



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
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e-Newsletter

MARCH-APRIL 2011 No. 59

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In April 2011 the International Budget Partnership (IBP) and the Maternal Health Task Force (MHTF) hosted a two-day conference in New York to discuss strategies for monitoring maternal health budgets in countries with high maternal mortality ratios, also known as high burden countries. The meeting was attended by representatives of the international maternal health community, including Women Deliver, Family Care International, White Ribbon Alliance, Engender Health, and the Averting Maternal Death and Disability program at Columbia University; and by representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Tanzania that were involved in the IBP's 2010 [Ask Your Government! Initiative](#). The objective of the meeting was to develop an action plan to monitor government commitments to the United Nation's (UN) Global Strategy (GS) on Women's and Children's Health, also known as the [Every Woman, Every Child campaign](#). The focus was on high burden countries that had made clear commitments to budget monitoring activities.

The GS was launched in September 2010 by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to improve women's and children's health, committing approximately US\$ 40 billion over a five year period. Forty-nine heads of state of the world's poorest countries pledged to give special attention to achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5, which call for reducing the mortality rates among children under five by two thirds (MDG 4), reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters (MDG 5a), and achieving universal access to reproductive health services (MDG 5b). The GS has projected that the achievement of MDGs 4 and 5 would save millions of lives by 2015.

The IBP and the MHTF recognize that maternal and child health has generally been "an accountability-free zone." There is, therefore, a tremendous opportunity in this sector for CSOs to monitor governments' activities and hold them to account. Governments need to act on their commitments to improve access to health services and expand their health budgets. The IBP and its partners will work to equip CSOs in high burden countries with the capacity to do budget monitoring and analysis to ensure that the GS on Women's and Children's Health meets its targets.

Visit the IBP website to learn more:
<http://www.internationalbudget.org>.

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The Open Budget Index Spurs Significant Improvements in Budget Transparency Worldwide by Vivek Ramkumar, International Budget Partnership

Since the October 2010 release of the International Budget Partnership's (IBP) [Open Budget Survey](#) 2010, we are still seeing responses from governments and donors to the survey's findings and recommendations.

The following is an update on responses and reactions to the Open Budget Survey 2010 and a look forward to the IBP's next steps in its ongoing push for greater budget transparency, participation, and accountability.

Governments Are Paying Closer Attention to the OBI Results and Taking Steps to Improve

In addition to [widespread media coverage](#), the 2010 Survey received significantly greater attention from national governments than it had previously, including a nine-fold increase in the number of governments commenting on their country's draft results (45 governments in 2010, up from five in 2008). Further, more than 20 governments attended regional 2010 Survey release events, where many made specific commitments to improving budget transparency in their countries.

More Governments Publishing Citizens Budgets

The IBP has been the leader in advocating for Citizens Budgets — widely accessible, nontechnical versions of budget reports — for more than a decade, so the recent publication of these documents by governments in [Brazil](#), [Egypt](#), [Guatemala](#), [Lebanon](#), [Mali](#), and [Mexico](#) is especially encouraging.

In addition to the governments of [Botswana](#) and Kazakhstan, the governments of Afghanistan, Honduras, and Thailand have also indicated their interest in publishing these reports, and some of them have expressed an interest in receiving assistance from the IBP or its partners.

Some Governments Have Begun Publishing Key Budget Reports for the First Time

The Open Budget Survey 2010 report specifically recommends that “[c]ountries should make public all of the eight key budget documents that they already produce.” Recently,

such steps have been taken by governments in Afghanistan (published a [Pre-Budget Statement and the Executive's Budget Proposal](#)); the Democratic Republic of Congo (published the [Executive's Budget Proposal](#) and a budget timetable); and Georgia (the supreme audit institution released a [report](#) of various violations by government entities identified in audits and an overview of the actions taken to address the problems).

The OBI Is Increasingly Used by Donors

Several bilateral and multilateral donors have begun using the OBI as a key measure of budget transparency in the countries to which they give aid, and some have even used it to guide their country assistance strategies.

