



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP  
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

## e-Newsletter

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#### Capacity Building Workshops in Tunisia

The IBP recently brought together 19 participants from nine CSOs and media outlets for a three-day workshop in Tunisia. The training introduced participants to independent budget work through examples from other countries and to the legal framework and timeline of the budget process in Tunisia, the key stakeholders, and the availability of key budget documents in the country and worldwide. In addition, a Ministry of Finance Director-General presented the budget reforms ongoing in Tunisia, which gave participants a chance not only to hear from a government official but also to ask questions and raise concerns about various reforms. The workshop also included a session for participants to discuss and give feedback on the Ministry of Finance's latest draft of the Citizens Budget — in particular noting ways to simplify the document and make it more accessible to the public.

This workshop will be followed in mid-August by a second in Tunis, at which participants will delve more deeply into Tunisia's budget documents and to learn how to make key budget calculations with the information that's available in the reports. In early September, the third and final workshop will bring together Tunisian and Egyptian civil society organizations, all new to budget work, with other IBP partners that have been doing budget analysis and advocacy for some time. These partners will share their experiences, highlight strategies that did and did not work, and hear from our Tunisian and Egyptian partners about their challenges and needs. We hope that this workshop will spark creative, strategic advocacy ideas and strengthen our current network of budget advocates, both in the Middle East and around the world.

#### Welcome New IBP Staff Members!

Join us in welcoming three new staff members to the IBP. First, Søren Kirk Jensen has joined the capacity building team. Søren brings rich experience and extensive skills in public finance management and civil society capacity building, including accompaniment and mentoring. Next, we would like to introduce Babacar Sarr, who is the Open Budget Initiative's new program officer for Francophone Africa. He has consulted for FERDI, a French foundation working on international economic development, and ICTD, a global policy research network working on political economy of taxation in developing countries. Finally, Deidre Huntington is the most recent addition to the communications team, where she will lead the development and reach of our digital communications. Deidre has extensive experience in the private and nonprofit sector that includes developing websites, designing and implementing social media campaigns, and producing electronic and print publications.

## Jobs and Opportunities

[Asia Pacific Senior Associate, Revenue Watch Institute](#)

[The Review of African Political Economy's Africa Small Research Grant Competition](#)

## The Role of Technology in Improved Data Access and Citizen Participation

### Code4Kenya: Harnessing the Potential of Open Data, by Cynthia Ugwuibe, the International Budget Partnership

Inspired by the [Nairobi Open Data Bootcamp](#) — a three-day training and hackathon for journalists and web developers hosted by the African Media Initiative and the World Bank — the [Code4Kenya](#) (C4K) initiative seeks to develop the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and media organizations to create their own open data projects using data from the [Kenya Open Data Initiative](#) (KODI). C4K was a joint pilot program funded by the World Bank and the African Media Initiative (AMI); administered by the [Open Institute](#); and supported by iHub Research, iLabAfrica, and the ICT Board. It was moderately successful and the [C4K pilot applications](#) were formally launched in February 2013.



The initiative competitively recruited four skilled ICT professionals from Kenya's technology sector to serve a five-month fellowship with select host organizations, four media houses, and one CSO. Each fellow, in consultation with his or her host organization, designed Internet applications that were consistent with each organization's goals and focused on one of the C4K's target sectors of water, education, and health. Due to a variety of factors, including limited access to useable data, initial

proposals were either redesigned or abandoned. A team of four software developers were recruited to support the fellows by developing the data-driven applications and needed software infrastructure. The developers were housed at 88mph, a co-working space in Nairobi.

### C4K Pilot Successes and Shortcomings

C4K fellows and stakeholders from the initiative's donor and host organizations eagerly shared the pilot's notable successes and its shortcomings. Many of the interviewees noted the following outcomes and lessons from the pilot:

***There was gradual but eventual institutional change:*** several months after the pilot, all five host organizations had either hired a staff member, created a unit to support their staff in using open data, or are in the process of doing so. More of the staffs at the host organizations are embracing open data. For instance, one of the *Standard Media* journalists now uses KODI data to create visualizations and evidence to support his investigative narratives.

