it has the desired impact, and what is the impact of the education budget on different parts of the population. By building national

capacity in budget analysis, tracking, and monitoring, civil society in many countries have used the information generated on public expenditure to advocate for the fulfillment of their right to education.

Pakistan: Understanding Education Budgets

In Pakistan, the CEF supported the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) to carry out national level budget tracking and monitoring and to empower local communities to demand transparency for public education resources. The CEF also partnered with the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CDPI), which respectively advocated for increased allocations to education and worked with parliamentarians on the use of public education resources.

The partners in Pakistan used a multi-pronged approach to improving education finance. They conducted analysis of education budgets, built the capacity of communities to track education spending and develop and implement advocacy strategies, delineated and increased the role of civil society in education budget monitoring and advocacy, and strengthened relationships between communities, civil society, and parliamentarians.

The HRCP conducted research to inform advocacy work and debate with policy makers, as well as to strengthen participation in education planning and spending. HRCP publications were widely disseminated, and many CSOs used the recommendations they contained when intervening in education budget debates. This empowered civil society to advocate for increased allocations for education, lobby for improved transparency and accountability, and participate in budget planning with the government.

Both the HRCP and the PCE worked to empower communities and train them to track government spending in order to ensure the effective use of available resources, demand transparency and accountability, and to advocate for an increase in the education budget where shortfalls were identified. This was done through awareness-raising sessions, community dialogues, capacity-building workshops, and policy forums with key stakeholders.

In addition to these efforts, the CDPI worked to develop an interface between the community, stakeholders, and the standing legislative committee on education. The CDPI established a working group that met quarterly to discuss issues related to transparency and accountability in education and facilitated a roundtable discussion on these issues that was attended by PCE members, parliamentarians, and members of the National Assembly.

The real impact of this work was felt in March 2007 when the government of Pakistan announced significant increases in funding for the education sector, committing to an increase in education spending from 2 percent to 4 percent of GDP by 2011.

Zambia: Building Local Level Capacity in Budget Work

The CEF Zambia initiative aimed at widening opportunities for civil society participation in budget expenditure tracking in order to engage with the government on education budget issues. The CEF supported training in budget tracking to increase the capacity of CSOs, school management committees, parent-teacher associations, women's groups, and school-going children to monitor the government's basic school grants at school level, as well as national education budget processes.

Operation Young Vote supported CEF partners by coordinating and sharing budget-related information as well as facilitating the production of a budget-tracking tool tailored to the needs of local users and translated into local languages. School development action plans were developed following training on school governance and budget tracking. This led to communities reporting cases of misappropriation of resources and fraud to the District Education Board office. The findings from budget tracking and monitoring school governance were shared through local radio stations, meetings, and other media publications.

Budget-tracking findings were disseminated to officials at the district and national level. The Ministry of Education committed to addressing most of the issues raised. Their commitments were closely monitored by CSOs at the district level and by the CEF partner, the Zambia National Education Coalition, at the national level.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

These are just two examples of the work of CEF partners. Further challenges and lessons learnt arise from the CEF's experience in building capacity and enabling civil society organizations to more strategically and substantively influence budgetary decisions and decisions around education budget policy in the 16 partner countries.

Executive control and secrecy are common characteristics of the budget process in many countries, especially at the formulation stage during which expenditure priorities are determined. Moreover, budget work activities may be limited in terms of the ability to gain access to information—in many countries freedom of information laws need to be enacted and implemented to allow for greater budget transparency at all levels of government. Often, there are long delays in receiving responses to requests for information, and in some cases the information may not be disclosed at all. In many countries, the general absence of information on education budgets—particularly in accessible, non-technical forms—seriously hinders the efforts of CSOs to participate in discussions on the distribution of education resources.

There is also a need to build CSOs' capacity to undertake budget analysis and expenditure tracking. This is one of the biggest challenges to scaling up successful budget work activities. Related to this is the absence of education coalitions in many countries. Unless a wider platform is in place to support capacity building and allow for interagency collaboration and learning, it is difficult to undertake effective budget work activities strengthened by the support and voice of a well-established and nationally recognized platform. More needs to be done to engage ordinary citizens in budget work, creating the demand from members of the public to routinely ask for budget figures and feel that they can affect change is as important as creating the institutions and framework in which this can happen. Building a culture of such wider public participation can only be achieved by demystifying budget work and empowering people with the understanding that they can be part of the change process.

For further information on CEF budget work, the following documents can be located at: www.commonwealtheducationfund.org.

- (2008) Civil Society Engagement in Education Budgets: A Report Documenting Commonwealth Education Fund Experience, London, Commonwealth Education Fund.
 - (2008) Making the Budget Work for Education: Experiences, Achievements and Lessons from Civil Society Budget Work, London, Commonwealth Education Fund.
 - (2009) A Budget Guide for Civil Society Organizations Working in Education, London, Commonwealth Education Fund.
-

CIPPEC in Argentina Creates Program to Monitor the Law on Education Funding by Alejandro Vera

In 2006 Argentina created an education finance law that aims to increase resources for education, science, and technology up to 6 percent of GDP by 2010. The law represented a significant commitment to education from the national and provincial governments. The mechanisms established to reach the progressive financial goals imply a joint effort by both levels of government.

Aware of the strategic importance of this education policy, the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth (CIPPEC), a non-profit based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has monitored the law since it was enacted. In the last three years, CIPPEC has published 12 reports that include an annual report for each fiscal cycle, and organized two public events and several trainings on the law for journalists, state officials, and civil society organizations.