- The World Bank includes the OBI as a measure in its [Worldwide Governance Indicators](#) on Voice and Accountability.
- The Open Government Partnership, co-chaired by the U.S. and Brazilian governments, has decided to use OBI results as one criterion to assess whether individual countries will be eligible to participate in its initiative to increase the transparency of governance systems around the world.
- The Inter-American Development Bank noted in its [country assistance strategy](#) for El Salvador that one measure of the country's performance will be its subsequent scores on the OBI.
- The U.S. government's Millennium Challenge Corporation will use Honduras' OBI score as one criterion to assess its eligibility for future aid.
- In a technical report presenting its new strategy guiding the provision of direct budget support to countries, UKaid has drawn extensively on OBI recommendations

In addition to these, the U.S. State Department, the Africa Development Bank, and UKaid are using the OBI to either inform their aid strategies or assess compliance with their requirements for receiving aid.

Governments Are Using OBI Information to Draft Legislation and Policies to Promote Greater Transparency and Public Engagement in Budgeting

The IBP and its civil society partners have begun receiving requests from some governments for information on how to develop legislation and policy measures to expand budget transparency and increase public engagement.

- In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the IBP's partner, Réseau des Organisations Partenaires de l'IFES, gave extensive inputs to the government prior to the publication of the country's recent public finance management reform [report](#).
- The Afghan Ministry of Finance has included "improvements in transparency" as a key commitment in its new Public Financial Management Roadmap, and, after participating in an OBI conference in November 2010, the Deputy Minister has reportedly been monitoring progress in this area.
- The Slovakian government has informed IBP partner, MESA 10, that it intends to consider the OBI 2010 recommendations as it develops new legislation on budget transparency and fiscal responsibility.

However, There Is Much More to Be Done...

As noted in the Open Budget Survey 2010 report, the overall state of budget transparency remains poor. The Survey also finds that efforts by legislatures and supreme audit

institutions to provide effective budget oversight are often undermined by the executive branch.

In the absence of effective oversight institutions and public engagement, access to information is frequently an inadequate condition to promote accountability and better budgeting results in a country. The IBP recognizes that its advocacy on budget transparency will not yield better results unless local organizations and individuals start using budget data to hold governments to account. Recognizing this, the IBP's [Partnership Initiative](#) is currently supporting a wide range of civil society organizations in 18 countries with multi-year funding and mentorship assistance to build and sustain their capacity to monitor government budgets in their country. The IBP has produced a number of [case studies](#) of the successes achieved by these organizations.

Going forward, the IBP proposes to support more intensive advocacy work at the country level, particularly in a subset of the 41 countries that fall at the bottom of the OBI 2010. Additionally, the IBP is working closely with colleagues at the Ash Institute at Harvard University to better understand what drives budget transparency practices and examine outcomes related to more open systems through in-depth case studies in 10 countries. Each case study will identify the factors that led to improvement, or lack thereof, in budget transparency. This research will help us to understand the trends identified in the three rounds of the Open Budget Survey.

For more information, contact Vivek Ramkumar at ramkumar@cbpp.org.

Challenging the Secret State of the European Union's Transparency Reforms by Helen Darbshire and Pamela Bartlett Quintanilla, Access Info Europe

Pro-transparency and human rights advocacy group [Access Info Europe](#) recently released "[The Secret State of EU Transparency Reforms](#)," which raises some serious concerns about access to data on public spending in Europe. The report recounts civil society victories in opening up decision-making processes in the European Union (EU), including a significant legal victory in favor of public participation rights in March, and identifies areas where more work remains to be done.

On 22 March 2011 the Luxembourg-based General Court (which is the first instance of the Court of Justice of the EU) decided a case brought by Access Info Europe ([Access Info Europe v Council of the European Union, case T-233/09](#)), challenging the EU for deleting the names of countries from documents on draft legislation. Responding to the challenge from civil society groups to eliminate closed-doors negotiations in Brussels between the EU's 27 member states, the General Court clearly stated that if citizens are to exercise their democratic rights, they must have access to public information and opportunities to fully participate in public decision making.

In an ironic twist, the documents in question in the case were about the EU's own transparency rules. Access Info Europe was concerned that hiding the identities of pro- and anti-openness countries made it impossible for the public to engage in the debate around how to ensure transparency in the EU.