***C4K generated demand for useful data in open formats:*** the resulting applications reflected the usefulness of KODI data, as the information needed to create online applications was either not available or available only in "closed" formats (i.e., formats like PDF files that require users to transcribe the data into Excel or other software to analyze it). For example, to create an interactive visualization of crime data in Kenya, the *Standard Media* used crime data from newspaper archives since it couldn't obtain aggregated police data in open formats from KODI in a timely manner. This constraint increased awareness about data access issues, and the newspaper requested that more open format, specific data be made directly available by the Kenyan police or through KODI.

***There needs to be closer interaction between the software development process and the host organizations:*** fellows for future placements should either be developers or have an understanding of

the software development process, or should be embedded in the host organizations. Placing an individual with a software development background within the host organization to implement the project would help catalyze the institutional shift toward more data-savvy journalism, in the case of a media house, as journalists would see the process by which project ideas are developed into functioning websites.

**A five-month fellowship is too short:** many applications were not ready for public launch by the end of the fellowship. AMI is providing additional funding to complete and enhance three of the applications that were started during the initial pilot. Future C4K iterations will be at least 10 months.

### What's Next for C4K?

In a tentative second round of C4K, government agencies, in addition to media houses and CSOs, may host fellows. Also, under the umbrella initiative Code4Africa, C4K-type projects will be implemented in other African countries, tailored to each country's context.

*The following individuals (listed in no specific order) were consulted in the writing of this article: Chris Finch ([cfinch@worldbank.org](mailto:cfinch@worldbank.org)), World Bank Kenya Office; Jay Bhalla ([jay@openinstitute.com](mailto:jay@openinstitute.com)), Code4Kenya project manager; Dickens Olewe ([dickens.olewe@the-star.co.ke](mailto:dickens.olewe@the-star.co.ke)), The Star newspaper; Craig Hammer ([hammer@worldbank.org](mailto:hammer@worldbank.org)), the World Bank Institute; and Muchiri Nyaggah ([muchiri@semacraft.com](mailto:muchiri@semacraft.com)), lead fellow for Code4Kenya. Please contact any one of these individuals to learn more about the Code4Kenya initiative.*

## Ugandan Government Engages Citizens on Budget Decisions with Interactive Technology, by Ryan Flynn, the Overseas Development Institute

Uganda's Ministry of Finance recently launched a new website, [Uganda Budget Information](#), in an effort to improve budget transparency. The site, which went live during the unveiling of the 2013/14 National Budget, boasts a relatively comprehensive library of documents covering information on budgets and performance at the national, sector, and local government level. But one of the real innovations of the site is the ability for users to provide feedback. Ugandans can search for information on the services to be delivered in their local parish and document the progress and quality of delivery by posting comments and photos. For instance, a woman from Yumbe, in the country's north, may notice that a school in her community has been allocated a sizable amount of funds in the financial year for new construction, yet no work has commenced. She can take a photo demonstrating the lack of progress and post it to the site. All feedback can be given anonymously and will appear on the site for everyone to see. According to the Ministry of Finance's Budget Directorate, the information provided by the public feeds into the government's monitoring of public spending and performance, right down to the local level, and will help the ministry monitor the performance of local government and various spending agencies.

Uganda was one of the top performers among African countries covered by the Open Budget Index 2012 — the International Budget Partnership's biennial measurement of whether, and how much, budget information governments make publicly available throughout the budget process — second only to South Africa. Building on this, the Ministry of Finance's Budget Directorate collaborated with the Overseas Development Institute's [Budget Strengthening Initiative](#), which helps fragile and conflict-affected states to build more effective, transparent, and accountable budget systems, to explore how new technology could be used to both disseminate information and collect public feedback on government services.

In many ways, Uganda is in a privileged position when it comes to being able to provide this level of information. Local governments all use the same automated budgetary system, meaning a uniform dataset can be generated for the whole country. While many countries could set up a similar system for spending at the national level, it could be more difficult for local governments because they often maintain budget data using various systems and formats so they may struggle to compile searchable information at the service delivery level.

