



BUDGET INFORMATION SERVICE

**Civil Society Budget Groups and their
Participation in the PRSP Process**

Draft Synthesis Report

Researched For

**The International Budget Project
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
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Researched By

The Africa Budget Project (ABP)

**A unit of the Budget Information Service (BIS) of
the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa)**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABP	Africa Budget Project
BIS	Budget Information Service
CBA	Centre for Budget Advocacy
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBPP	Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Economic Justice Program
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EA	Economic Association
GAPVOD	Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations for Development
GMD	Mozambican Debt Group
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IBP	International Budget Project
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NED	National Economic Dialogue
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPEP	National Poverty Eradication Plan
PAMU	Poverty Analysis Monitoring Unit
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PEWG	Poverty Eradication Work Group
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SODNET	Social Development Network
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents findings from a survey of six African countries that considers the participation of civil society budget groups in the PRSP process. We are particularly interested in the participation of such groups, due to the fact that the budget is perhaps the primary and certainly the most immediate vehicle through which PRSP commitments are to be realized. The countries included are Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

The respondents are all (with the possible exception of Kenya) from CSOs that emphasize applied budget work amongst their activities, and which are amongst the leading budget groups in their respective countries. Some of these groups, in particular UDN and CCJP, are amongst those groups in the region with the most consistent track record in applied budget work for a number of years. Others, in particular ISODEC and MEJN have more recently build up their capacity for applied budget work, and have quickly established a strong reputation. GDM and SODNET seem to be developing in a similar direction.

The survey involved the administration of a questionnaire to key individuals in these six organizations during August 2002. Once the responses were received, a follow-up telephonic interview was conducted for clarification and elaboration purposes. The country responses are available separately in a standardized format. The questions were loosely grouped under three headings: (1) preparatory stage, (2) formulation stage, and (3) conclusion. Under the first heading, we primarily consider all preparatory work that was required before the actual formulation of the PRSP document, i.e. when and how civil society generally and budget groups in particular got involved in the PRSP process. The second section looks at all the activities that occurred during the formulation of the PRSP document, i.e. the nature and level of this involvement, while the third explores issues relating to the results of participation.

There are some important similarities across our sample countries with regard to process issues. It is striking that the transparency of the PRSP process was considered less than optimal in all of our sample countries. The respondents judged only two countries as having achieved moderate levels of transparency in the PRSP process (Uganda and Zambia), while the rest received marginal scores in this regard. A particular concern that cuts across most cases with the notable exception of Uganda is that relevant documentation was not shared with civil society in a timely manner. In addition, background briefings and workshops to brief civil society organizations on the nature and purpose of the PRSP process were not a significant part of the process in any of the countries. It is also significant that none of the respondents indicate that there are formalized feedback mechanisms to track which particular civil society demands and proposals were incorporated into the PRSP. At the same time, some important differences emerge. Only four out of six groups were formally invited by the government to participate in the process (except CCJP and MEJN). We find this surprising, given the high quality budget work delivered by the latter two organizations. The process seems to have been most explicitly structured to cater for participation in Uganda, where a timetable with events and activities was discussed by civil society at the beginning of the process.

Considering the nature and level of civil society and budget group participation, there are again several similarities. Importantly, in no country is government regarded as having

done enough to facilitate meaningful participation. Ratings are particularly poor in both Malawi and Mozambique, where respondents are of the view that government has done little in this regard, whereas in the remaining four countries the respondents indicated a moderate effort by the government. It is probably not surprising that the groups surveyed generally judge the level of their own participation in a more favourable light. They regard their performance as relatively good, given sub-optimal conditions for participation. A crucial omission reported by the groups across all countries is that parliament was not significantly involved in the PRSP process, and that no substantive interaction occurred between civil society and parliament or its committees over the PRSP. In addition, the representation of CSOs was, with the notable exception of Uganda, subject to significant biases. The insufficient use of local languages excluded large segments of civil society in Mozambique and Ghana, for instance, where organizations based outside the capital did not participate in any significant way. Ghana and Uganda seem to have involved budget groups most extensively, as consultants for particular aspects of the PRSP (Ghana) or as an integral participant in the overall process (Uganda). Despite the probable under-utilisation of budget groups, at least in most of the sample countries, all respondents point out that budget groups have an important role to play in monitoring the implementation of PRSPs through the budget. Generally, the process in Uganda seems to come closest to achieving meaningful participation of civil society, whereas elsewhere it is probably more adequately summarized as a consultative exercise, at best, and often with a pro forma flavour.

Nonetheless, and importantly, all respondents are keen to continue their involvement in the PRSP process. But respondents point to the need for capacity building both in government as well as civil society, in particular with regard to budget literacy. The outcome of civil society participation is hard to capture precisely, also because this will ultimately be judged by the implementation of PRSPs, which is at an early stage in the sample countries (except Uganda). Nonetheless, several points emerge from our survey. In some countries civil society groups demanded additional time for the completion for the PRSP process (Malawi) or broader consultation (Kenya and Zambia) with at least some success. However, evidence of concrete proposals that were incorporated into the PRSP documents in the various countries is patchy, with the examples of greater prominence for HIV/Aids issues in the Ugandan document standing out as an exception. All countries except Uganda point to significant civil society proposals that, in the opinion of the groups surveyed were omitted from the final document. These relate to, for instance, concerns about cost sharing for education and health services (Ghana), a critique of past structural adjustment efforts (Malawi), and demands for greater emphasis on agriculture (Mozambique). It is not surprising, given the unique experience of Uganda, that country ownership is regarded as strongest there. This is because the Ugandan PRSP is in essence the product of a largely indigenous effort (PEAP) that commenced earlier, independently and has been implemented with considerable success. Nonetheless, even in this context the respondent concludes that processes that are determined externally "usually leaves some bitter taste".

In conclusion, it is hard to escape the observation that the participation of civil society generally and of budget groups in particular has not been optimized in the PRSP process of the countries considered in this brief survey, perhaps with the exception of Uganda. Yet, and this is encouraging, there is continued willingness on the part of civil society to keep engaging and indeed deepen the engagement with the PRSP process. In doing so, tremendous potential remains to build on the lessons from this initial wave of PRSPs. In our view, some of the critical issues and related recommendations are:

(1) It is regrettable that, thus far, the PRSP process might have in some cases perpetuated or even contributed to the marginalisation of as important a component of democratic government as parliament - even in the otherwise positive case of Uganda. Legislatures need to be brought into the PRSP process. Civil society organizations have much to gain from interacting with thus far marginalised parliamentary committees and individual parliamentarians, as a means of building coalitions significant enough to gain attention from the executive and the donor community. Interaction between parliament and civil society can also help to ensure that the PRSP process is widely understood and appreciated, and to generate support for more critical and uncomfortable civil society inputs.

(2) Civil society is challenged to build its capacity to engage in more technical debates around sound economic and fiscal governance that are intrinsically important for the success of the PRSP experiment. In some cases, CSOs complain that they were deliberately excluded from macro-economic debates, for instance in Kenya and Malawi. This might suggest that governments and donors in such cases mistakenly tend to regard 'soft' non-economic issues as more conducive to civil society participation and engagement. To counter this misunderstanding and to penetrate the macro-economic and fiscal debate, budget groups need to build their own competence and expertise base to become recognized and respected players in this important area. Mutual learning amongst CSOs as well as targeted and sustained capacity building for applied budget work is required.

(3) Both the donor community and governments have not sufficiently used background briefings to inform civil society and the general public about the PRSP process. However, such knowledge is a crucial prerequisite for creating the demand from civil society for broadly based participation. In future, any PRSP process should be preceded by a thorough awareness creation exercise among civil society and the broader public. Combinations of radio programmes, popular versions of draft PRSPs in a variety of local languages, media campaigns, and parliamentary debates should be considered for this purpose. The evidence from this survey is that this potential has been largely underutilized - with detrimental implications for country ownership of at least some PRSPs, and the depth and scope of participation in several countries.

(4) The Ugandan case demonstrates the potential of a homegrown poverty eradication strategy. But all other cases in this survey show that it is not possible to mechanistically replicate positive experience. Time pressures and formalistic requirements are not helpful. A well-planned and clearly scheduled process, combined with open access to relevant information are likely to substantially enhance the participation of civil society in PRSP processes.

(5) With regard to budget groups, transparency on the part of the government is now required to enable CSOs to monitor disbursements against PRSP commitments, and the congruence of budget implementation with the PRSP more generally. Budget groups in return need to build their capacity to fulfil this important role.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This research paper was commissioned by the International Budget Project (IBP), based at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), Washington DC.

IBP requested the Africa Budget Project (ABP), located within the Budget Information Service at Idasa, to carry out a short research study in Africa, exploring civil society budget groups role, participation and experience in the development of their countries PRSP.

The study broadly looked at issues relating to the transparency of the PRSP process, participation from key civil society players and the outcome of that involvement. Key questions asked focussed on the relationship between the budget and the PRSP plan, whether civil society budget groups made meaningful contributions during the PRSP process and reference to any influence they had on the budget.