The General Court agreed that such opacity was illegitimate and ruled that the EU was wrong to withhold the names of the countries, confirming that the public should "have access to all relevant information" to be able to follow the decision-making process.

National Refusals and Leaked Documents

The decision of the General Court came the same week that Access Info Europe released its report that presented the challenges faced by the EU's initiatives to increase transparency. The report was based in part on the response of the EU country governments to request for information on their positions on transparency practices in the EU. Despite requesting information from all 27 countries — and pursuing the requests for nearly a year — Access Info Europe received information from just 11 countries. The remaining 16 either refused or failed to provide any information at all.

Information Received		No Information Received		
Partial release of documents	Position (& minimal other info)	Referral back to EU	Refusal to release information	No response
Denmark Finland Sweden Lithuania Netherlands	Austria Estonia Latvia Malta Poland UK	Greece Hungary Romania Slovakia Luxembourg Ireland	Belgium Czech Republic France Germany Slovenia Spain	Bulgaria Cyprus Italy Portugal
Total 5 countries	Total 6 countries	Total 6 countries	Total 6 countries	Total 4 countries

The country referrals back to the EU demonstrate some of the challenges faced by information-seekers, as their requests can get caught in an endless shuffle between the national and supranational level. The report revealed that most countries that refused to provide information about their positions on transparency practices within the EU were influenced by a culture of secrecy in Brussels. The General Court's ruling should help address these challenges.

Spending Data Denied

For budget transparency activists, other news from the Court of Justice (at the second instance level) is not all positive. On 9 November 2011 the Court ruled that the publication of detailed data on European agricultural subsidy recipients may violate personal privacy and data protection rules. This judgment led to as much as 80 percent of the subsidy information to be taken offline, despite the fact that €55 billion in annual farm subsidies go to farmers acting as commercial entities.

Some countries, like Finland and the Czech Republic, responded to this ruling by taking the detailed spending data offline; others, like Denmark and Sweden, decided to continue publishing, claiming that the ruling does not affect national access to information laws. This case raises serious concerns that privacy rights will trump transparency across the EU, reducing transparency in other EU expenditures, not just agricultural subsidies, at the national and supranational level. Transparency activists are strategizing on how to use national access to information laws and policy advocacy at the EU level to challenge the Court of Justice's ruling.

It is clear that the EU is now a battleground in the efforts to set global standards of budget transparency, which directly affect the level of accountability and public participation in decision making. These developments should be of interest and concern not only to the 500

million people living in the EU region but also to open government activists worldwide. Transparency standards coming out of Brussels and Luxembourg will undoubtedly contribute to any global standards that are established in the future.

For more information, contact Helen Darbshire at helen@access-info.org, or Pamela Bartlett Quintanilla at pam@access-info.org.

Release of Kenya's Citizens Alternative Budget 2010-11 by Irene Kinuthia, Institute of Economic Affairs

One way for civil society organizations to influence government decision making and help develop substantive alternatives to government policy is to issue an alternative budget. Alternative budgets also provide a complementary avenue for citizens to participate in the budget process. Over the years, some of the proposals in the alternative budgets produced by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), based in Nairobi, have been incorporated into Kenya's national budget. On 23 March 2011 the IEA released its 10th annual Citizens Alternative Budget for 2011-12. The release was attended by 100 representatives from government, academic institutions, business and donor communities, civil society organizations, and the general public.

In the Citizens Alternative Budget 2011-12, the IEA presents budget proposals from the corporate and social sectors compiled during annual pre-budget hearings. This year's hearings took place in early February 2011, and those who were unable to attend sent their written submissions to the IEA. Before the release of the alternative budget, a memorandum is forwarded to the Kenyan Treasury for possible incorporation in the forthcoming national budget. The Citizens Alternative Budget took into account the Budget Outlook Papers for 2011-12 and 2013-14, as well as other Treasury guidelines, and all the proposals were consolidated and synthesized into various Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) sectors.