The ministry is now planning a series of workshops with "intermediaries" — members of parliament, civil society, and the media — to position the website as the key tool to access budget information. Mobile

versions of the site and smartphone apps will be developed, as well, and randomized trials to assess the impact of different intermediaries on service delivery are also planned.

## Stimulating the Will for Budget Transparency in Governments

### Lessons for Opening Budgets – How to Strengthen the Political Will to Improve Transparency and Participation

*The following article is one of four Lessons Learned essays from the IBP's 2012 Annual Report. Two of the essays appeared in the [March-April issue](#) of this newsletter. The remaining essay will appear in the July-August issue. Access the complete report [here](#).*

The fourth round of the Open Budget Survey paints a contradictory picture of transparency. While there have been significant advances in some countries, average levels of budget transparency remain poor worldwide, given the slow and uneven pace of overall improvement. Nevertheless, as countries like Honduras, Afghanistan, and those of Francophone Africa have shown in the latest survey, almost any country can do well on budget transparency, if the government is committed to improving.

Promoting such commitment represents a great challenge for the IBP. At the international level many of the tools necessary to advance budget transparency reforms — consensus on standards to be followed, technical assistance, and mobilized nongovernmental actors — are readily available, but the political will of the government to improve is absent. Therefore, understanding when and how governments do and do not take advantage of these tools to promote transparency and participation in budget processes, and what the IBP and our partners can do to increase the pace of reforms, is key to our work going forward.

#### What Are the Key Lessons We Have Learned?

First, our research points to “windows of opportunity” during which countries, such as Brazil, South Africa, and South Korea, launched major advances in budget transparency. Significant political changes, such as a transition from autocracy to democracy, provide one such window. Other important windows for reform arise in the aftermath of major fiscal crises — as governments attempt to regain control of public finances and reassure international financial markets — and after a high-profile corruption scandal. This last factor has created limited openings even in difficult environments like China and Vietnam. While most of the IBP's work points to the importance of strategic planning capacity in partner organizations, this research points to the need to balance long-term planning with being aware of transitions currently occurring and the opportunities for big wins.

A second finding from our research (and experience on the ground) suggests that it is often a combination of domestic and external pressures that allow reformers within government to push through the policy measures necessary to increase budget transparency. In Afghanistan and Honduras, for example, the IBP worked with civil society partners, donor agencies, and directly with key reformers within government to support changes. In Francophone Africa increased pressure from civil society groups went hand in hand with binding regional directives approved by the West African Economic and Monetary Union to push governments to become more fiscally transparent.

Combining international and domestic pressure for reform is a vital lesson for budget activists to integrate into their work, as has been done very effectively in the environmental and extractive industries sectors. The important role of regional institutions is not new, as shown by the impact of the European Union on budget transparency in Eastern Europe, but it is still underutilized in Africa and Southeast Asia.

A third finding from our research is that there is space for the donor community to play an even more active role in stimulating budget transparency, although further research is needed to fully understand the relevant incentive mechanisms. The IBP's most recent data shows that the type of aid provided by donors to countries can have a positive impact on budget transparency. In particular, aid that is provided in ways that are compatible with country budget systems, such as general budget support or Sector Wide Support, facilitate greater budget transparency in aid-receiving countries.

This suggests that donor agencies could effectively link their choice of aid instruments to the willingness of governments to introduce and sustain the reforms necessary to make budget systems more transparent. They could also ensure that technical assistance programs in support of budget reforms include a transparency component. The IBP and other civil society organizations can play a role in helping donors to develop such incentives without falling into the traps of how conditionality has been applied in the past.

A final finding from our recent research shows that countries with more transparent budgets are able to access international credit more easily and cheaply. This corroborates similar research from the International Monetary Fund. New incentives could be provided by international credit rating agencies, linking more transparent budget practices to better sovereign credit ratings and, therefore, lower borrowing costs. Civil society has less of a role to play in creating such market-led incentives, but it can promote the benefits of budget transparency at events where the private sector is well represented, like the World Economic Forum.