Methodology

A structured self-reporting questionnaire was used, which was administered by means of electronic mail. This was followed up with a telephonic interview. All interviews were carried out between, 29th August - 13th September 2002.

The sampling procedure was purposive in nature with the focus being on getting as wide a range of leading and credible civil society organisations involved in budget analysis across Africa. For this reason, the selected participants came from organisations based in West, East and Southern Africa.

Country	Organization	Respondent
Ghana	Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) Centre for Budget Advocacy (CBA)	Vitus Azeem
Kenya	Social Development Network (SODNET)	Bonfas K. O. Owinga
Malawi	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Collins Magalasi
Mozambique	Mozambican Debt Group (GMD)	Humberto T. Zaqueu
Uganda	Uganda Debt Network (UDN)	Zie Gariyo
Zambia	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Economic Justice program (CCJP)	Mulima Akapelwa

Analysis of results

The results were analysed and are presented according to the themes as outlined below in the structure of the report.

Prior to the write-up of this synthesis report, individual country summaries have been compiled, based on the outcome of the telephonic interviews.

The report is structured in the following way:

- Executive Summary
- Stages of the PRSP process
 - Section 1: Preparatory stage
 - Section 2: Formulation stage
 - Section 3: Concluding stage

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

SECTION 1: PREPARATORY STAGE

This section explores the transparency of the PRSP process; who and how many CSOs participated; CSOs entry point into the PRSP process; how government alerted organizations/public of opportunities to make inputs; the format of their contributions; provision of background briefings and training; extent of participation; dissemination of PRSP related documents; and access to important meetings.

Transparency of the PRSP consultation process

When asked whether the PRSP consultation process was transparent, in the sense that a clear schedule with key stages and/or dates made publicly available Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique indicated that this never happened. Malawi and Zambia noted various degrees of transparency. Only the Ugandan respondent indicated that the process was transparent in his country.

In Ghana various stakeholders, including civil society organisations, were invited by letter to send representatives to join the five thematic groups supported by five hired consultants on the proposals for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

In Kenya, before the PRSP became public, the writing of the document was done in secrecy, and was highly guarded in the hands of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) secretariat, six sector working groups and part of the donor community. It was not until the core plan of the strategy was apparent, that the PRSP was given to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for input and participation. Secondly, the pace and management of the PRSP process within the Ministry of Finance and Planning had not allowed wider and inclusive ownership of the paper. The process did not fully involve civil society but was dominated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The speed of the document's preparation was a major concern and the pace of engagement reflected less the needs of the various constituencies than a pre-occupation with accessing budgetary support from the WB and IMF.

The PRSP process in Mozambique was characterised by various problems from the onset. The government was placed under considerable time pressure to finalise the PRSP, given the prospect of debt cancellation that created a sense of urgency. The government seems to have invited civil society participation *pro forma* – to lend the process credibility – rather than with intentions of soliciting substantive input. GMD and civil society in general did not have enough information about the details of the timeline that applied to the process. In addition, as the process was new for civil society, it struggled to know what information was actually important to demand from the government. As a result no clear schedule with key stages and dates were publicly known.

Initially the civil society organizations in Malawi were not provided with information. Dates were communicated at the last minute, inviting participants to meetings. The Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) participation was dependent on private relationships with certain officials in government and donors.

Zambia indicated that the process was not "quite" transparent. They made reference to the timetable that was not clear, and only known by the government. All other stakeholders received it at very short notice.

The PRSP process in Uganda started in December 1999 and ended in May 2001. A second meeting in January developed a timetable of events and activities. Civil Society Organisations undertook to organise civil society consultations and developed a work plan for the purpose. Meetings of the technical committee (drafting committee) and national steering committee were organised on a regular basis when specific outputs (draft reports) were ready for discussions.

When asked if organizations were invited to participate in the PRSP consultation process, the general response was YES.

The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Social Development Network (SODNET), The Mozambican Debt Group (GMD), and the Uganda Debt Network (UDN) all were invited by written invitation. Only the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) were not invited.

ISODEC in particular was invited to join the thematic group on micro-economic issues, to participate in preparing the reports that would form the basis of the PRSP.

UDN was invited to participate as one of the three national networks in Uganda and later was selected by other CSOs to become the lead agency and to co-ordinate CSO participation in the PRSP process. In Uganda the PRSP process coincided with the scheduled revision of Uganda's own Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) which had been developed during 1997 with the participation of CSOs. As a result the Uganda PEAP is also the PRSP that was endorsed by the Executive Boards of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in May 2000.

Even though MEJN and CCJP were never invited, they forced themselves into the process. In Malawi, at the launch of the PRSP process, MEJN and other civil society organizations literally "gate-crashed" the event, since no one had been invited. In Zambia, CCJP had to protest before being invited via a civil society group that they collaborated with.

How government alerted organisations and the general public of opportunities to make inputs

In Ghana, CSOs were alerted of opportunities for input through invitations to join the working groups and to attend workshops, and through media coverage of these workshops and public functions. Nonetheless they reported that this was not sufficient, as the details were not known for some time.

The government of Kenya also alerted SODNET of opportunities to make inputs through written invitation. In the districts, where most of the general public made their inputs, it was the responsibility of the district administration to organise for opportunities to make inputs. This was done via invitation and verbal communication in barazas¹ and through

¹ The Swahili word for meetings organised by chiefs.

assistant chiefs. Many have complained that this was not sufficient, as the time given was very short.

MEJN felt that government made little effort and that the general public “pushed” itself into the process.

According to GMD it was relatively easy to get informed about opportunities to make inputs, because for some time the main issue was foreign debt and its impact on the national economy. GMD campaigned for debt cancellation. The PRSP came as a condition for debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and GMD immediately started alerting other civil society members, to lead some initiatives related to the process.

The CSO taskforce in Uganda was a member of the National Steering Committee for the revision of the PEAP and formulation of the PRSP. The CSO Technical Committee was a member of the National Technical Committee of the Ministry of Finance, the government agency that was responsible for the formulation of the PEAP/PRSP.² UDN attended all the planning meetings and this enabled them to make specific suggestions on how the consultations could be made more useful.

In Zambia, even though government alerted everyone through the newspaper, this was obviously not adequate.

Extent of participation in the PRSP process

The question about civil society participation (who and how many attended), illustrates that although CSOs were not initially invited and excluded, they actively mobilized and/or forced themselves into the process. As a result quite a number of CSOs including those involved in budget work became participants. In Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique, and Zambia inputs were by government invitation only.

In Ghana most CSOs were invited either directly or through the umbrella body, the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations for Development (GAPVOD), to the consultation process. Only five organisations (Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA), the Institute of Social, Statistical and Economic Research (ISSER), the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Gariba Associates, and ISODEC) are involved in budget research or analysis, but they were mainly involved as consultants.

At the first meeting about 300 participants, drawn from the government, the private sector and civil society attended and participated. Later CSOs formed a group to discuss and put forward their suggestions and views to the PRSP working group. Some CSOs were incorporated into certain working groups. Of these only three organisations involved in budget work were included in the final group of CSOs.

In Malawi, at the start of the process, only 4 CSOs were involved in the consultations, but as the CSO “participation-push” proceeded, forty-nine CSO representatives were involved. Of these, no more than six civil society organizations are involved in a

² The CSO Task Force consisted of organisations that volunteered to head the civil society consultation process. UDN was the lead agency, but it employed three additional people that formed UDN’s own Technical Committee for day to day matters relating to the process.

combination of budget analysis/research and monitoring. They include MEJN, Economists Association of Malawi, National Democratic Institute, Civil Society Agriculture Network, Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education and Malawi Health Equity Network. During the process however, every interested party in Malawi could make inputs. It was however still at the discretion of government to use or ignore the information.

In Kenya, at first a number of CSOs attended. Forums were open at the initial stages of the PRSP process, but subsequently attendance was by invitation. Civil society organisations formed a working group³ in an attempt to make the process as participatory as possible amongst themselves, before presenting their views to government.

The Mozambican respondent was unclear on the number of CSOs invited to take part in the consultation process, but recalled that they were few and mainly from the capital Maputo. About ten NGOs were present at the meetings that GMD attended. Budget groups that were involved include the Mozambique Child Network, which does some children's budget work, international NGOs, and a national forum of NGOs called DEIA. GMD invited various interest groups to a meeting to discuss broader strategies for civil society. In addition they met once a week during the PRSP process.⁴

In Uganda, the UDN mobilised over 60 national NGOs, research institutions and other civil society groups.⁵ However, over 600 individuals representing farmers, women, youth, elders, people with disabilities and opinion leaders participated in the district consultations that were organised to collect inputs from the people at the grassroots during numerous workshops organised for the purpose. The participants were mobilised from the 48 out of 49 districts in Uganda. Other interest groups such as those involved with human rights and conflict resolution, and groups working on environmental issues organised their own stakeholder meetings and through UDN submitted their concerns that were incorporated in the PRSP. CSOs that were invited to participate in sectoral consultations were invited on the recommendation of the CSO task force. This meant that in Uganda meetings were attended by those CSOs that could make an input into the process i.e. agriculture, good governance, health, education etc.