The IEA's Citizens Alternative Budget considered such factors as Kenya's recovery from the global financial crisis, the effects of recent droughts, and the 2007 electoral crisis by incorporating the effects of the favorable weather conditions in 2009 and 2010, the country's fiscal stimulus initiative in 2009, and the new Kenyan Constitution, approved in August 2010. Against this backdrop, the IEA made several recommendations for the upcoming budget, including calls on the government to:

- revisit turnover tax (an indirect tax applicable to private businesses for production or manufacturing activities) by including small and medium sized businesses and increase revenue collection;
- set aside funds to implement the new constitution; and
- reform public entities with the potential to finance themselves and wean them off government transfers, and close nonessential state-owned companies.

To read the IEA's Citizens Alternative Budget 2011-12, go to:

<http://www.ieakenya.or.ke/documents/Final%20IEA%27s%20Citizen%20Alt%20Budget%202011.pdf>.

For more information, contact Irene Kinuthia, at Irene@ieakenya.or.ke.

Strengthening Social Accountability Processes in South Africa by Jay Kruuse, Centre for Social Accountability

The Centre for Social Accountability (CSA) is an independent institute affiliated with Rhodes University in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) is a key program of the CSA that has monitored how governments at the national and subnational levels manage public resources since 1999. The PSAM/CSA shares its budget monitoring findings with civil society organizations (CSOs) and Eastern Cape legislative oversight committees to enable and inform timely and relevant advocacy interventions to strengthen social accountability processes in:

- planning and resource allocation;
- management of public spending;
- performance management;
- process integrity management; and
- oversight.

The PSAM/CSA's efforts to strengthen public participation throughout public finance processes and improve the responsiveness of public service delivery can be seen in various interventions.

- After analyzing the 2008-09 budget, the PSAM and the Budget and Expenditure Monitoring Forum advocated for the National Treasury to increase the HIV/AIDS budget to provinces. In 2009-10 the HIV/AIDS allocation to provinces was increased by ZAR1 billion, with a substantial portion reaching the Eastern Cape. This made up for the shortfall in required funds, ensured that patients continued to receive treatment, and contributed to the national government's revisions to the 2010-11 budget.
- The PSAM works with government ministries to improve their annual strategic plans and include accurate situational and human needs analyses. The PSAM's sustained interventions in this regard have resulted in government ministries requesting its input on the appropriateness of the ministries' draft strategic plans.
- The PSAM's sustained advocacy to draw public attention to audit reports has institutionalized media coverage of the annual reviews of the government's performance. The PSAM has also witnessed a greater number of CSOs using these results to inform their advocacy initiatives.
- Training offered by the CSA's regional learning program and the PSAM seek to equip a larger audience of civil society activists with tools to improve public service delivery.

The PSAM/CSA will continue to maintain working relations between civil society and government departments to promote effective participation in key public resource management processes. In order to complement this cooperative approach, the PSAM/CSA will support parliamentary oversight entities, such as the portfolio and public accounts committees, and constitutional oversight agencies, such as the auditor general. This two-pronged approach seeks to ensure that the gains obtained by cooperation with government departments are consolidated and systematized by oversight institutions.

For more information, contact the PSAM at psam-admin@ru.ac.za, or go to: www.psam.org.za and www.icount.org.za.

Monitoring Public Social Spending in Argentina by Gisell Cogliandro, Siena Foundation

Since 2010 the Siena Foundation in Argentina, with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, has offered timely and relevant information to legislators and civil society on social spending practices through its "Analysis and Tracking of Public Social Spending in the National Budget" project. The project focuses on eight jurisdictions that together represent 91 percent of social spending in Argentina's national budget; analyzes the funds allocated for critical social programs, as well as the criteria used by national governments to distribute the funds at the local level during the budget process; and summarizes the national budget law for 2010, the first semester of budget execution, and the national budget proposal law for 2011 (see www.fundacionsiena.org.ar). The project presents these analyses in different formats, including PowerPoint presentations for legislators and civil society organizations (CSOs) and executive summaries for the media, to enable the public and other oversight actors to:

- learn more about the national government's budget priorities;
- monitor the implementation of funds allocated to social programs during the fiscal year; and
- improve the quality of budget debates.