Appropriate responses by the IBP and our partners to each of these findings can help to shift incentives for governments to improve budget transparency. However, this is unlikely to be enough to radically increase the pace of improvements. As we know, information is power and there are very strong incentives for closed governments to remain closed, often even at a high cost to their countries' development. What is clear from our efforts to date is that no one agency or actor has the answer to this problem, nor the capacity to correct it alone.

For this reason, the IBP argues that a global reform effort is needed that brings together domestic and international champions, and the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. We know from the Open Budget Survey that improvements are possible relatively quickly and at modest cost. The question is whether we can elevate budget transparency as one of the global development priorities going forward — this is the kind of profile that is required to build political will for rapidly improving practices. For many of us working in the sector this is obvious: budget transparency is a gateway development issue — it must be tackled to sustainably address development and poverty.

## **Pointing Out Corruption Is Not Enough: Integrity Action's "Fix-Rate" Tells Us What Was Done About It, by Alec Simantov, the International Budget Partnership**

Since 1995 Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has been the key metric to gauge the perception of corruption within governments around the world. While the CPI gives a general impressionistic assessment of corruption levels, it is not a useful tool for tracking change, according to Fredrik Galtung, co-founder and chief executive of Integrity Action (a London-based NGO and international network in the transparency and accountability movement focused on integrity building).

As those engaged in promoting effective transparency policies can attest, the CPI is limited when it comes to assessing policy implementation and corruption trends. While the IBP's Open Budget Index is considered to be the measure of government budget transparency, there is no universal unit of measurement for more general public transparency and accountability, thus the CPI remains a key performance indicator for many agencies and organizations. To fill this gap, Integrity Action is developing a new performance indicator, called "the Fix-Rate," as part of its Community Integrity Building initiatives.

### **What Is the Fix-Rate?**

The Fix-Rate is the incidence with which transparency and accountability problems are resolved to the satisfaction of key stakeholders. This can be represented as the percentage of resolved problems within a country or local jurisdiction. Key stakeholders are often members of the local community experiencing a problem or issue, local public officials, and local civil society organizations. In adherence to Integrity Action's community-centered approach, the stakeholders define the "fix."

### **What Is Community Integrity Building?**

Community Integrity Building (CIB) is a collaborative method through which local citizens and public officials work jointly on improving public service delivery and infrastructure development. CIB is not an anticorruption initiative and is not based on “naming and shaming” public officials, but instead focuses on people and institutions. CIB diverges from traditional anticorruption work, which, according to Galtung, is mostly compliance focused and has proved to be largely ineffective in realizing actual policy change. CIB is proactive and focuses on “closing the loop” by integrating feedback mechanisms into the process so that an “intelligent response” is triggered. An “open loop” is a website like [ipaidabribe.org](http://ipaidabribe.org) in India, where anonymous reports of bribery may embarrass Indian officials, but corrective action is neither built into the process nor often taken as a result. A “closed loop” is a website like [FixMyStreet.com](http://FixMyStreet.com) in the UK, where citizens can report problems on their street. What closes the loop is that the organization behind the initiative, My Society, signs contracts with city councils in which the councils agree to publish fixes on the city council’s homepage to any problems identified by the public on FixMyStreet.com.

### **Future Prospects**

Integrity Action has used the Fix-Rate to assess a number of CIB initiatives in countries around the world, including Afghanistan, Nepal, and Palestine, with great success. However, CIB is still being tested and refined as a new methodology, and Integrity Action is looking for ways to expand the focus from the “last mile” of public service delivery (i.e., what services, and of what quality, were actually delivered) and connect the process to budget monitoring and oversight for government projects that were only partially implemented, or not implemented at all. Looking forward, Galtung believes that the Fix-Rate and CIB can drive policy and innovation in the transparency and accountability field by contributing to the idea that people at all different levels of government can help fix problems by coordinating and consulting with all the stakeholders, including local citizens.