In Zambia about thirteen CSOs participated. Two of them are involved in budget analysis but they mainly do their analysis from a business perspective. For example the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (though their budget work is not consistent). The Economics Association also carries out analysis.

³ The "Civil Society PRSP Working Group" was led by the NGO Council. This group is still operational, and now wants to start monitoring, including input into a national monitoring plan for the PRSP.

⁴ GMD wanted to discuss broader strategies for civil society. They invited other NGOs (GMD is itself a network of NGOs interested in debt issues), and also academics, DEIA, other organisations considered partners, as well as international groups such as Save the Children Norway and UK, and also the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

⁵ There were no other groups with a particular budget focus. Some gender CSOs that do work on the budget did not attend consistently. However, some CSOs engaged in macro-economic policy work did, such as Action Aid and Oxfam.

Frequency and Format of Organizational Contributions

ISODEC was first invited in 1998 to join the working group on Poverty Measurement and Monitoring System to help identify key poverty indicators as well as to design a system for collation, analysis and dissemination of data on indicators. This was before the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) required PRSPs as a condition for assistance. ISODEC carried out a field survey and designed the system. In 1999, ISODEC was invited to join the Thematic Working Group on Poverty Reduction, which included representatives of NGOs, donors, the private sector and government agencies to prepare the initial report for the PRSP. Very recently (in June 2002) ISODEC was again invited to join the Macroeconomic Stability Committee to provide inputs into the Development Policy Framework document, alongside other committees, to serve as a long-term development strategy for the country to meet a constitutional requirement.⁶

They did not however, make any written submissions but attended the meetings of the thematic groups and made their contributions verbally. They also attended the National Economic Dialogue (NED)⁷, and its review a year later, and a number of workshops and seminars held for CSOs in Accra and Tamale. ISODEC also attended and made a presentation at a meeting convened to deliberate on the actions government has taken on various comments and criticisms of aspects of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).

SODNET was first invited to make contributions at the formulation stage of the process. They attended two national consultative meetings, which involved hearings and informal contributions. Thereafter they collaborated with a network of CSOs, made written submissions to this group and took part in formal discussions on the PRSP.

MEJN started to participate during the formulation stage. At first the poverty assessment was done without civil society involvement, but after making comments on the government's draft, the chapter was redone, with civil society involvement. This was however somewhat late as some of the thematic discussions on the PRSP had started before a thorough and accepted poverty assessment was done. MEJN also carried out research and analyses on both the process and content of PRSP. Additionally, they conducted "PRSP priorities hearings" with churches and a wide spectrum of civil society groups. They made written submissions on all the draft PRSPs. Position papers were also written on specific issues such as the representation of civil society on the PRSP Technical Committee.

In Mozambique, GMD was invited when the strategy was already designed but before it was approved. A couple of times they were called to meet with the government to comment on the PRSP document. They were however, not satisfied with this procedure and organised a meeting with other NGOs, to produce a written submission. Unfortunately they received no feedback from government.

UDN has been active in influencing policy and planning for a number of years now. From 1996 onwards, UDN and other CSOs have been involved with the drafting of the PEAP.

⁶ When a president comes to power, he or she has two years to develop a long-term economic policy for the country. The current president has to meet the deadline by the end of 2002.

⁷ NED was a two day meeting of representatives of various sectors of the economy, including the government, donors and CSOs to discuss the economic problems facing the country, and to come up with recommendations as to which direction the country should take to deal with these.

Presently they are involved with monitoring the implementation of the PRSP/PEAP, especially with regard to the quality and delivery of services. In addition, they organized stakeholder consultation workshops as well as seminars and media events. These were used to solicit information from the public as well as to inform them about the processes that were taking place at the time. Written reports from the meetings, seminars, and media dialogues were submitted to the Technical Drafting Team of the Ministry of Finance. UDN established a direct link with the committee and continued to feed them with information when it was received. Sometimes the committee took entire drafts or raw material and used them for drafting.

CCJP made contributions during a series of meetings, over approximately 6 months and made written submissions.

Provision of background briefings and training

In Ghana government, some donors and a few other stakeholders held briefings and training sessions, but only after the GPRS had more or less been finalised. Thus, the briefings and training sessions served more a purpose of disseminating information about the document rather than as a consultation process. These briefings and training were useful for many people to understand the GPRS, but also provided another opportunity for ISODEC to state their concerns and criticisms.

The government in Kenya in collaboration with donors conducted relevant background briefings and training. Attendance was by invitation only. SODNET did not participate because they were not invited.

The government of Malawi and donors did not provide training. The latter, according to MEJN, was because “both were convinced that nobody had experience in PRSPs”. Government however held a few briefings on PRSP issues and although MEJN thought that the briefings were not useful, they participated in all.

Similarly no training or briefing sessions were conducted in Mozambique. Only after the PRSP was approved, and after continued pressure from civil society, have they heard about “some civil society support organised by the World Bank (WB)”. GMD is not sure who benefited from the WB support, or what kind of support was offered.

Although government and donors in Uganda did not conduct training, open meetings and discussions were the main method of interaction. UDN, however, organised briefing meetings for CSOs that were attended by donors, and government officials. World Bank and IMF mission officials also attended the initial PRSP meetings and gave briefings.

In Zambia, only one workshop was organised by UNDP for civil society on negotiating skills. Although CCJP was invited, they could not attend.

Distribution of relevant PRSP documentation

The sharing of documentation was generally not timely and this has been one of ISODEC’s main criticisms of the PRSP process in Ghana, as it does not allow for adequate preparation for consultations. In some cases, relevant information was not

even available.⁸ The draft PRSP and other documents were usually distributed at the workshops or sometimes a few days before the workshops to invited organisations.

In Kenya relevant documentation was shared but not in a timely manner. The time that was given before consultations was too short and many CSOs complained about the speed by which the government was doing this. Documents such as the National Development Plan, the National Poverty Eradication Plan (NPEP)⁹, and the economic survey were all shared. Fiscal strategy papers were only shared after the drafting had been completed.

MEJN complained that the distribution of documentation in Malawi was the biggest problem. Most papers, especially the thematic working group papers, were distributed at the meetings and led to participants not making informed choices.

GMD also did not receive any relevant documentation before meetings. Only some guiding material was distributed at the time of the meeting.

Uganda was the exception. Information was shared adequately. Nevertheless, most times this information arrived one or two days in advance of a meeting, and therefore could not be shared with all CSOs in time.

In Zambia the only documents circulated were minutes of meetings and twice "a few poorly written papers" were circulated.

Access to important documentation

ISODEC and Uganda were very fortunate and generally could access most documents. UDN however, noted that the little time given to access a document and make comments denied many CSOs an opportunity to participate effectively.

In Malawi, MEJN was denied any papers on the macroeconomic framework of Government e.g. the government Letter of Intent with the IMF. They felt these were crucial for the PRSP formulation as they contained commitments of government, even before drafting of the "country-owned PRSP." They accessed information largely through donors.

In Mozambique, due to the lack of preparatory training it was impossible to identify which relevant information was necessary to obtain in order to participate meaningfully. Furthermore, GMD felt that the technical nature of the documents undermined accessibility and therefore discussion between the government and civil society members.

Access to important meetings

Although ISODEC was not denied access to any meetings, most of the meetings were by invitation only. They were not invited to the annual review of the NED held in May 2002, but gained access after negotiations.

⁸ The three drafts of the PRSP that came before the final document were often only made available upon arrival at meetings or workshops. In addition, macro-economic targets and assumptions were not initially made known.

⁹ A 15 year plan for poverty eradication finalised in 1999.

In Kenya, the government did not invite NGOs to the meetings of the macro-economic working group and neither were NGOs represented in that working group.

MEJN was denied access to the technical committee meetings. This committee decided on the programme, logistics and synthesis of the content of PRSP formulation. MEJN was denied access to their meetings.¹⁰

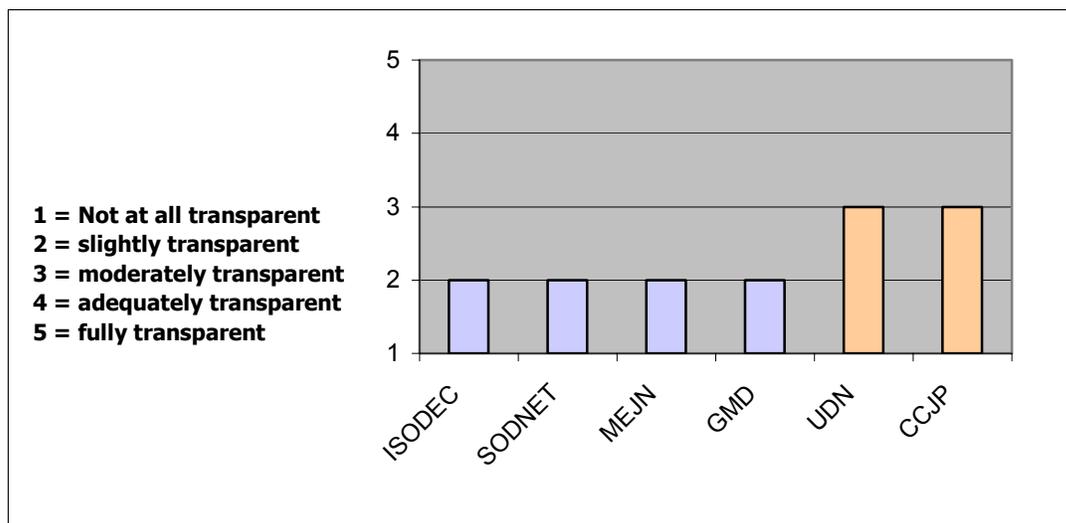
In Mozambique a number of meetings took place at cabinet level, involving only government institutions such as ministries. Other meetings between the government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and other donors also took place. In these meetings no civil society representatives were invited.