The project's analyses received significant national and state media coverage, informed the debate in the Chamber of Deputies on the 2011 budget law and were referenced on the website of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The analyses are also being used to supplement the curriculum of the graduate program in public finance at the National University of Matanza.

The main advocacy activities of the project include:

- working with legislators from different political parties during debates on the budget law and with members of the budget commission through one-on-one meetings;
- contacting journalists who cover economic and budget topics to disseminate the project's analyses; and
- publishing the project's findings in specialized journals and with CSOs, research centers, international organizations, and local and national governmental agencies.

In 2011 the Siena Foundation looks to consolidate its work with legislators from the budget commission and to formalize its collaboration with other legislative commissions focused on social policy, such as the Commission on Family, Childhood, and Youth. The Siena Foundation will increase its collaboration with other CSOs working to increase access to information on social spending. For example, together with the civil society forum "Foro de Habitantes a Ciudadanos" the Foundation will prepare a political proposal and action plan to address child and maternal malnutrition in Argentina, which they will present to the national authorities.

To read some of the coverage of the Foundation's work, go to:

Diario La Nación, "Ajustan el gasto público social," at http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1278928.

Diario La Nación, "La transparencia del Presupuesto 2011," at http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1314433.

Diario Clarin, "Radiografía del gasto social," at http://www.ieco.clarin.com/economia/Radiografia-gasto-social_0_179700002.html.

For more information, contact Gisell Cogliandro at gcogliandro@fundacionsiena.org.ar.

CitiVox: A Communications Platform to Promote Citizen Participation in Public Decision Making by Jorge Soto, CitiVox

CitiVox is an online platform that combines relationship and knowledge management with mobile and traditional crowdsourcing technology (mechanisms that generate an open call to a large group of people or community for information or responses) to generate valuable information for the public, private, and civil society sectors. Using this platform, citizens can monitor and participate in decision-making processes, and public officials can communicate with and gather information from the public in order to make more informed policy decisions and act on key policy issues more effectively. CitiVox supports information exchange and public participation in four stages:

1. **Reporting** - citizens use mobile technology, e.g., instant text messages, email, smart phone applications, web widgets, or social media like Facebook and Twitter to collect and report information in real time on a variety of issues like public safety, ultimately contributing to greater trust in public institutions and improving public security and accountability.
2. **Managing** - the citizen reports are received by network administrators, who send a confirmation and status to the sender in real time. Each report is tagged and assigned to an administrator for oversight and follow up.
3. **Measuring** - CitiVox uses a statistics platform called CompStat to compile and analyze all the reports received. It then creates a daily, weekly, or monthly analysis of key performance indicators, identified by the client, and makes recommendations for best practices. CompStat can create graphs, geo-localized maps of incident reports, and relevant statistics for efficient decision making.
4. **Communicating** - CitiVox publishes on a website the statistical information, geo-localized maps, known as heat maps, and live-streaming information on crimes, delivery of public services, legislative debates, etc. This allows citizens to track the status of each report and determine if it was addressed in a timely fashion. This step is essential to ensure accountability.

Examples of CitiVox in Action

In October 2008 the government of the state of Guerrero, Mexico, started using CitiVox as a one-way communication tool to provide citizens with information. A year later the system evolved into a two-way communication tool through which citizens were able to report public safety irregularities. At first, citizens only reported potholes or water leaks, but later they started to report crimes. In April 2010 CitiVox was adapted with online dashboards to serve as the Central State Alert System, improving the state government's response rate to citizens' reports from 72 to 24 hours.

In May 2010 90 policemen in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, used CitiVox to report crimes, including locations and pictures, in real time using global positioning systems and cameras in smart phones. In this case, CitiVox proved to be an effective mechanism to design public security strategies based on the information collected by the policemen.

CitiVox can assist civil society budget groups with tracking and mapping public spending, monitoring the allocation of public funds or following legislative debates. The Mexican civil

society organization Fundar is currently working with CitiVox to develop an interactive website to educate the general public about the legislative process that will use short and “tweetable” messages. These messages will be nontechnical descriptions and updates of the different initiatives discussed by legislators in areas relevant to Fundar’s work, including security, human rights, gender equity, health, transparency, and budgets. The website will allow people to comment and vote on a number of legislative initiatives, subscribe to receive email alerts, and contact legislators. Fundar would ultimately like legislators to use the website to communicate with people and to measure how closely legislative decisions represent public opinion. Fundar is planning to launch this website later this summer.