Because of CIPPEC's early leadership on the issue, its monitoring project is now accepted by the government and education stakeholders as the main tool to guarantee the fulfillment of the education finance law. The Ministry of Education asked CIPPEC exclusively to disseminate the data related to provincial authorities' implementation of the law. National and provincial authorities, teaching unions, education experts, and the media value CIPPEC as a key resource for information on the implementation and implications of the law. For instance, the Minister of Education and the General Secretary of the Confederation of Education Workers in Argentina (Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina, CTERA) participated as speakers in the presentation of the annual report in 2007 and 2008. Even when these two national institutions had changes in their administrations, they maintained their commitment to the monitoring project.

In addition, the project has formed a coalition of civil society organizations, known as the "Commitment to Education Financing," that has taken the lead as a third voice in education policy discussions and serves as a mediator between the government and the unions, which had previously monopolized education finance policy. CIPPEC has trained the coalition's member organizations and promoted the participation of other state level organizations in the monitoring process, developing a federal network for monitoring education finance activities.

The monitoring project has been instrumental not only in guaranteeing the fulfillment of the law but also in proposing amendments to the law and in institutionalizing the policy therein. This can be seen in CIPPEC's successful advocacy to ensure that the funds designated by the law to the provinces are disbursed, particularly those related to the national program on compensatory teachers' wages.

During the last event organized by the monitoring project, Minister of Education, Juan Carlos Tedesco, announced the 2009 debates on reforms to the law on funding for education. The proposed reforms are based largely on the reports produced by the monitoring project. Recently, a commission of provincial ministers of education has been created in order to elaborate a law project, and CIPPEC hopes to have a leading role in the debates and contribute with a set of recommendations for the new text of the law based on the monitoring experience of the last three years.

For further information, visit www.cippecc.org/mlfe, or send an email to infoeducacion@cippec.org.

“Investigate Your MP’s Expenses”: Online Budget Monitoring Initiative from the *Guardian* by Delaine McCullough

When you go to <http://mps-expenses.guardian.co.uk/>, you land on a web-based application that allows members of the public to examine hundreds of thousands of expense claims filed by U.K. members of parliament (MPs) over the past four years. Sponsored by the *Guardian* newspaper, the website is the key tool in an experiment in public budget monitoring aptly named “crowdsourcing.”

In light of recent scandals in the U.K. (and elsewhere) related to MPs’ expense claims, the government’s release of information from all 646 MPs on items they have billed the public for, including receipts for meals, furnishings, travel, and (yes) duck houses, provides an opportunity for the public to call their representatives to account. The *Guardian* reports that the government has made publicly available over 700,000 individual documents contained in 5,500 PDF files, and—fueled by the belief that “many hands can make light work” of sifting through this huge dataset—the newspaper has called on members of the public to look through the documents for their MPs and highlight those that merit further investigation. The website includes a tracker that indicates that by June 22, over 20,000 individuals had reviewed 171,920 of the 457,153 documents that had been loaded into the online database.

Arming the public with easily accessible data and tips on what to look for (e.g., “food bills, repeated claims for less than £250 [the limit for claims not backed up by a receipt], and rejected claims”), the initiative allows those with Internet access to play a critical oversight role. The “crowdsourcing” initiative is a unique effort by the media to increase public participation in the budget process, which, if a significant amount of abuse in MP expensing is uncovered and made public, has the potential to lead to reforms that ensure that public funds are used more efficiently.

Even though the *Guardian’s* initiative has limitations (public participation is restricted to those with Internet access and the results of the monitoring exercise are not integrated into an official mechanism for holding MPs accountable), it is an exciting example of how two powerful and important forces of accountability—public oversight of government budgets and an informed and critical media—are uniting to shine a spotlight on misuse of public money.

Expanding opportunities for the public to be involved in monitoring how government budgets are implemented, as this initiative does, can play a key role in effective oversight and improved policy decisions and budget outcomes. Traditionally, official audits of government budgets by supreme audit institutions (SAIs) have focused on whether money was spent in compliance with existing legislation and in line with sound financial management practices. There is increasing interest in expanding the scope of official audits to include a “value for money” assessment—i.e., did the programs and policies funded by the government achieve the desired results? Public input into these types of audits can be invaluable, which is why the Honduran Tribunal Superior de Cuentas (the national SAI) implemented a pilot program in 2007 to solicit information directly from the public on the functioning and effectiveness of eight agencies, including hospitals, schools, and municipalities. The pilot, which involved public meetings organized by the SAI, led to a large

number of findings that would most likely not have been identified through a regular audit investigation.

In addition to providing critical information on government activities, public participation in the auditing process has political implications that could result in increased follow up on audit findings. Because SAIs are generally prohibited from playing a direct policy or political role, it is up to legislatures to ensure that the government follows up on audit findings and recommendations. A greater role for their constituents in the audit process increases the pressure on legislators not only to follow up on audits but also to inform the public on the actions taken to address audit recommendations.

The healthy response to the *Guardian's* call for public involvement indicates the potential for using communications technology to engage the public directly in the auditing process, as well as in other budget processes. However, while more governments are posting budget information online and providing dedicated email addresses and other Internet-based mechanisms that allow for public input, it has been difficult to get people to actually engage in the process.