In Uganda, CSOs attended all meetings that were open. These included meetings of the National Steering Committee (composed of senior officials in government, donors, and CSO representatives), consultative workshops and seminars including donor-government meetings. The only meetings not attended were those of the cabinet and other high level meetings with the Office of the President etc. No information was made available about the latter's schedule.

In Zambia, CCJP was denied access to meetings and involvement in the final drafting of the PRSP.

In conclusion, figure 1 below shows that none of the six organisations surveyed felt that the PRSP process was either adequately or fully transparent. In fact four organisations (ISODEC, SODNET, MEJN & GMD) said that the process was slightly transparent and two (UDN & CCJP) said the process was moderately transparent.

Figure 1: Ratings by organizations on the Transparency of the PRSP process



¹⁰ To be a member of the committee, needs the State President's signature.

SECTION 2: FORMULATION STAGE

This section essentially looks at who participated in the PRSP consultative process, the level of participation, the role of civil society budget groups and the relationship between the PRSP and the budget.

Participation in the PRSP consultative process

In all of the countries interviewed a combination of central government, local government/district assemblies, business people, researchers, donors, politicians, local and international NGOs, media, non-poor interest groups and civil servants participated in the consultative process. In Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, civil society participation however was limited. People in poor communities were not involved at all in Ghana and in Kenya they were only involved to a limited extent. In addition, Kenya reported that very short notices for meetings were given and that local languages were not used in discussions which barred community members from expressing their opinions adequately. It therefore seems that participation was more broadly at national level.

In Uganda, in addition to strong representation from a variety of interest groups, poor people were involved at the early stages of information gathering through the Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs).

Organisational engagement with Parliament

ISODEC, SODNET, GMD, UDN and CCJP all did not engage with Parliament or any of its committees at any stage during the PRSP process. In Kenya however, parliamentarians were engaged in the overall process as a separate stakeholder. In Ghana government did not involve Parliament at all. Yet, at a later stage ISODEC was invited to make presentations at two workshops for selected Members of Parliament. Parliament, as an institution, was involved only at the dissemination stage. This was when cabinet and the external development partners had approved the document, and after Members of Parliament had complained about not being involved in the whole PRSP process.

MEJN in Malawi is the only CSO that engaged with parliament, especially with the Parliamentary Committee on Budget and Finance.

Under/Over representation of certain segments of civil society

In Ghana even though civil society was consulted this consultation was grossly inadequate, as significant segments were under-represented, particularly poor communities. Both GMD and ISODEC reported language problems as a major barrier. In Ghana English was the main language used during the process and in Mozambique Portuguese. At grass roots level traditional languages are widely spoken. Furthermore, in Ghana, Accra based organisations had better exposure to the process and were better known to government and donors. In Mozambique all PRSP activities took place in the main city of Maputo and discussions did not involve district and provincial level participation in any significant way.

In Kenya women and the disabled were significantly under represented, while the very poor were to a large extent excluded. District forum attendance was by invitation only and thus many poor people were excluded. Stronger groups in policy analysis had more time to articulate their views, whereas, community based organisations (CBOs) were much weaker. Organised business was well represented through the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, which made inputs on the macro-economic paper.

Although civil society in Malawi was greatly under-represented at the start of the process, as the process continued civil society representation grew stronger.

UDN said that the most important stakeholder that was not visibly present in the Uganda PRSP process was Parliament. By the time this omission was noticed, the process had reached the completion stage. Parliament was not required to validate the PRSP. The respondent was of the opinion that the planning process in Uganda was largely “a business of the technocrats”. The latter bias is however being addressed. A new law, the Budget Act of 2001 was recently put in place to ensure that government seeks consultation with parliament before it approves a policy.

In Zambia central government was over represented and most segments of civil society were under represented, for example the poor and NGOs working closely with the poor.

Role of civil society budget groups in the PRSP process

Budget groups in Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique played little or no role during the process. MEJN tried to join the group on macroeconomic framework and costing but government at the end contracted a consultant for the work. In Kenya CSOs were denied participation in the formulation of the fiscal strategy paper and in Mozambique groups received very little background information and the drafting of the PRSP was dominated by government.

In Ghana groups involved in budget analysis were involved largely as consultants in the initial stage and later as participants at subsequent workshops to deliberate the proposals of the consultants and the thematic groups.

Groups in Zambia made inputs on issues of economic and political governance, emphasising the need for good public management of resources and the need for good systems and accountability. The Economic Association (EA) mainly contributed on issues concerning macro economic policies to underpin the PRSP.

In Uganda most organisations that took part in the PEAP/PRSP process were not necessarily involved in the budget process. However, UDN ensured that CSOs were involved in the discussions for the costing of the PEAP/PRSP during consultations. UDN's technical team provided some expertise in this area and its input was highly regarded. They also provided input into the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

Media and general public participation

Consultation meetings in which ISODEC and SODNET participated were open to and covered by the media. They were however not open to the general public. Participation was by invitation.

In Malawi consultation meetings were open to the media and the general public.

Meetings in which GMD and CCJP participated were not open to the media and the general public. Only those civil society members invited by the government attended.

All consultations in Uganda (both government and CSOs) were open to the media from the beginning. At times the media found these issues tedious but the interest has now picked up.

Relationship between the PRSP and the budget

In Ghana it was only very recently that workshops were organised for government officials involved in the budget process to explain the linkage in preparation of the 2003 Annual Budget. Most CSOs, except those involved in budget research and analysis, are not aware of the relationship between the GPRS and the budget.

SODNET in Kenya noted that many government officials and many CSOs are not aware of the linkage between the PRSP and the budget.

GMD thinks that probably many of those in government and in NGOs do not know about the implications of budget management on PRSP implementation. They attribute this to problems related to capacity.

CCJP and MEJN believe that government is sufficiently aware of this relationship. MEJN further observed that some civil society organizations still see the two as unrelated.

In Uganda any basis for the budgeting process is the PEAP/PRSP. A Poverty Eradication Working Group to which UDN belong works to ensure that poverty eradication is mainstreamed in all sector budgets. All government expenditure is being re-aligned to fit into this arrangement. Defence still takes a large chunk of the budget and there is continuous pressure to increase it.

Linkages between the PRSP process and the budget process

Even though the government of Ghana announced that the 2002 Annual Budget marked the beginning of the implementation of the GPRS, ISODEC is of opinion that the two processes were not sufficiently linked, as the costing of the GPRS was not yet completed by the time the budget was read. For them it is important that the two processes are linked because through the budget process resources are allocated to projects and programmes, including poverty related projects and programmes.

SODNET was convinced that the link between the PRSP and the budget was and still is very weak. They believe the two processes should be linked and that the MTEF should integrate policy planning and budgeting so that programs are driven by policy priorities

and confined to budgetary revenue, expenditure and deficit financing realities. In this way the MTEF becomes the means to achieving poverty reduction with the PRSP the road map and the MTEF the vehicle. The national budget is therefore the instrument by which policies are made a reality and policy papers turned into tangible projects and programmes.

MEJN reported that the PRSP process and the budget process were not linked at the PRSP formulation stage. Malawi's PRSP process was rushed to feed into budget 2001/2002. This year, after the launch of the Malawi PRSP, it has been incorporated into the budget. They strongly feel that the PRSP should be formulated independent of the budget. When the PRSP is finalized, the budget should then be drafted in line with the PRSP priorities.

In Mozambique the PRSP has a chapter called PRSP budget implication. Despite that, the respondent is not sure to what extent the relationship was accurately established. He nonetheless feels that the budget and the PRSP should be linked to provide resources for implementation and that the quality of budget management has a major impact on the degree of fulfilment of the PRSP aims.

The Uganda PEAP/PRSP is closely linked to the budget to the extent that PEAP priority areas are now ring fenced (not subject to budget cuts). The donors have accepted to put all their contributions into "one basket" to provide resources for the budget (providing programme support rather than project support). One of UDN's arguments during the PEAP/PRSP process was and continues to be that a plan is as good as the paper it is written on. Government was urged to commit substantial resources for implementing the PEAP. About 30-35 per cent of the budget is allocated for poverty eradication.