#### **Tracking the Use of Budget Data: A Proposal for an Information Portal and Helpdesk, by Fredrik Galtung, Integrity Action**

There are many case studies ([see those produced by the IBP](#)) that demonstrate the potential and power of open budget information but it is often difficult to gather substantial evidence on who uses budget data, how many users there are, and how they use this information to solve specific problems. So how can we better track the real world impact of budget work? One way could be for an independent organization to partner with a country’s Ministry of Finance to create an online Budget Information Portal and Helpdesk. The portal would provide organizations and individuals with access to budget information, including information on foreign aid and resource extraction in countries where these are significant factors, and would also track how the information is being used and the number of users. To encourage engagement, increase demand for budget data, and provide evidence of how a range of stakeholders use such data to close the loop on specific challenges, users would receive periodic updates on the latest budget information available and be surveyed about how they have used the budget data.

## Tools for Strengthening CSOs

### The Added Value of Capacity Building in Boosting Budget Activism: An Interview with Manuela Garza, Senior Program Officer and Technical Assistance (TA) Coordinator for the IBP's Partnership Initiative (PI), by Deidre Huntington, the International Budget Partnership

**Deidre Huntington:** Give us some history on the PI and the mentoring and TA program that you oversaw and coordinated.

**Manuela Garza:** The IBP's history of combining a full package of support — including financial and capacity-building resources — started with two initiatives that came before the PI. These were the Civil Society Budget Initiative (CSBI) and the Central American Incentive Fund (CAIF). Through CSBI and CAIF we learned that financial support is necessary but not sufficient if we want to contribute to building sustainable, impact-oriented institutions.

The PI entailed a wider and more diverse set of civil society partners, more countries, and a more targeted and sustained approach to capacity building. The PI team and the training team developed a program that entailed a sustained and layered package of support, including tailored mentoring around strategy issues, TA on specific budget-related methodologies and issues, horizontal learning opportunities, and international and in-country trainings.

**Huntington:** What is the difference between “mentoring” and “technical assistance”?

**Garza:** Mentoring in the PI, which in the IBP's future work will be referred to as Strategic Accompaniment, focused on strategy. Mentors supported partners to think strategically about budget work and how it could be more impactful. It meant a more sustained relationship between mentors and partners. TA focused on supporting partners on specific budget analysis-related issues and/or methodologies. TA providers usually engaged for shorter periods of time and for targeted support.

**Huntington:** What is the relevance of mentoring and TA for the consolidation of budget analysis and advocacy skills within CSOs and other budget stakeholders?

**Garza:** We know that impactful budget work requires sustained, creative, and flexible capacity-building efforts. Additionally, the learning curve to engage in budget analysis and advocacy is long. It requires dedicated staff, and equally dedicated support. An organization like the IBP can play a critical role in supporting partners to shorten the learning curve through investing in capacity-building efforts. Through mentoring and TA, groups can more effectively build the skills required to do impactful budget work, shorten the learning curve, and boost the potential for applying methodologies well.

**Huntington:** How has your program evolved and where is it today?

**Garza:** Our thinking and practice evolved over the course of the PI due to what partners taught us about how they learn and what they need, but also as a result of how the PI itself evolved. For the first half of the initiative we based mentoring and TA solely on what partners alone would identify for the short term. As the PI moved toward a more sustained country strategy approach and as impact planning became more relevant for our community we tried to shift our *modus operandi* so that mentoring and TA would connect with partners' impact plans and goals within country strategies. This pushed us and partners to be more strategic in prioritizing mentoring and TA.

**Huntington:** What methods have you found to be most successful with mentoring and TA? What challenges have you encountered?

**Garza:** Successful capacity building efforts need the following: 1) they have to be sustained and you have to invest time, human resources, and money; 2) what you offer has to be broad and include a

creative set of activities that add value to each other; 3) capacity building needs to connect to goals and objectives rather than respond to everything; and 4) there is not one single model to do this “successfully.” One has to be creative, have a willingness to adapt, and never lose sight of how partners learn.

It is also important to support those who provide support. During the PI we tried to do this through mentor workshops and having a full-time mentoring and TA coordinator. Additionally, training for trainers and adult education methods will be a key element of the IBP’s future strategy.