Internet access clearly plays a role in whether there is broad involvement in monitoring online data to hold government accountable, but the *Guardian* initiative points to other factors that may have greater influence on participation. For instance, is it the type of data that is made available that spurs people to get involved? Public ire at the kind of corruption that the *Guardian* initiative focuses on may generate far more engagement than would trend data on the revenue impacts of changes to the property tax's depreciation rules. At issue is how to communicate to the public that the property tax data may be less controversial but may have a much greater impact on the amount of resources the government has to fund such critical public services as health care and education.

However, providing the data and effectively communicating its importance may not be enough to engage people who do not understand the data. The reports on the expense reimbursement requests are fairly easy for the average non-technical person to grasp; this may not be the case with the depreciation data. Therefore, providing guidance in simple and accessible formats on what the data means and how to read it is likely to be a key step in efforts to increase public participation in budget monitoring.

In addition to the type of data made available, the unique—though unintended, on the part of the government—partnership between the U.K. government, the media, and the public was probably an important factor in the success of the initiative. Both the government and the *Guardian* posted the data in an accessible form within user-friendly platforms (visitors to both websites can quickly access the documents submitted by their MP without having to sift through reams of data). However, the initiative by the *Guardian* increased the pool of potential users of the data: the paper's website (www.guardian.co.uk) boasts 9.7 million monthly users, nearly 3 million more than the government's public website where the data is posted (www.direct.gov.uk).

More important, the *Guardian's* exercise gave people an opportunity to actually do something (other than punish individual MPs at the ballot box) that ultimately might improve the system that allowed abuse to occur. Providing people with a means to channel their anger into a coordinated effort to investigate and publicize questionable claims and potentially call for systemic reform may have resulted in greater participation than releasing the data alone would have.

Although the *Guardian's* experiment in "crowdsourcing" does not provide definitive answers on how to overcome the "demand-side" challenge in engaging the public in budget and oversight processes, it demonstrates that such online initiatives, particularly those that involve both the government and a critical and independent media, have the potential to strengthen accountability and, therefore, budget outcomes.

Cell Phones: Transformative Technology for Civil Society Budget Work by Rocío Campos

Is Jeffrey Sachs exaggerating when he says that the cell phone is the single most transformative technology for development? Indeed, the use of cell phone technology in developing countries has increased dramatically. According to Rohit Singh, research officer at the Overseas Development Institute, "the number of mobile subscribers globally is estimated to have reached four billion in 2008, with mobile penetration reaching 61 percent. Around 58 percent of subscribers are in developing countries, and subscriber growth in Africa—more than 50 percent per year—is the highest in the world" (see <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2846.pdf>). Such widespread use has had an impact on the international development community that now sees cell phones as accessible tools in their efforts to alleviate poverty.

The increased use of cell phones in development is driven by two sets of factors. First, many rural and urban areas lack landline infrastructure or accessible and affordable Internet or email services. The second set of factors relates to convenience, cell phones offer portability, instant voice communications, short-messaging service (SMS), Internet access, and photo functionality. Combined these factors make cell phones a suitable tool for the rapid dissemination of messages to a network of supporters with a specific call to action, cutting response time considerably.

For example, Rashida Dohad, from the Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation in Pakistan, reports that cell phones played a critical communications and response role during the campaign for the rule of law led by Pakistan's lawyers and supported by civil society (including the Foundation) from 2007-09. The campaign used cell phones to send text messages to inform participants about meetings, protests, and even arrests. Rashida recounts that an activist friend sent a text message to others as she was being arrested from her home early in the morning. This ensured that the campaign activists were aware of her arrest even before she had left her house. Prompt action ensured her release within a few hours.

In an interview with Katrin Verclas, mobile communications expert, featured in the [IBP Newsletter No. 44](#), we discussed some of the innovative ways in which advocates are using cell phones. But when I asked IBP partners to send us examples of how they might be using cell phones in their budget analysis and advocacy, the overwhelming response was that though few were currently using cell phones in their work, most were interested but didn't know where to start. In this article, we look at some additional examples of how organizations around the world have taken advantage of cell phone technology to further their advocacy and suggest possible ways that civil society budget groups might use this technology to strengthen their budget analysis, monitoring, and oversight work. It is important to note that not all of the suggestions below will be appropriate for all contexts. Each group will need to evaluate their budget and political environment and identify those most appropriate.

The ideas presented below are just to get you thinking, please send us your ideas for ways you and IBP's partners might use cell phones in their work at info@internationalbudget.org. We will share those ideas that we receive in the next newsletter.

Mobilize a Constituency

Amnesty International-Netherlands is one example of how the power of text messaging can further the organization's work and attract new members by engaging them in a specific campaign. Through urgent action appeals Amnesty International was able to build awareness of the campaign against torture and engage new followers to respond to cases of torture. SMS technology is a perfect fit for Amnesty's work to stop torture as a rapid response to arrests and "disappearances" is critical.

The first step in an SMS mobilization campaign is to get potential activists to sign up to receive action alerts. In addition to signing up older people through such traditional venues as churches and libraries, Amnesty focused on recruiting younger activists through its website and by asking pop stars to make announcements at concerts and encourage attendees to call Amnesty on the spot to sign up. Over 5,000 people signed up for the SMS Urgent Action campaign in the Dutch section of Amnesty, agreeing to receive alerts and calls to action via SMS; of these 500 became paying members. About 39 percent of the cell phone campaigns conducted by Amnesty in 2002 were successful achieving the release of prisoners of conscience, finding people who had "disappeared," and sabotaging death sentences (see <http://www.newtactics.org/SendingOutanSMS>).