The combination of geo-referenced reporting, real time follow up, and detailed statistical analysis sets CitiVox apart from other passive data collection systems. Rather than simply selling software, CitiVox works closely with its clients to provide a strategy to ensure that the technology is used to its full potential; understand the political and social environment in which it will operate; and ensure that the information collected enhances the relationship between citizens and decision makers through civil participation, transparency, and accountability.

For more information, contact Jorge Soto at jorge.soto@citivox.com or go to: <http://www.citivox.com>.

Public Telephone Lines Improve Cash Subsidies Programs in Developing Countries by Chris Gruenberg, Gender Equity Expert

A significant percentage of public budgets in middle-income countries like Brazil, India, Mexico, Nigeria, and Turkey are allocated to conditional cash transfers (Transferencias en Efectivo Condicionadas or TEC). These poverty reduction programs disburse cash subsidies directly to low-income families so they can invest in their children’s health and education (<http://www.rlc.fao.org/iniciativa/expertos/>). Women are usually the recipients of these subsidies on behalf of their children, but they frequently face gender discrimination from public officials when requesting health and education services. For example, in the case of the TEC program in Mexico, known as “Oportunidades” (<http://dds.cepal.org/bdptc/programa/?id=22>), between 2006 and 2009 there were 8,366 reported cases of misconduct, 39 percent of which were for abuse of authority in the health sector. In Argentina 5,000 cases of sexual, physical, and psychological harassment or violence were reported between 2002 and 2008 related to the implementation of the TEC program “Jefas de Hogar.” For example, women were forced to participate in unpaid activities outside the scope of the program, such as attending political demonstrations or cleaning private properties in exchange for health and education benefits.

In response to this situation, international and local organizations demanded TEC programs to improve their level of transparency and accountability. Subsequently TEC programs in Mexico and Brazil started offering free telephone lines for citizens to use to report cases of violence and corruption from public officials. These dedicated lines provide a means to:

- circumvent local public officials who had been the only institutional channel to present a complaint and who may be involved in the reported cases; and
- preserve the level of confidentiality of those making the complaints, particularly women.

The telephone lines in Brazil and Mexico have generated valuable information on the administration of social programs, the types of irregularities and cases of corruption, and

the different forms of decentralized gender violence occurring within TEC programs. The free telephone lines are an institutional innovation that has improved the level of transparency and accountability during service delivery, when women interact with public servants, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, and municipal officials. Although the telephone lines have given women the opportunity to voice their grievances, there is still the challenge of transforming the complaints into impartial investigations and penalties to fully protect women's rights.

For more information, contact Chris Gruenberg at chris.copadi@gmail.com.

New Website from the Transparency and Accountability Initiative: A Donor Collaborative by Martin Tisné, Transparency and Accountability Initiative

In 2010 the Transparency and Accountability Initiative (T/A Initiative) was created by a group of global private and government funders committed to strengthening democracy and development through empowering citizens to hold their governing institutions to account. It is led by a diverse group of eight leading funders including: [Ford Foundation](#), [Hivos](#), [International Budget Partnership](#), [Omidyar Network](#), [Open Society Foundations](#), [Revenue Watch Institute](#), [United Kingdom Department for International Development](#) and the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#). It is co-chaired by the [Open Society Foundations](#) and [DfID](#). At its core, the T/A Initiative supports policy change and encourages all those working in the sector to learn from their successes and failures so that they can have greater impact in the future. Our focus is to identify, help bring to scale, and improve the impact of transparency and accountability interventions in three areas:

1. Policy innovations in key transparency and accountability fields, including budget transparency, climate change, donor aid finance, financial system reform, natural resource governance: we explore and promote new ideas and ways in which the transparency and accountability movement can create change at scale.
2. Harnessing the potential of new technologies throughout the movement: we showcase how these are being used to improve transparency and accountability efforts worldwide.
3. Learning about where, when, and how initiatives inform effective interventions: we review the impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives worldwide.