According to CCJP the PRSP process and the budget is linked in Zambia. They believe that it should be linked since the budget acts as a tool to achieve development. The PRSP is essentially about needs that require resources.

Types of input that organisations involved in budget analysis can provide in the PRSP process

All of the organisations interviewed mentioned a number of inputs they can provide in the PRSP process. These include:

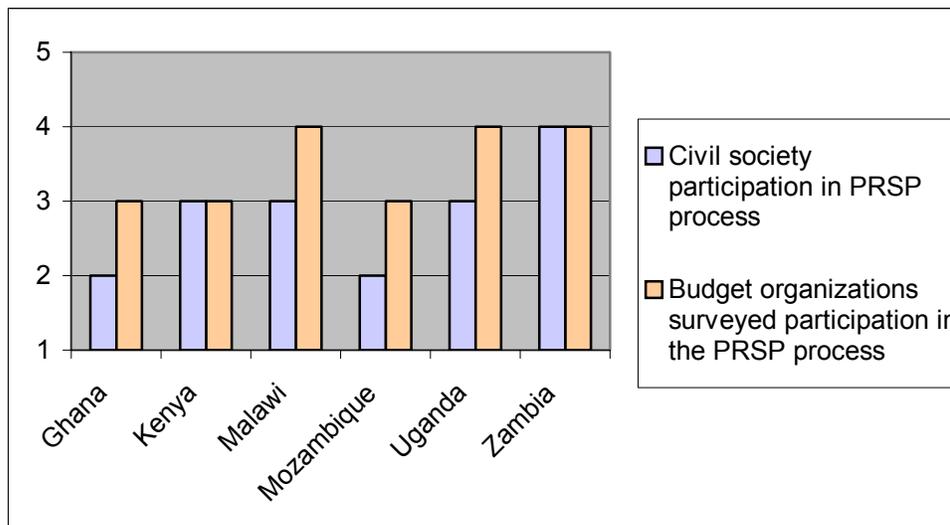
- monitoring (budget allocations; the impact of public policies; expenditure on PRSPs)
- tracking the flow of public resources to most needed areas
- determine appropriate indicators
- providing grassroots people with information
- hold public forums and workshops to gather information on budgetary and economic issues
- providing government with information on the needs of the poor
- awareness creation of the PRSP document
- continue to influence policies and ensure they are "friendly to the poor"
- make sure the PRSP and budget are linked
- do submissions to government
- continue to analyse budgets
- mobilise people at grassroots level
- monitoring the efficacy of implementation structures
- continue to play a role in refining the PRSP

A number of the organisations are already in close contact with grassroots organisations, have made written submissions on the budget and have influenced policies in various degrees.

In figure 2 below, the first bar indicates that the level of civil society participation in the PRSP process was on average very limited. Kenya, Malawi and Uganda rated the participation as moderate. Zambia rated it as good, and Ghana and Mozambique thought it was weak.

The second bar, which indicates the level of participation of the budget groups surveyed, shows that half of the respondents thought their organisation’s participation was fairly adequate, while the other half thought their organisation's participation was average.

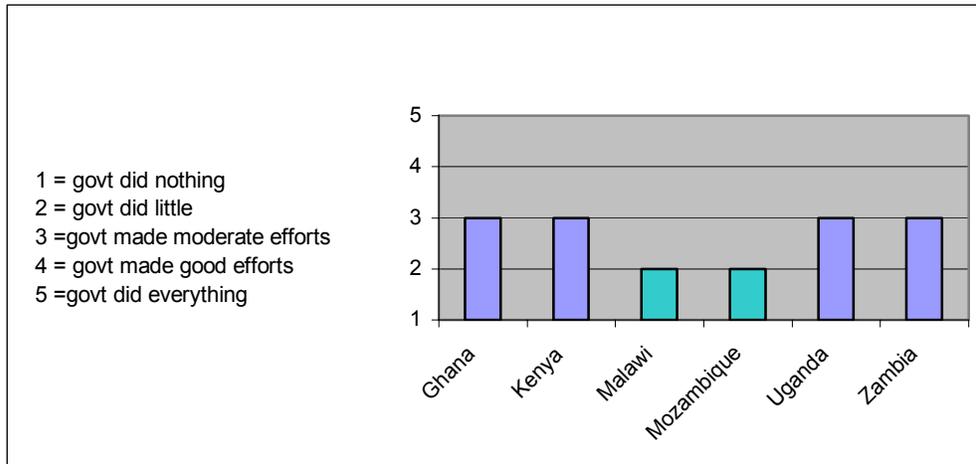
Figure 2: Ratings on the PRSP process¹¹



¹¹ 1=no participation, 2=weak participation, 3=moderate participation, 4=good participation, 5=substantial participation

In Figure 3 below, the respondents in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia all indicated that their governments made moderate efforts to facilitate meaningful participation. Malawi and Mozambique indicated that their governments did little.

Figure 3: Government efforts to facilitate participation



SECTION 3: CONCLUDING STAGE

This section explores the outcome of budget CSO participation and focuses on: examples of their suggestions included/excluded in the PRSP; government's response to CSO contributions; suggestions on how to improve consultation; requirements for making the PRSP work and lists negative and positive experiences of organization's engagement.

Reasons for CS involvement in the PRSP process and what they hoped to gain

Generally, the organizations interviewed provided a range of reasons why they decided to get involved. ISODEC said that the PRSP is a programme framework targeted at reducing poverty in the country and it would be in the best interests of the poor if the strategy were well formulated and implemented. They hope to achieve a better life for the majority of Ghanaians, especially the poor and marginalised, through the PRSP process.

SODNET believes that despite all the misgivings that certain sections of society might have about the efficacy of the PRSP, it offers some window of opportunity, which should be used, enlarged and domesticated. As a window of opportunity, it will give CSOs in Kenya the legitimacy to become a part of the social transformation forces in society. Furthermore they strive to contribute to the reality-testing of the efficacy of the PRSP as an economic management instrument and assist to make the process more sensitive to the concerns of various actors in the economy.

MEJN and CCJP wishes to influence the strategy and policy formulation. MEJN believed that if they didn't participate, the PRSP would have continued anyway, and be hijacked by the interests of International Financing Institutions.

GMD's final aim is to contribute to the fight against poverty. They believe the PRSP is an anti-poverty plan and they hope to influence policies from a pro-poor perspective.

UDN, a leading advocacy organisation in the country, saw it as their responsibility and duty to make the participation of civil society their primary agenda. They want to increase the knowledge of civil society in the policy formulation process through organising consultation workshops that are highly participatory and interactive. UDN has since become highly rated in macro-policy formulation and is acknowledged as such through continuous invitations to make inputs into policy design and formulation.

SODNET, MEJN and UDN all noted that they have achieved their objectives to some degree. SODNET conducted an interim evaluation of the consultative process, which showed that the PRSP process was not well done. They explained that given the fact that the government of Mozambique did not know anything about popular participation in policy design, monitoring and implementation, the findings of the research was not surprising.

Ghana explained that the GPRS is just beginning to be implemented and therefore makes it difficult for them to say whether objectives have been achieved. Similarly GMD also thought it is still early to say whether they achieved their objectives.

Conditions for the continuation of civil society participation

All respondents indicated that they would continue to participate in the PRSP process.

ISODEC will insist on transparency, especially with regards to the macro-economic framework and targets and the avoidance of too much pressures by the IFIs. CCJP said that government must provide adequate information and that more recognition be given to the voices of NGOs and authority to decide what is tabled before Cabinet.

UDN believes that participation (in policy formulation, monitoring etc.) is a fundamental role of CSOs. The policy environment in Uganda is relatively open and allows CSOs to participate at the highest level. The limiting factor however, is the capacity of the CSOs. UDN is therefore working to ensure that consultation processes become an institutional obligation of the central and local governments (both the Constitution of Uganda and the laws governing local government already provide for this situation).

MEJN said that they would continue to participate under the following conditions:

- (a) Process and content be agreed upon by government and civil society organizations
- (b) Civil Society be in steering/technical committee
- (c) Agree on timetable in advance.
- (d) Access to information must be guaranteed

GMD is waiting for new opportunities that should occur under more openness and commitment from the government, reinforced democracy, and institutionalised dialogue involving the government, civil society, politicians, Parliament and donors.

Governments response to CSO contributions

In Ghana government did not respond to ISODEC's comments in particular but convened a meeting and reported the actions it had taken on all the comments and contributions made by various stakeholders including CSOs.

The government of Kenya responded to these contributions through formal responses in meetings i.e. the sharing of consultative forum reports and informal engagements during discussions. There was no response through press statements, though announcements of meetings were put into the press.

According to MEJN the government of Malawi took their contributions seriously, but never responded in writing or in the media.

GMD never received feedback until the PRSP was approved. Now, with civil society pressure, the government recognises the error and promises to contemplate the inclusion of "acceptable civil society points of view" in future opportunities.