Civil society budget groups also often need to mobilize fellow supporters and attract new advocates to campaigns. In both instances, budget groups face the task of getting key messages to specific audiences, such as legislators, journalists, fellow advocates, and citizens, in a timely way during the budget process. A variety of methods can be used to craft the messages and disseminate and promote them, including cell phone technology.

Some of the methods used by civil society budget groups to develop messages for their target audiences include focus groups and polling. In addition, they rely on input from coalition partners, internal staff, policy makers, and other advocates. To gather such input, budget groups could use cell phones to survey constituents and to streamline the exchange of feedback and ideas amongst a large number of constituents.

Once messages are crafted, groups use a number of strategies to deliver them to their target audiences, including press conferences, action alerts to networks, newsletters, lobbying, websites, and email. Civil society budget groups also can use cell phones to ask people to take action—by joining a petition or testifying at hearings. They can also be used to gather information on the results of these petitions, which can later be posted on a blog or website.

For example, Kubatana, a local NGO in Zimbabwe that promotes human rights and good governance, used a combination of SMS and email to ask people: "What would you like a free Zimbabwe to look like?" SMS was used to blast the messages out and to collect responses, which were then distributed via an electronic newsletter and posted on the Kubatana Community Blog (see <http://www.kubatanablogs.net/kubatana/?p=474>). Kubatana used SMS Frontline to manage its incoming and outgoing messages, which is a common solution for NGOs in the developing world interested in using SMS in their work.

In addition to using cell phones to gather information, formulate messages, and deliver them as part of a campaign, budget groups can use their cell phones for better planning and coordination around a public hearing or social audit. The first step is to ask residents to sign up to receive SMS messages about the hearing in your initial contact with them. You can then use this list to inform residents about the location of the hearing and the topic to be discussed, e.g., contracting and management aspects of a specific public infrastructure project. By making outreach more efficient, budget groups will free up time for other mobilization activities that reach those without cell phones or other electronic communications (i.e., Internet and email).

During the public hearing, civil society advocates can use their cell phones to report to the media any unexpected developments. And after the public hearing or social audit, advocates can use their cell phones to call on all those on their SMS network to contact the pertinent authorities and request that they audit problematic programs or projects.

Strengthening the ability of groups to inform and mobilize activists around a planned event is critical, but cell phones also can help when the unexpected happens. Civil society budget groups can use SMS technology to enhance their ability to respond quickly to changing events and mobilize their activists. For example, if you are working to ensure that funding for a specific health care program is included in the budget and are in a hearing where funding is being discussed, SMS technology could enable you to instantaneously alert your activists to any proposals to cut funding, thus allowing for an immediate response to legislators.

Enhance Communication and Facilitate Budget Monitoring in Conflict or Disaster Zones

Often in areas of conflict or natural disasters, phone lines are cut and Internet and email access is interrupted, leaving cell phones as one of the only reliable means of communication. This was the case in Chad, when the outbreak of violence coincided with the Open Budget Index 2006 research. The entire 122-question survey was completed and vetted via text messaging between the researcher in Chad and IBP staff in Cape Town and D.C.

In another example of cell phone use in conflict zones, Interaction Belfast created a cell phone network to prevent outbreaks of violence between volatile neighborhoods in Belfast. Volunteers in both Catholic and Protestant communities were given cell phones to communicate with their counterparts when rumors of violence start to spread. The widespread use of cell phone technology facilitated rapid responses to ongoing abuse. In Northern Ireland, cell phones made communication possible even when the two sides did not at first have a particularly strong relationship but shared a commitment to ending the violence (see <http://www.newtactics.org/sites/newtactics.org/files/resources/05preventionsharing.pdf>).

This experience suggests the potential of cell phone technology in complex environments. For example, civil society organizations could use cell phones to monitor reconstruction projects in a post-conflict zone. Cell phones could be used to collect information that will build useful databases of the details on the implementation of reconstruction projects in cooperation with local and international universities, think tanks, and NGOs with expertise in data collection. These details could include such information as: Where is the money coming from? How is it being spent? And where is it being spent? The findings could then be shared amongst all stakeholders via SMS.

In many post-conflict situations where communication is not easy because of the threat of recurring violence, cell phones could play an instrumental role in developing accountability monitoring mechanisms. Project monitors can use SMS to report on particular projects, but more important in volatile environments, to alert others in emergencies. It is in the interest of all the stakeholders involved in providing aid for post-conflict reconstruction projects (governments, bilateral or multilateral donors, international financial institutions, private-sector companies, and local groups) to invest in cell phone technology for better data collection and greater transparency.

Monitoring the use of financial aid for relief and reconstruction after a natural disaster is crucial in ensuring that aid flows are sufficient, targeted effectively, and spent efficiently. Following the devastation in Nicaragua wrought by hurricane Mitch in 1998, civil society was concerned with the government's management of the resulting international aid flows. In response, a local civil society network, "Coordinadora Civil," undertook a social audit of communities' perceptions of aid delivery.

The audit was carried out through surveys and interviews with a total of 10,528 households located in 61 municipalities. The large number of affected communities increased the difficulty of measuring the distribution of aid. In a situation like this cell phone technology could improve the collection of information.