A few of the most salient challenges were developing a successful strategy to better support established budget organizations, which is not an easy task. One way to do this is by engaging more substantially with organizational development issues. Secondly, matching partners with mentors and TA providers requires a lot of sensitivity and creativity to find the right person for each group. Lastly, the biggest challenge is measuring the impact of capacity building on partners’ work to understand how, when, and why it has a bearing. This is a key element of our future strategy.

**Huntington:** What advice would you give others looking to do similar work?

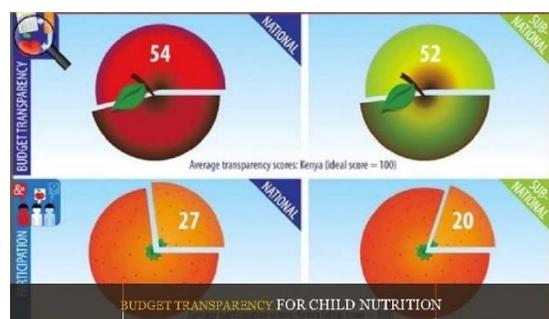
**Garza:** Develop a sustained and comprehensive approach, provide layers of support, and be strategic in what you provide. And, it is important to be willing to be self-critical, open to change, and aware that there is not one single, magic bullet. Capacity building needs to adapt to the ever changing nature of civil society and the contexts in which they fight their fights.

[Learn more](#) about the IBP’s mentoring and technical assistance.

## Using Budget Transparency to Examine Child Nutrition in Africa

### Final Report on Budget Transparency and Child Nutrition in Five African Countries Released, by Anna Schnell, the Accountability & Transparency for Human Rights Foundation (AT4HR)

[AT4HR](#), a Sweden-based civil society organization whose mission is to advance human rights by promoting accountability, transparency, and participation, set out to establish the degree of budget transparency in five African countries with regard to one critical issue related to child mortality: child nutrition. The objective of the study was to identify important transparency gaps, so that child rights advocates can make stronger, more targeted calls for access to budget information needed to ensure effective oversight. The study was carried out over the course of 14 months in 2012 and 2013 with individual experts and partners in Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



In each country, five of the government’s child nutrition-related programs were assessed in terms of their budget transparency. A questionnaire on Budget Transparency and Child Nutrition was developed and used to conduct the research. It contained 34 questions regarding the public availability of different types of information pertaining to budgeting for child nutrition. The questionnaire also had 11 questions about public participation in the government’s decision making about child nutrition.

The research was conducted at the national and subnational levels by researchers from the Children’s Legal Action in Kenya; Public Service Accountability Monitor in South Africa; Uganda Debt Network; University of Zambia, Department of Economics and Zambia Civic Education Association; and the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations in Zimbabwe.

The final report, “Budget Transparency and Child Nutrition,” resulted in a number of general (cross-country) and country-specific findings, and recommendations for action. In general, the level of budget transparency in relation to child nutrition was found to be low across the five countries. Among other things, the study found that citizens had a better chance of reading about their government’s plans to combat child malnutrition than they did of being able to track and monitor how those plans were put into practice. For example, at the national level, the average cross-country score for information about *planning* for child nutrition was 46 (out of 100). By comparison, the average cross-country score for transparency about the *implementation* of child nutrition interventions was 29 (out of 100).

The research was developed and coordinated by AT4HR, and supported by the IBP and the Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (CRGI) of Save the Children. The findings are now being followed up in different ways by those involved in each country. AT4HR, the IBP, and CRGI are also discussing plans for ways to follow up at the African Union and United Nations later this year. For more information about the study and to access the report visit [http://at4hr.org/BTCN\\_Study.html](http://at4hr.org/BTCN_Study.html).