The T/A Initiative has launched a [new website](#) to provide private and public donors and civil society organizations with an opportunity to follow its work. The website seeks to support the transparency and accountability community to make ambitious, concrete gains in the next decade. The website hosts new research on how to improve the impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives worldwide across a range of related issues and policy ideas.

To see the website, go to: <http://www.transparency-initiative.org>

To stay up to date with our work, sign up to our [RSS news feed](#) or to register, go to: <http://www.transparency-initiative.org/contact>.

For more information, contact Martin Tisné, Program Manager, Transparency and Accountability Initiative at martin.tisne@transparency-initiative.org.

New Edition of the Budget Defense Atlas for Latin America by Gonzalo Serra, Latin American Security and Defense Network

On November 2010 the Latin American Security and Defense Network (RESDAL) released the fourth edition of the Comparative Atlas of Defense in Latin America and the Caribbean. This publication is the result of a two-year research project on the evolution of defense issues in Latin America, which will hopefully build transparency and trust between the military and the public. The Atlas is recognized as a regional point of reference to understand defense developments and offers comparative and practical information on defense spending for Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The publication is divided into three sections:

1. An informative section describing eight comparative variables: the legal framework, budgets, political definitions, institutions, hemispheric relations, education, armed forces, and defense and national and international community.
2. An analytical section with country analysis and papers from leading researchers in the field.
3. Two special sections one on Haiti and one that introduces the defense and security capabilities in English-speaking Caribbean countries.

The Atlas presents data tracking the evolution of military spending over the past five years and uses charts and graphs to show regional comparisons in terms of GDP.

To read the Atlas in English, go to: <http://www.resdal.org/atlas/atlas-libro-10-ingles.html>.

To read the Atlas in Spanish, go to: <http://www.resdal.org/atlas/atlas-libro-10-espanol.html>.

The Lebanese Transparency Association's Campaign Finance Monitoring Manual Provides Tools for Voters to Ensure Electoral Integrity by Daniel Wessler, International Budget Partnership

The Campaign Finance Monitoring Project of the Lebanese Transparency Association's (LTA) Democratization and Public Accountability Program created the Campaign Finance Monitor's Manual to give citizens a role in promoting transparent and fair elections in Lebanon. While the manual is tailored to reflect campaign finance regulations in Lebanon, the methodology presented to objectively collect data and monitor campaign expenditures provides a model for similar programs in burgeoning democracies throughout the Middle East and North African region.

The manual offers an overview of electoral laws and regulations in Lebanon and describes in simple terms some of the most common infractions, as well as methods for preventing fraud and abuse before, during, and after elections. The manual includes a monitoring template that gives citizens a way to provide independent and objective scrutiny of campaigns using a combination of direct observation, interviews, surveys, media coverage, and data analysis. By empowering citizens to strengthen the integrity of the ballot box, the LTA's manual fights political corruption by ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections.

To read the full report, go to:

<http://www.transparency-lebanon.org/publications/cfmmanualen.pdf>.

Parliaments and the Budget: World Bank e-Learning Course

Budget scrutiny can be a daunting challenge facing legislators when they are asked to consider their governments' annual revenue and expenditure proposals. At the same time, the influence of national legislatures on budget policy has declined in many industrialized countries. Many legislatures are rethinking their role in the budget process and reasserting themselves as more active players. The goal of this training module is to promote effective parliamentary participation in the budget process. Although it was designed for parliamentary staff, it is open to all participants and will be of interest to journalists, civil society organizations, and public officials working in ministries of finance. The course starts on 13 June 2011 and ends on 8 July 2011.

To learn more, go to: <http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/event/parliaments-and-budget-elearning-course>.

Remembering Dr. Raufa Hassan Alsharki

It is with great sadness that the International Budget Partnership (IBP) received the news of **Dr. Raufa Hassan Alsharki's** recent passing. The IBP would like to acknowledge Dr. Hassan's contribution to the Open Budget Initiative in 2008 and 2010, and extends sincere condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues at the Cultural Development Programs Foundation in Yemen.