Gather Information and Influence Key Stakeholders

The African Medical and Research Foundation (Amref) and its partner Farm-Africa in Katine, Uganda, are planning to use mobile phone technology to improve agricultural marketing practices. In Uganda, the cost of cell phones and service is higher than many can afford. In response, Amref is planning to equip farmers with cell phones, a noticeboard, and a calculator and take them to visit town markets. The idea is to enable villagers to bypass middlemen and find out the best prices for their crops (see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/katine/2009/jan/04/katine-uganda-africa-mobile-phones>).

Civil society groups could use cell phones to enhance their ability to gather data during budget tracking and monitoring activities. Here, community monitors work to gather qualitative and quantitative information on the goods and services received by a community, often at far flung sites. Community members collecting data in different localities could use cell phones to send messages documenting the delivery of defective goods and inform their fellow monitors, journalists, or local authorities.

Another way in which cell phones can contribute to the debate on the use of public resources is being explored by the Parliamentary Center in Canada (see <http://www.parlcent.ca/>), which works to improve the effectiveness of representative assemblies around the world. As part a new initiative to serve parliaments and legislatures, the Center is exploring the feasibility of using text messaging to link citizens and members of parliament. At a 2007 Overseas Development Institute (ODI) meeting on how parliaments in developing countries can contribute to poverty reduction. Rasheed Draman, director of Africa programs noted the importance of mobile phones in disseminating information. Their importance is in evidence across Africa, where Draman and his team are gearing up for a big new budget oversight program. Among other things, the program aims at strengthening parliamentary responsiveness to citizens by increasing their opportunities to participate in the budget process, and to do so with more and better information available to them (see http://www.odi.org.uk/events/parliaments_07/23_May/index.html).

I hope that these examples and ideas get you thinking about how you might use cell phone technology in your budget work. If you are interested in doing so, here are some initial steps to follow:

1. Learn more about how other NGOs are using cell phones in their advocacy efforts (e.g., regular calls, text messaging, taking photos as a way to gather data on functioning of public utilities and quality of capital projects, etc.).
2. Consider the needs and characteristics of your organization and target audience.
3. Examine your current advocacy strategy methods and identify the instances where cell phones can strengthen your strategy.
4. If you are currently using electronic advocacy tools, evaluate if you should integrate cell phone technology into your strategy.
5. If you decide to do an SMS campaign estimate the costs involved in licensing a campaign through a contract with a specialized vendor, find out about per-message monthly fees, and buying and installing adequate software. The following website offers some guidelines on steps to follow: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Step-by-Step-Guide-to-an-SMS-Campaign&id=24951>.
6. Build and maintain a list of contacts (members of organization or coalition, journalists, members of parliament, etc.) that you would want to reach through text messages.
Kubatana, mentioned in this article, offers useful suggestions on how to build lists and attract supporters (see <http://www.internationalbudget.org/kubatanatrainingmanual.doc>).
7. Recruit volunteers with cell phones.

The Missing Link: Applied Budget Work as a Tool to Hold Governments Accountable for their Maternal Mortality Reduction Commitments

The International Initiative on Maternal Mortality and Human Rights (IIMMHR) and the International Budget Partnership (IBP) are happy to announce the publication of *The Missing Link: Applied Budget Work as a Tool to Hold Governments Accountable for their Maternal Mortality Reduction Commitments*. This joint publication explores the relevance of civil society budget analysis and advocacy and its potential as a tool to hold governments accountable for their commitments around maternal health. The brief discusses three recent examples of civil society groups engaged in budget analysis and advocacy: Fundar, Center for Analysis and Research in Mexico; Women's Dignity in Tanzania; and the Center for Budget and Governance Accountability in India. The work and experiences of these organizations underscore that the lack of real progress in reducing maternal mortality is unquestionably linked to the failure of governments to make maternal health a budget priority. Their work has found that even though resources to address this issue exist—and may continue to grow—they are not necessarily being allocated correctly or spent effectively.

Both the IIMMHR and IBP hope that this paper will contribute to the growing literature around maternal mortality, human rights, and budgets and that it will provide maternal health activists with new approaches and avenues for advocacy and government accountability.

To learn more about the IIMMHR, its partners, and IBP's contributions, we cordially invite you to visit the newly launched IIMMHR website at www.righttomaternalhealth.org.

Making the Money Work for the People in Nigeria

The Nigerian NGO Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) has carried out different activities as part of their budget monitoring initiative to strengthen the national response to HIV and AIDS. In the book *Making the Money Work for the People* (<http://www.nigeria-aids.org/documents/MakingTheMoneyWorkForThePeople.pdf>), JAAIDS presents research on budget allocation and money available from debt relief to fund HIV/AIDS interventions in Nigeria in 2006 and 2007. However, documenting these allocations is just one step in the accountability process, as stakeholders at several forums and book reviews held by JAAIDS have commented. It is also important to take the next step of identifying the actual amount spent on HIV/AIDS intervention.

JAAIDS conducted budget expenditure analysis to encourage responsible and precise implementation of HIV/AIDS programs at the national, state, and community level. The research analyzes and documents budget disbursements of six selected federal ministries (health, education, defense, women affairs, agriculture and water resources, and labor) towards the implementation of HIV/AIDS programs in 2006 and 2007.