The Ugandan government organised several consultation meetings that were highly participatory and open. At every stage there was a discussion on each output during the drafting period. When a draft was ready, a meeting of the national steering committee composed of the senior government officials, donors, CSOs and the media was called to discuss the draft and make suggestions for improvement and plan the future course of events. The media was encouraged to report and provide information to the public as much as possible. CSOs organised a newspaper pullout, briefing papers, policy briefs

etc. to enable the public to participate in the process. This information process informed open discussions in the electronic media.

In Zambia government compiled a report of all submissions and subsequently decided what to include in the final document.

Specific examples of process issues/suggestions or commitments that were included in the PRSP due to organisation's input, demand or suggestions

SODNET advised the government to consult with people in the villages. They suggested the formation of a civil society group, to consolidate suggestions put forward to the government. Their aim was for civil society to speak with one voice.

MEJN suggested the following:

- analysis of poverty
- indicators and priorities
- section on monitoring and evaluation to come from civil society
- incorporate civil society in the final drafting committee

ISODEC had no specific examples and GMD is not sure because they received no feedback from the government after the few consultation meetings. GMD thinks the approved document is too complex and technical and, as a result, not easy to understand.

UDN's main interests were to ensure that issues such as education, health etc. were not compromised and were agreed on by all the stakeholders as critical for poverty eradication. Due to their input, HIV/AIDS that was initially being treated as a health issue received prominence and government committed itself to make the budget poverty-focused through increased commitments for priority issues.

CCJP suggested the holding of provincial consultations.

Key issues raised by organisations that were not included in the PRSP

ISODEC raised concerns about the policy of cost recovery of utilities and cost sharing for education and health services, as well as the demand to engage in a transparent debate on the macroeconomic targets set in the GPRS. They believe "government has committed itself to the external development partners on these policy issues and is not willing to renege on those commitments".

SODNET suggested a wide and inclusive coverage of the districts in order to incorporate the contribution of very poor people. They also suggested the inclusion of civil society in the fiscal strategy design, especially those involved in the budget work, but government and donors felt that "when it came to fiscal issues, civil society was better left out". They reasoned that this was because the International Financial Institutions wanted their views, especially the tight fiscal and inflation lowering concerns, in the strategy, which NGOs would have opposed.

MEJN made suggestions about the costing of the strategy and the analysis of past efforts, e.g. structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Government however hired a

team of consultants to do the costing and the analysis of SAPs was taken to be "negative and without appreciation of the benefits that came with it".

GMD raised the need for more emphasis on the agricultural sector, which accommodates about 80 per cent of the people in Mozambique. Yet Mozambique's PRSP does not show strong policies on agriculture.

The Uganda PEAP/PRSP formulation process was more of a validation process than a new undertaking. The general consensus is that the PEAP is widely and broadly accepted.

Systematic processes of documenting which of the demands of civil society have been included in final PRSP

In Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia there are no systematic processes of documenting which of the demands of civil society have been included in the final PRSP.

The government of Ghana reported on the actions they have taken on some of the demands while in Malawi the government refused because civil society participated in all sectors and thematic groups. In Zambia civil society is documenting which of its demands have been included.

UDN is mainly involved in the monitoring of the implementation process of the PEAP/PRSP and not in documenting civil society inputs. The final PEAP/PRSP is very comprehensive and incorporates as much of the materials derived from the consultation process as possible. However, issues such as elaborate monitoring and evaluation strategy are being separately handled as policy issues. Here UDN is a very active and keen participant through membership of the Poverty Eradication Work Group (PEWG) and the Poverty Analysis Monitoring Unit (PAMU).¹²

Nature of the participation and whether it provided an opportunity for meaningful and effective input by organisations

All of the organizations surveyed, except for UDN, thought that the PRSP process was not truly participative but rather consultative, especially at the initial stages, that civil society was marginalized and reacted to already developed views and that the "usual suspects" were involved. They also commented on the exclusion of parliament. This resulted in organisations enforcing themselves onto the process

On the other hand, Kenya noted that it opened opportunities for future meaningful and effective participation, that the Kenyan government learnt a lot from these engagements and that changes are noticeable.

¹² PEWG is composed of various agencies, research groups, donors and CSOs. It discusses policies to mainstream poverty across the entire planning process, so that various activities focus on poverty, as part of the sector working group mechanism. PAMU is a small unit in the Finance Ministry, with a staff of two to three. It continuously collects and analyses data relating to poverty indicators, monitoring whether these are improving or deteriorating. Much of the latter's work draws on national household surveys.

In Uganda the PEAP/PRSP exercise was a big opportunity for CSOs to make inputs into the national policy formulation process. UDN reported that the environment for influencing policy formulation in Uganda is very open and many CSOs are already taking advantage of this. In addition, this process is now going beyond the urban centres to CSOs based in the countryside, since civil society participation in local level policy processes is regarded as very important.

Suggestions on how to improve the consultation process and participation

ISODEC is of the opinion that consultation on poverty issues must start with the poor themselves and so it should involve the rural poor, including the Village and Town Committees and up to the District Assemblies. All issues must be open for debate and all relevant information must be adequately made available on a timely basis for study and constructive debate.

In Kenya the process of consultation and participation could be improved through a more structured consensus-reaching mechanism of collaboration between NGOs and the government. There is a need for open disclosure of information and the right to information. The Official Secrets Act, the Information and Broadcasting Act, and the Prohibited Publications Act are hindrances to collaboration in the PRSP. Sections of these acts limit participation and consultation, and should be reviewed or suspended while awaiting amendment. This is because many officers in the government still regard much ordinary information and documents that they handle by virtue of their positions as official secrets and are little disposed to discussing them or giving them out. The PRSP must strive to improve communication flow and timely dissemination of information between the government, policy makers, implementers and other CSOs. Information must also be available to communities so that they can make informed decisions about access and control over livelihood resources. The process should be made more transparent. The PRSP process in Kenya shows that NGOs could only have access to what was allowed by the government. For example NGOs did not participate in the formulation of the fiscal strategy paper, which is part of the PRSP. Until NGOs engage in the discussion of the macro-economic target setting process, their scope of influencing the broader policy framework will be limited.

MEJN suggested that the process of consultation must be transparent and a clear programme of events must be made available and known to all, and that the information be made available to the stakeholders in time.

GMD suggested the institutionalisation of dialogue with the government, which should be supported by law.

In Uganda the process of consultation and participation are already embedded within the Constitution and the Local Government Act. They only need to be implemented. They further suggest that other African countries could do the same.

CCJP believes consideration must be given to include real grassroots analyses and suggestions. The provision of quality information of current programmes in government, adopted by NGOs, should also be made available. Lessons of what has worked and not worked in the past should be taken into consideration.

Requirements to make the PRSP process work

ISODEC, SODNET, MEJN, GMD and CCJP all suggested the need for further capacity building for both government and NGOs.

In addition ISODEC recommended the need for clear political commitment on the part of the government and a general change of attitude of public officials towards the use of public resources. NGOs need more capacity to assist in programme and project implementation (as some NGOs have access to substantial funds) and to undertake monitoring and evaluation of poverty related programmes and projects as confidence in the government monitoring itself is very low.

SODNET added that in order for collaboration between government and NGOs for the PRSP to function effectively, the state needs both political goodwill and capacity to respond effectively and appropriately to inputs from civil society. There should be improved management capacity in NGOs to ensure meaningful contributions in policy formulation and the implementation process and political goodwill and commitment on the part of government to this process. Donors need to assist with resources to guarantee implementation. Countries should have ownership over the process and design strategies according to their specific needs. SODNET sees the latter as very important because donors have "really meddled in this process with their own perceptions and conditionalities that have forced developing countries to adopt the donor outfit in order to access donor funding and win acceptance".

MEJN suggested openness on the part of government and innovation and persistence on the part of civil society.

According to the UDN, CSOs and government must build a structured (not ad-hoc) relationship and in addition government must provide resources to credible CSOs to enhance civil society participation and consultation in the processes.

Extent to which country's PRSP has incorporated CSO input

UDN presented high quality analysis of the PEAP/PRSP objectives and made comments and suggestions for improvement on the content of the PEAP/PRSP. Some suggestions were incorporated but much more importantly the whole concept of planning in Uganda presently recognises the participation of CS in the policy formulation process. Issues such as peace building, fair and just taxation, environmental protection, employment that were not clearly identified previously as key to poverty eradication were given prominence and CSOs were requested to provide the text that was wholly incorporated within the document.

CCJP and GMD felt it is too early to say to what extent the PRSP incorporates such input. In Mozambique up to the approval of the PRSP in September 2001, very little was known about the document and its background. From September 2001 to August 2002, the main challenge was to become more familiar with the document. Only now are they in a position to influence the document from a budget perspective.

Only MEJN was positive that its contribution was incorporated to a large degree, except for the allocation to the statehood expenses. Expenses under the state president vote, for example, increased despite sectoral proposals for reduction.

ISODEC and SODNET¹³ respondents are not convinced that the PRSP process has incorporated their inputs in any significant way.