## Publications

### IBP Publications

New Arabic-language versions of key IBP publications are now available! Seven case studies and a civil society guide to budget transparency now include Arabic versions:

- [The Role of Brazilian Civil Society in the Tax Reform Debate: INESC’s Tax Campaign for Social Justice](#)
- [Ghana: Budget Monitoring by SEND-Ghana and its Partners Helps Improve Nutrition for Children and Support Local Farmers](#)
- [Freeing Funds to Meet Priorities and Needs: Sikika’s Campaign to Curb Unnecessary Expenditure in Tanzania](#)
- [Samarthan’s Campaign to Improve Access to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India](#)
- [Children’s Right to Early Education in the City of Buenos Aires: A Case Study on ACIJ’s Class Action](#)
- [Quality of Education Reforms: The Case of HakiElimu’s Campaign of 2005-2007](#)
- [Evidence for Change: The Case of \*Subsidios al Campo\* in Mexico](#)
- [Guide to Transparency in Government Budget Reports: How Civil Society Can Use Budget Reports for Research and Advocacy](#)

### Further Reading from the Field – Relevant coverage of budget issues and civil society’s engagement in public budgeting from academia and professional journals

A study titled “[Good Governance and Budget Reform in Lesotho Public Hospitals: Performance, Root Causes and Reality](#),” published in *Oxford Journals*, examines efforts to reform budget processes in the Lesotho health sector. The African country has been implementing financial management reforms, including performance-based budgeting (PBB) since 2005 in an effort to increase accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in governance. Yet little is known about how these efforts are affecting the health sector. This study designed and tested a methodology for measuring implementation progress for PBB reform in the hospital sector in Lesotho.

A recent paper, “[Assessing Open Government Budgetary Data in Brazil](#)” submitted as part of the ICDS 2013 International Conference on Digital Society, posits that the Internet provides great potential in providing budget information in a timely and transparent manner. Currently, there is no structured framework to evaluate the quality of the budgetary information disclosed on the web. The paper takes this into consideration when proposing an assessment framework and analyzing data collected from two samples: one composed of 54 budgetary websites from different Brazilian executive power levels (national, state, and municipal), complemented with another sample of 34 Brazilian audit court websites.

According to the authors of the paper "[Fiscal Transparency at the Chinese Provincial Level](#)," published in *Public Administration*, there is a global movement towards more budgetary transparency, in both developed and developing countries, as this lies at the heart of responsible governance. Since the promulgation of the Regulation on Open Government Information in China in 2008, China has witnessed an external demand and internal push for more budget transparency. Using annual survey data collected between 2009 and 2012, the authors found that budget transparency at the Chinese provincial government level, although showing slight improvement over this period, was still very low, and there was significant volatility in the amount of information disclosed by individual provinces from year to year.

The authors of the paper "[Local Budget Transparency: the Case of 33 Croatian Cities](#)" investigated the quality of city budget information and the openness of the city budget process to the public. Using the Open City Budget Index and survey questionnaires of local civil society organizations, local councils, as well as Ministry of Finance representatives, the authors highlight persistent budget transparency challenges for local municipalities.

## Jobs and Opportunities

### Asia Pacific Senior Associate, Revenue Watch Institute

The Senior Associate will support the Asia Pacific team, including assisting with strategic planning, project management, capacity building, technical assistance, grants management and administration, budget monitoring and reporting, research and analysis, representation and communication with partners and RWI staff. [Read](#) the full job description.

### ***The Review of African Political Economy's Africa Small Research Grant Competition***

The *Review of African Political Economy* (ROAPE) is pleased to announce the establishment of a small research grants competition for African scholars/activists based in Africa and pursuing a political economy agenda. **The deadline for applications is 31 July 2013.** ROAPE is a refereed journal committed to encouraging high-quality research and fostering excellence in the understanding of African political economy, and is listed in the Thomson Reuters Social Sciences Citation Index. Published quarterly by Taylor & Francis for the ROAPE international collective, it has since 1974 provided radical analysis of trends, issues, and social processes in Africa, adopting a broadly materialist interpretation of change. The small grant competition is based on the premise that the shortage of funding for critical research is one of the problems faced by Africa-based scholars/activists wishing to carry forward a political economy agenda. In response to this, ROAPE is offering up to four small research grants (each up to £3,000). Complete information is available [here](#).