JAAIDS's major constraint on their budget expenditure research was the difficulty faced in gaining approvals for the release of documents from the line ministries. However, following due process, the research team was able to access budget documents from the office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF). Although these documents contained a summary of amounts released to ministries, departments, and agencies for HIV/AIDS-related activities, further research is needed at the audit stage of the budget process to ensure that activities were effectively implemented.

Dignity and Defiance, Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization

The Democracy Center based in Cochabamba, Bolivia, recently published *Dignity and Defiance, Stories from Bolivia's Challenge to Globalization*. One of the cases examined in the book traces how International Monetary Fund (IMF) pressure on the Bolivian government to reduce its deficit spiraled into a proposed tax increase on the poor and a public revolt and government repression that left 34 people dead. Another case looks in detail at the decades-long struggle by Bolivia to secure fair revenue in exchange for its formidable gas and oil resources, including recent "nationalization" efforts by the government of President Evo Morales. These cases and others in the book are based on extensive interviews with government officials, civil society activists, and representatives of international financial institutions.

For details on how to obtain the book, go to:

<http://www.democracyctr.org/publications/dignitydefiance>.

To read an excerpt from the book, go to: [*The Cochabamba Water Revolt and its Aftermath*](#).

A Portrait of Egypt: The Squander of Socio-Economic Rights in the

Implementation of the Government Development Plan, 2002-2007

The Egyptian civil society organization, Budgetary and Human Rights Observatory (BAHRO), has released a report titled *A Portrait of Egypt: The Squander of Socio-Economic Rights in the Implementation of the Government Development Plan, 2002-2007*. The report addresses how the implementation of the government's previous five-year development plan fulfilled socio-economic rights. In addition to analyzing the plan's budget and the effect its expenditure policies had on socio-economic rights, the paper reports on the discussions held by members of the People's Assembly and their opinions on the five-year plan.

The report concluded that the five-year plan had failed to meet its targets, according to the indicators set by the planners themselves. Further, it attributed this failure directly to a decline in public investments in economic, social, and cultural rights. Public investment in education decreased by 36 percent over the course of the last five-year plan, when individual shares of real expenditure on education also decreased.

Public expenditure on health decreased by 25 percent during that same period, which meant that the target to reduce the birth rate was not realized, nor was the desired decrease in the mortality and maternal mortality rates realized. The situation is not much better when it comes to housing and public utilities. The plan failed to increase the number of housing units, reaching only 87 percent of the overall target, and only 62 percent of the rural housing target. Only 84 percent of the targeted sanitation projects were completed, even though investments in sovereign areas increased noticeably during this period.

BAHRO executive director, Helmy Elrawy, called on the People's Assembly to withdraw confidence from the government during discussions on the upcoming budget and demanded that the finance minister respect the most recent constitutional amendments by presenting the next budget proposal to the People's Assembly at least three months before the start of the new fiscal year. BAHRO rights and budgets director, Ahmed El-Hawit, demanded that a permanent mechanism be created for monitoring the implementation of the plan as set by the People's Assembly, and that the monitoring body includes members of civil society in order to guarantee transparency.

Freedominfo.org

This online community (Freedominfo.org) offers resources about freedom of information laws and movements around the world. This initiative centers on a web portal that aims to be the online institutional memory of freedom of information (FOI) campaigns throughout the world. It is a gathering place for members of a global network of advocates sharing an interest in citizens' right of access to government information. Information on the site may be accessed in various ways, such as country-specific background, documents, news, and links related to FOI in more than 65 countries.

The Accountability Initiative

The Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi has recently launched [The Accountability Initiative](#), a new website designed to be a comprehensive source on the state of accountability in India, making available information on civil society experiments, accountability tool kits, and relevant research and analytical work. The website also aims to

showcase ongoing research and projects undertaken at the initiative.

Azerbaijan and Yemen Launch the Open Budget Survey 2008

In addition to the regional and national Open Budget Survey 2008 releases we reported on in the last issue, several IBP partner organizations have held national launch events in the weeks and months following the international release on February 1, 2009. Groups made particular efforts to use these launches as advocacy opportunities, engaging in media outreach to further disseminate the Survey and making policy recommendations to legislators and other government officials on how to make their countries' budget processes more open and accountable. We will continue to report on these events and activities as they occur.

On February 11, the National Budget Group (NBG) in Azerbaijan held an event to release the Survey results, which drew participants from various embassies, international organizations, international financial institutions, national and community-based civil society organizations, legislators, and officials from the Ministry of Finance and other government bodies, including the heads of the Budget Department and the Income Planning Department. The Public Finance Monitoring Center, a member and one of the founders of the NBG, implemented the Survey in Azerbaijan.

Kenan Aslanli of the NBG presented the results of the Survey, which found that Azerbaijan does not provide the public with enough information during the budget process to hold the government accountable for how it manages the public's money. Azerbaijan's score of 37 out of a possible 100 on the Open Budget Index 2008 (OBI)—a comparative measure of budget transparency derived from a subset of questions from the Survey—places it 50th of the 85 countries in the survey and among the 16 countries that provide the public with "minimal" budget information.

While the official representatives acknowledged NBG for its work on the Survey and noted the importance of the Open Budget Initiative, they rejected some of the Survey's findings on the availability of budget documents. NBG experts Ingilab Ahmadov, Rovshan Agayev, Kenan Aslanli, and Zohrab Ismailov responded to the Ministry of Finance's position: "Of course, all budget documents are produced. The problem is with their accessibility. The public and experts do not have access to them; we usually need to ask MPs or use other informal ways to obtain these documents. There are websites for almost all ministries, why not post the documents on them?"