SODNET is of opinion, the PRSP incorporated inputs from budget groups to a moderate extent.

Budget group's success in influencing the budget

ISODEC's Centre for Budget Advocacy (CBA) was established in September 2000. At this point they are not sure whether they have succeeded in influencing the budget as it takes time for influences to show. CBA has sent its comments and analysis on the last two budgets to the president and the leadership of Parliament. In 2001, the CBA held a press conference to call on the government to take advantage of the HIPC initiative. Shortly after this the government announced its decision to do this but the feeling is that this does not necessarily mean that it was the press conference that made the government to take that decision.

SODNET thinks civil society, to some extent, has been successful in influencing the budget. They mentioned the following: Firstly, district level participation in the budget process has improved. Secondly the government now invites suggestions in the form of memoranda from CSOs and is ready to discuss some of these suggestions. Thirdly accountability and transparency have also improved though they still need to do more especially concerning laws governing the budgetary process that remains bureaucratic and closed to many actors and ordinary citizens. Overall, government is more receptive and shows signs of opening up.

MEJN also thought that CSOs were successful to some extent in influencing the budget. They succeed in prioritizing sector focussing and allocations in education, health, agriculture and the macro-economic framework. They admitted to not succeeding in influencing allocations for 'non - priority areas' such as state residences and "special activities".

The respondent from GMD thought that his organisation and other groups involved in budget analysis have been successful in influencing the budget, because they are now starting to see significant changes in terms of budget priorities. Some sectors, which supported major campaigns by NGOs and groups involved in budget analysis (supported even by some donor agencies) are now starting to benefit somewhat more than before. This applies to the education sector, health sector and social welfare, infrastructure etc.

Since the mid-1990s CSOs in Uganda have argued for increased expenditure for the social sector. This has largely been achieved. Education used to get less than 10 per cent of total recurrent expenditure before 1998. Today this has increased to over 25 per cent. Health, which used to get less than 4 per cent, is now over 7 per cent. Other areas such as agriculture, water and sanitation have attracted substantial resources. The budget for local government expenditure constitutes over 35 per cent of the total

¹³ In general, the respondent felt that the success was more in terms of opening up the process, but found it difficult to judge what was concretely incorporated, as this was not systematically documented.

recurrent and development expenditure, which used to get much smaller allocations. Thus partly because of debt relief and the formulation of the PRSP donors have increased expenditure for poverty focused programmes.

Key requirements for groups involved in budget analysis for meaningful participation and effective influence in the PRSP process

ISODEC expressed the need for timely access to all relevant information and an adequate legal framework to ensure this. Opportunities to be represented at negotiations with external partners and making clear the role of NGOs' in monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP was also a requirement.

SODNET raised the following points:

- capacity building training on the budget;
- the need for networking at country level, especially for the pre-budget lobbying process;
- the creation of a national budgetary forum for CSOs;
- engaging with parliament on the need for participation in the budgetary process;
- inter-continental networking and experience sharing to learn from other African countries;
- the need for research on the budgetary process and the gaps at policy levels that deny people full participation in this process and ways of establishing best practices on this;
- educating ordinary people on the budget and the importance of participating and speaking for themselves;
- if groups involved in the budget work are adequately supported much more could be achieved to add to the gains so far achieved.

MEJN thought an understanding of the economy and budget cycle, the prioritizing of services and establishment of indicator outputs are all key requirements for involvement by budget groups.

GMD regards openness on the part of government, reinforced democracy, provision of acceptable public information and capacity building, among others, as key requirements.

UDN views the need to build human and financial capacity to enable them to make quality input into the policy process as a key requirement. This, according to them, will ensure that CSOs undertake continuous and rigorous budget analysis and make meaningful inputs.

Budget groups consultation and interaction with other civil society organizations during the PRSP process with regard to submissions made and attendance at meetings

Even though ISODEC did not consult or interact with other civil society groups in a formal way or offered specific training, they provided information through presentations and contributions at workshops organised by other agencies. In retrospect they felt that they should have created the opportunity for such interaction.

SODNET, CCJP, GMD, UDN and MEJN all interacted with other organisations and provided them with crucial information. In addition UDN, SODNET and MEJN made

submissions on the PRSP, after consulting with other CSOs in their respective countries and UDN, MEJN and GMD also offered training.

In Uganda, UDN was responsible for organising and co-ordinating the civil society consultation process. Over 600 people and 60 CSOs were involved in the consultation with people at the grassroots or national levels. Information was provided to persons that were involved in facilitating community consultations. UDN also published several newsletters and newspaper inserts to make the process public.

Summary of civil society budget groups' negative and positive experiences on their engagement in the PRSP process

ISODEC concluded that the PRSP process served as a beginning for consultation in economic decision-making in Ghana. Although government and donors realised that civil society can make substantial contributions to its policy making process, government nonetheless excluded them from the macro-economic framework. The PRSP is viewed by several people as no different from the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) as it was tied to the conditionalities of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) of the World Bank and others. They felt that this raises credibility concerns, which devalued the whole process.

SODNET feels that a lot still has to be done to promote civil society-government collaboration in poverty reduction initiatives. They believe government views civil society as having a hidden agenda. Nevertheless, this perception amongst a number of government officials changed during the PRSP process as CSOs have been increasingly invited to participate in the monitoring of the PRSP.

MEJN lists the negative and positive aspects of the PRSP as follows: Negatively, the PRSP process took the biggest share of the organization's resources and time, so much so that the other programmes suffered. Positively, the PRSP process fostered further unity among civil society groups. It allowed MEJN to get salient information from government and donors. Finally, the process made MEJN to be trusted as a grouping that offers credible alternatives.

On a positive note, GMD said that the PRSP process was an opportunity for civil society to influence policies through participation. Negatively, the process was characterised by the lack of openness from government and the low importance government attached to the role of civil society in the process.

UDN would have preferred that more time was allocated to the PRSP formulation process. They had to work under immense pressure to keep up with the pace of the revision and PRSP formulation process.

CCJP thought that it was too time consuming. They also do not have confidence that government will deliver. On the positive side, they became aware of so many things happening in the country.

Concluding thoughts from survey participants

Ghana felt that budget issues and the PRSP involved technical issues, which were not easily grasped by some civil society and government participants in the consultation process. There is therefore a need for further capacity building of CSOs and government officials if the consultative process is to be effective.

SODNET thinks that donors can play a role in fostering civil society and government collaboration in poverty reduction processes due to their leverage on the government and even NGOs. This kind of collaboration for many governments in Africa is a learning process and will take some time to bear positive fruit. CSOs have to continue applying pressure to ensure their involvement in especially the budget process otherwise poverty reduction will not be realised.

MEJN concluded that:

- (a) The PRSP process helped in educating the Malawi civil society on economic issues;
- (b) The participation / inputs of civil society were not welcome in some important sectors such as the macro-economic framework.
- (c) Government and IMF retained some of the rejected elements in the final PRSP. For example in Malawi Privatisation of water and electricity boards were rejected at sectoral level and were absent in the first three drafts. However they were present in the final PRSP.
- (d) Lastly, a united civil society is a strong force that can influence trends or processes in policy formulation; a united civil society in Malawi was able to move the timetable of the MPRSP formulation process from 3 months to 15 months.

GMD are also not optimistic about upcoming PRSP results, because they feel in many ways it is not different from structural adjustment policies, as the policy framework is greatly influenced by IMF and World Bank policies. They concluded that these same institutions, should therefore be held responsible for the PRSP results (even during the implementation process).¹⁴

UDN concluded as follows: "processes that are determined externally usually leave some bitter taste in the mouth" of those who interact with them. For government, because of the much needed debt relief, and for civil society, because of the need to prove itself as a key player in policy planning and formulation.

Figure 4: Rating of government's receptiveness to incorporate suggestions by CSO's

Respondents were asked to rate the receptiveness of government to incorporate suggestions by civil society. Ghana and Mozambique felt that only a few CSO suggestions were incorporated. The other four countries were more positive about their contributions. Kenya and Malawi reported moderate amounts of incorporation while Uganda and Zambia said that most suggestions were incorporated.

¹⁴ Mozambique had a negative experience with Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), relating to the Cashew industry. Government was forced to liberalise by the IFIs, and as Mozambique is 60 per cent dependent on foreign aid, it could not refuse. The industry suffered as a result. Now, a similar issue has arisen with regard to railways privatisation. They feel the IFIs must be held accountable for the results of such measures.