During the discussions it became clear that both civil society and government share an interest in increasing transparency and accountability in the country's budget process. The Ministry of Finance responded positively to NBG's call for government to work with civil society to improve Azerbaijan's OBI score in 2010.



National Budget Group presents findings of the Open Budget Survey 2008 to media, civil society, and government

The Cultural Development Program Foundation (CDPF) in Yemen held its launch of the Open Budget Survey 2008 on March 21, Yemeni Mother's Day, to emphasize the link between budget transparency and accountability for the efficient and effective use of public resources and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The event took place in Sana'a and was attended by the media, civil society organizations from Sana'a and the other governorates involved with the Budget Monitoring Network formed by CDPF, members of the Anticorruption Council, members of parliament, and a number of Ministry of Finance officials.

Dr. Raufa Hassan, chairperson of the CDPF, presented the findings from the Survey, including Yemen's poor performance on the OBI 2008—its score of 9 out of 100 indicates that the government provides, scant or no, information to the members of the public, barring them from any meaningful role in the budget process. Dr. Raufa emphasized that access to information would lead to improvements in the quality of decisions made on spending priorities in the budget, leading to more effective and balanced use of public funds.

The CDPF called on the participants, especially members of the media and the National Budget Monitoring Network, to petition the relevant government institutions for greater transparency: "Go to the Ministry of Finance and ask for information, go to the Central Bank and ask for information, go to the National Public Committee to Combat Corruption and ask for information, go to the Parliament and ask, go to the Central Organization for Auditing and Accounting and ask, go and ask them all. That is your job and that is why you are here." The media was also encouraged to pay closer attention to the budget and to increase its coverage of the process.

The poster with the OBI rankings that the IBP produced for the release was distributed to the launch event attendees who, in turn, made it widely available. In addition, the CDPF produced an accompanying video to "It's Your Money," the OBI campaign song, that illustrates the lack of budgetary transparency in Yemen. This video gives a clear message about the issue with Arabic subtitles, and a visual narrative of the problem, thus helping non-English speakers to understand the issue and the importance of transparency in Yemen.

The CDPF reported the following outcomes of the launch:

- The formation of local budget monitoring networks, which will open up opportunities for more budget transparency, create tighter accountability channels, and ensure that expenditures from national and local governments actually reach the intended beneficiaries and are spent as efficiently and effectively as possible.
 - Ministry of Finance officials have promised to put available budget-related documents on the ministry's website in an effort to improve Yemen's performance on the OBI in 2010.
 - Several newspapers published articles on the Open Budget Survey 2008, and the story was broadcast on the local evening news. This coverage has led to numerous requests from individuals and civil society organizations for more information on the Survey in Arabia.
-

Open Budget Initiative 2010 Trainings

Recently the International Budget Partnership hosted two trainings for approximately 50 of the 90 researchers participating in the 2010 round of the Open Budget Initiative. The first OBI 2010 researcher training was organized in Washington, DC, on 4-6 May 2009, and the second training was held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 27-29 May 2009. Both trainings included participants from sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The first part of the trainings was focused on participants developing an in-depth understanding of the methodology to be used to complete research on the Open Budget Questionnaire. During this segment of the training, participants highlighted the importance of access to budget information and reviewed all sections of the Open Budget Questionnaire. The second part of the trainings encouraged participants to produce draft advocacy plans on how transparency in budget systems can be expanded in targeted countries. Participants focused on the link between Open Budget Survey research and advocacy, as well as on identifying the components of a successful advocacy strategy. In addition to presentations by the facilitators, the trainings involved group discussions as well as role play exercises. The trainings ended with discussions about how IBP and its partners could take the lead in a global transparency campaign and establish and strengthen global norms for fiscal transparency.

The IBP also intended for these trainings to strengthen a peer network of researchers who can work with and assist one another with the Open Budget Survey 2010 research and dissemination and advocacy. During both trainings, OBI researchers from various regions had an opportunity to interact with one another and to share information about public financial management from national and regional perspectives.

In general the IBP received positive feedback from training participants, who valued the opportunity to revise the Open Budget Survey methodology before they commence their research. They also recognized these trainings as the basis for "great interactions and far stronger partnerships."

The IBP is glad to have had an opportunity to host our partners and to strengthen our collaboration with them, and we look forward to commencing with the 2010 round of the Open Budget Initiative with the support of our partners.

Gender Festival in Tanzania. Making Resources Work for Women

The Feminist Activist Coalition (FemAct) and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) are organizing the 2009 Gender Festival (Tamasha la Jinsia) from 8–11 September 2009. The festival will focus on Making Resources Work for Marginalised Women within the broad theme of Gender, Democracy and Development. This four-day event will feature workshops, plenary sessions, and exhibitions geared towards strengthening civil society skills in and outside the country and beyond Africa. TGNP's festival provides a major opportunity for gender practitioners, human rights activists, and others to exchange experiences in order to further the democracy and development agenda from a gender feminist perspective.

The festival hopes to enhance participants' capacity at the district, national, and regional levels to organize and demand transformative approaches to governance and decision-making on policies and resource allocation, in order to promote gender equity and social transformation. Some of the themes that will be covered include: reproductive and maternal health, economic rights and livelihoods, cultural identity and documentation of her-stories, right to resources, and politics of HIV/AIDS.