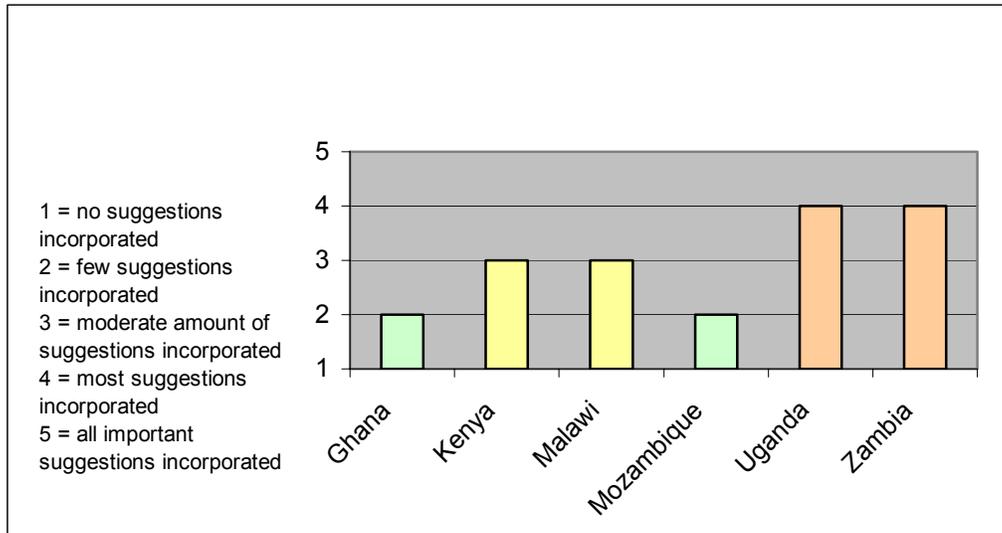
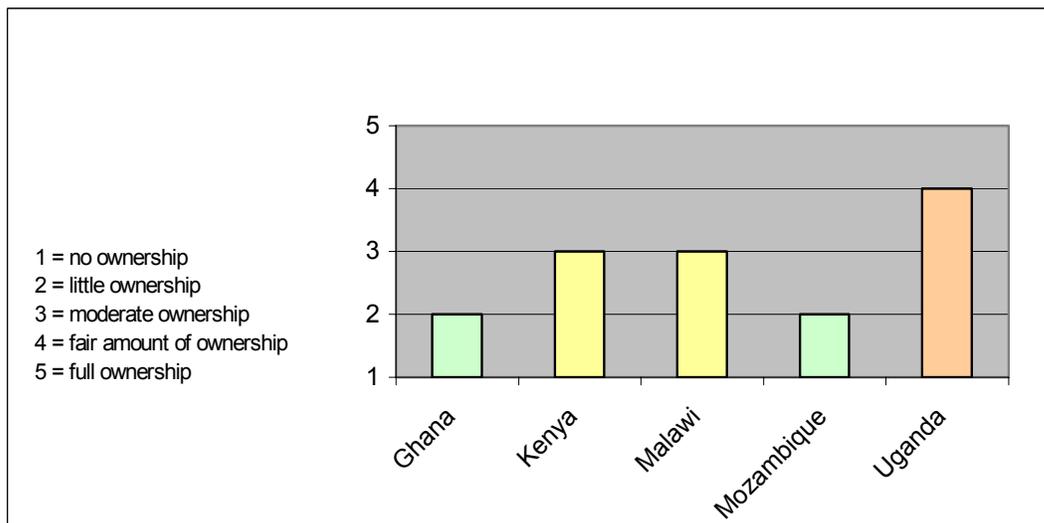


Figure 5: Rating of ownership by civil society on the final PRSP document

The chart below indicates that respondents expressed similar opinions on their ownership over the PRSP process as with their ratings on the receptiveness of government. Ghana and Mozambique expressed little ownership over the final PRSP document, while Kenya and Malawi said they feel moderate ownership. Only Uganda reported a fair amount of ownership.



APPENDIX 1: Survey Questionnaire

**Civil Society Budget Groups and their
Involvement in the PRSP Process**

CONTACT DETAILS

Country:	_____
Name of organisation:	_____
Telephone number:	_____
Fax number:	_____
E-mail address:	_____
Date of telephonic interview	_____

PROCESS QUESTIONS

1. Was the PRSP consultation process transparent, in the sense that a clear schedule with key stages and/or dates made publicly available?

2. Were you invited to participate in the PRSP consultation process? If yes, how was the invitation extended (e.g. written invite, verbally etc.)?

3. How many CSO's were invited to the consultation process? How many of these (other than yourself) are involved in budget research/analysis?

4. At what stage (assessment; strategy design/formulation; approval; implementation; monitoring)¹⁵ during the PRSP process was your organisation first invited to make contributions?

¹⁵ Assessment = understanding poverty its diversity, its causes, & effects; Strategy design = participatory analysis of range of policy options and identification of the most promising strategies; Approval = the countries authorities (government, parliament) decide on PRSP and its budgetary implications; Implementation = all those involved put the PRSP into practice).

5. How many times and in what form did your organisation make contributions, e.g. written submissions, hearings, meetings, etc.?

6. In what form, if any, did government respond to these contributions by your organisation, e.g. press statements, formal responses, informal engagement etc.?

7. Did government or donors conduct relevant background briefings or training? If yes, did your organisation participate in any of these? If yes, was this useful?

8. Was relevant documentation shared with you in a timely manner so as to allow you to prepare adequately for consultations? If yes, what documentation was distributed?

9. Were you denied access to any particular documents that you felt was important to have in order to make meaningful contributions to the PRSP process?

10. Were you denied access to any particular meetings that you felt was important to attend in order to make meaningful contributions to the PRSP process?

11. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, how would you judge the transparency of the PRSP process? Please mark the appropriate box with an .

1 = not at all transparent	2 = slightly transparent	3 = moderately transparent	4 = adequately transparent	5 = fully transparent
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PARTICIPATION QUESTIONS

1. Who participated in the PRSP consultative process (i.e. central government; local government; politicians and political parties; donor agencies; non-poor interest groups; media; academic researchers; civil society; local NGOs; international NGOs; other NGOs involved in budget analysis; people in poor communities; etc.)?

2. Did you at any point in this process engage with parliament or any of its committees?

3. In your view, were significant segments of civil society under-represented, over-represented or excluded?

4. What role did groups involved in budget analysis play in the PRSP process?

5. Was consultation by invitation of the government only, or could all those interested make inputs?

6. How did the government alert your organisation and the general public of opportunities to make inputs? Was this sufficient?

7. Were consultation meetings in which your organisation participated open to the media and the general public?

8. Do you think government and other CSOs are sufficiently aware of the relationship between the PRSP and the budget?

9. Do you think the PRSP process was at all linked to the budget process?

10. In your opinion, do you think it should be linked? Please explain.

11. Have your organisation and other groups involved in budget analysis been successful in influencing the budget?

12. What type of input can your organisation and others involved in budget analysis provide in the PRSP process?

13. In your opinion, to what extent did your country's PRSP incorporate this input?

14. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you describe the level of civil society participation in the PRSP process? Please mark the appropriate box with an .

1 = no CS participation	2 = weak CS participation	3 = moderate CS participation	4 = good CS participation	5 = substantial CS participation
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15. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you describe the level of your organisation's participation in the PRSP process? Please mark the appropriate box with an .

1 = no CS participation	2 = weak CS participation	3 = moderate CS participation	4 = good CS participation	5 = substantial CS participation
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16. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, how would you judge the efforts of the government to facilitate meaningful participation? Please mark the appropriate box with an .

1 = government did nothing to facilitate participation	2 = government did little to facilitate participation	3 = government made a moderate effort to facilitate participation	4 = government made a good effort to facilitate participation	5 = government did everything possible to facilitate participation
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OUTCOME QUESTIONS

1. Why did your organisation get involved in the PRSP process? What did you hope to gain?

2. Did you achieve this?

3. Should more opportunities arise, would you continue to participate and under what conditions?

4. Are there specific examples of process issues/suggestions or commitments that were included in the PRSP due to your organisation's input, demand or suggestions?

5. To the contrary, what were the key issues raised by your organisation that were not included in the PRSP? Why not?

6. Has your country adopted a systematic process of documenting which of the demands of civil society have been included in final PRSPs?

7. Do you think that the PRSP process was truly participative and provided an opportunity for meaningful and effective input by organisations such as yours?

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you describe the receptiveness of the government to incorporate suggestions by civil society? Please mark the appropriate box with an .

1 = no suggestions incorporated	2 = few suggestions incorporated	3 = moderate amount of suggestions incorporated	4 = most suggestions incorporated	5 = all-important suggestions incorporated
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9. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the extent of ownership by civil society on the final PRSP document? Please mark the appropriate box with an .

1 = no ownership	2 = little ownership	3 = moderate ownership	4 = fair amount of ownership	5 = full ownership
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10. Do you have any specific suggestions on how to improve the process of consultation and participation?

11. What do you think is required (e.g. government capacity, NGO capacity etc.) to make the PRSP process work?

12. What in your opinion are the key requirements, for your organisation and other groups involved in budget analysis, for meaningful participation and effective influence in the PRSP process?

13. Did your organisation consult/interact with other civil society organizations during the PRSP process, or did you make submission/attended meetings alone?

14. If yes, did you provide them with training/information?

15. If no, why did you prefer not to work with other CSO's?

16. How would you summarise the negative and positive experiences in your organisation's engagement with the PRSP process thus far?

17. Is there anything else regarding the outcome of your participation in the PRSP process that you would like to add?