Civil society organizations are invited to participate by

- preparing a presentation (e.g., paper, poem, video, song, art performance),
- organizing or facilitating a workshop or debate
- mobilizing and facilitating a large group from your country, region, area, constituency or organization to attend and contribute to the festival,
- creating an interactive exhibition that may include publications, photographs, appropriate technology materials, handcrafts, etc.
- offering financial support and fundraising to support specific events

The guidelines for papers, case studies, and workshops will soon be available online at www.tgnp.org. For further information, contact Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) at info@tgnp.org or gf_coordinator@tgnp.org (re: GF 2009).

Opportunity for Civil Society to Influence IMF Governance Reform

In September 2008, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), laid out a four-pillar approach to reform the governance structure of the IMF. The four pillars are:

- IMF Independent Evaluation Office of the IMF
- A working group of the IMF executive directors
- A committee of eminent persons
- Direct interaction with civil society organizations (CSOs)

The IMF developed an interactive website (see thefourthpillar.org) where CSOs can join the debate on IMF reforms and offer feedback on the IMF governance structure. The CSO administrator of this website is *New Rules for Global Finance* (see <http://www.new-rules.org/bringingbalance.htm>). Invitations to participate in the consultation will be initially sent out by the CSO administrator, once invited any member can invite other members. To

send your request to participate in the website, send an email to imf_governance@new-rules.org.

On Friday, July 10, the CSO administrator will submit a preliminary three-page summary of the principles, recommendations, and issues to be considered by the board of governors, IMFC, and executive board for their discussion in July 22.

In addition, the IMF external relations team is coordinating an informal session between CSOs and the IMF executive board in either early or late August, or early September.

Finally by September 1, *New Rules for Global Finance* will commission an independent author to write a "CSO Report on IMF Governance" for consideration by all IMF governors and executive directors (EDs) in the lead-up to the October 6-7, 2009 Annual Meetings in Istanbul, Turkey. This paper will identify points of consensus, as well as catalog the diverse range of views submitted. IMF EDs and governors will have access to all documents and submissions, unless the author(s) request anonymity. The findings will be presented at a side event in Istanbul.

For further information, contact *New Rules for Global Finance* Executive Director Jo Marie Griesgraber at IMF_Governance@new-rules.org, or call 202-277-9390.

New IBP Staff

The International Budget Partnership (IBP) is pleased to welcome Jason Lakin as a program officer for its Partnership Initiative. Jason is currently based in Boston but will be relocating to IBP's Washington, DC, office in September 2009. Prior to joining IBP, Jason completed his Ph.D. in Government and Social Policy and post-doctoral research in Global Health at Harvard University. The focus of Jason's research was on the political economy of social policy reform in Mexico (particularly health financing and implementation). Before graduate school, Jason worked briefly as a researcher on tax and housing issues for the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute. He also has studied and conducted research in Chile, Germany, Mexico, India, and Zimbabwe. He is the co-author, with Seymour Martin Lipset, of *The Democratic Century* (2004).

IBP Job Opportunity: Trainer/Technical Assistance Provider

The IBP is seeking a trainer/technical assistance provider to work with its international team.

Responsibilities:

- Work with the IBP training team in developing and achieving training and technical assistance objectives.
- Conduct assessments of the strategic environment for civil society budget work and the organizational capacity of potential partners.
- Undertake training and technical needs analysis of partner organizations.
- Design and produce training materials to assist civil society organizations to undertake applied public finance analysis and advocacy.
- Conceptualize and develop curricula.

- Provide directly and coordinate one-on-one technical assistance/mentoring to individual organizations in the targeted regions.
- Identify organizations and strategic opportunities to undertake and promote civil society budget work in the IBP targeted regions.

Knowledge, education, and experience:

- Post-graduate qualification or equivalent experience in applied public finance, public policy, or related subject.
- In-depth knowledge and experience in training methods, training provision, facilitation, and curriculum development.
- At least three years experience in providing training in applied budget analysis and advocacy work, applied public finance, or public policy-related training.
- Several years of experience working in an international development environment.
- Ability to work in English and one other language is required, e.g., French, Spanish, or Portuguese.

The successful candidate will be based at one of the IBP offices in Mexico City, Mexico; Washington, DC; or Cape Town, South Africa. Send a cover letter and resume to: ibp-training@cbpp.org. Please consider your application unsuccessful if you have not received a reply within 15 working days of your application.

French and Spanish Translations of *Our Money, Our Responsibility: A Citizens' Guide to Monitoring Government Expenditures*

The French version of IBP's guide, *Our Money, Our Responsibility – Notre argent, notre responsabilité: Guide de surveillance des dépenses publiques à l'intention des citoyens* – has been published, and the Spanish version of the guide will soon be available for distribution, as well. The electronic version of the guide is available on the IBP's website at: www.internationalbudget.org. The guide was translated into French and printed through the generous support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), respectively. Hard copies of the guide will be distributed widely to IBP's partner organizations in Francophone countries and will also be available upon request.

This guide reflects the growing focus of civil society organizations on monitoring the results achieved by government expenditures. It offers an overview of government budget implementation, including budget execution, procurement, impact measurement, and auditing and legislative oversight processes. The guide provides practical, tested tools that can be used by independent organizations interested in monitoring government expenditures. To order a copy in French or Spanish, send an email to info@internationalbudget.org.