



Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group

CSO BUDGET COALITION POSITION PAPER FOR FY 2017/18

BUKEDI SUB-REGION

MAY 2017



This position paper was developed by a cohort of CSOs including Nyanza Fish Farmers Pilot project-Budaka district, Pallisa Network of Aid Service Organisation-Pallisa district, Awake Youth Relief Agency, Kadama Widows Association, Kagumu Development Organisation, Action Aid, Uganda–Pallisa, CSBAG Kibuku, Busolwe CDC, Global Human Rights, and A little bit of Hope.

The Bukedi Sub Region Position Paper on the FY 2017/18 Budget was produced by the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) in close collaboration with the Bukedi Sub-Regional CSO Budget Coalition. The contents of this publication are the responsibility of CSBAG and not our Development Partners.

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1.0 Introduction

Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) is a coalition formed in 2004 to bring together Civil Society actors at national and district levels to influence Government decisions on resource mobilisation, allocation and utilisation for equitable gender responsive and sustainable development. Since its formation, 85 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) under the CSBAG have engaged Government in influencing the budget process to ensure that both the local and national budgets address the needs and aspirations of the poor and marginalised groups.

CSBAG facilitates its members to ensure that budgets are financed, designed, implemented and monitored to promote prudent and transparent allocation of resources across Government sectors for the benefit of citizens. The coalition conducts awareness campaigns on pertinent budget issues and engages in advocacy initiatives with duty bearers in different Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at national level and with Local Government at sub-national levels.

1.1 About the Paper

This paper is a compilation of budget concerns identified by Bukedi Sub-region CSO representatives raised during a strategic meeting held in Pallisa on 30th March, 2017.

This position paper was developed by a cohort of CSOs including Nyanza Fish Farmers Pilot project-Budaka district, Pallisa Network of Aid Service Organisation-Pallisa district, Awake Youth Relief Agency, Kadama Widows Association, Kagumu Development Organisation, Action Aid, Uganda-Pallisa, CSBAG Kibuku, Busolwe CDC, Global Human Rights, and A little bit of Hope.

2.0 Background to Bukedi Sub-region CSO Budget Coalition

In implementing her mandate, CSBAG formed a loose coalition with CSOs from Bukedi Sub-region which includes districts of Pallisa, Budaka, Kibuku and Butaleja to advocate and engage respective district leaders on budget issues. The organisations that are part of the coalition include; Nyanza Fish Farmers Pilot project-Budaka district, Pallisa Network of Aid Service Organisation-Pallisa district, Awake Youth Relief Agency, Kadama Widows Association, Kagumu Development Organisation, Action Aid, Uganda-Pallisa, CSBAG Kibuku, Busolwe CDC, Global Human Rights, and A little bit of Hope.

2.1 Cross Cutting Challenges Faced by Local Governments in Implementing District Budgets: A case of Pallisa District

The decentralisation Policy as enshrined in the Local Government (1997) Act was aimed at ensuring that services are extended closer to communities. However, the achievement of this objective has been constrained by numerous shortcomings as highlighted below.

2.1.1 Stringent Guidelines on Budget Process

- a) Central Government determines district budget ceilings:

Central Government through the budget call circulars determines budget ceilings for respective Local Governments within which they should operate during the budgeting process. Thus Local Governments are often left with a limited level of flexibility to shift between budget lines in case of emergencies within the district. As such, some community priorities have to wait until the following financial year for consideration. It should be noted that while the Office of the Prime Minister has an emergency response mechanism to disasters, Local Governments are expected to share the cost in averting such calamities. However, it is paramount to note that Local Governments' responses have not been forthcoming in such cases due to budget ceilings and conditionalities on grants from Central Government.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Central Government should develop guidelines to enable flexible transfer of resources for emergency responses in case of disaster. However, this should be under high level of supervision.

- b) Non adherence to Bottom-up approach in budgeting:

Participatory planning and budgeting enhances ownership and collective responsibility in monitoring budget execution. The generation of budget priorities is supposed to start with consultations from the village level (Lower Local Governments) through to Higher Local Governments. This is supposed to feed into the district budget and finally into the National Budget. However, due to limited consultations on budget priorities, communities are unaware of opportunities for their participation during the budget cycle. Less frequent budget consultations are sometimes considered a resource saving strategy for Local Governments in addition to embracing taking the "Critical Path Approach" of priority selection amidst limited local revenue. As such on several occasions, communities get highly frustrated as officials cannot address their most pressing priorities but rather impose budgets on them.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Government should undertake a pilot study in selected districts on Local Government budget consultations. Such consultations could be conducted after a period of two

years since community priorities rarely change within a short period of time save for emergency cases. This will give Local Governments time to address previous priorities in better way compared to circumstances under the current practice.

2.1.2 Inadequate share of National Budget to Local Governments:

Of the total national budget, only 9.7% is allocated to Local Governments while the 91.3% is retained to facilitate Central Government operations. The merger share extended to Local Governments is expected to address the overwhelming and divergent community priority demands. As such it is of concern to note that though Local Governments strive to meet these demands, the quality of service delivery is in most cases compromised due to the inadequate funding to these competing community priorities.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Central Government should increase the share of the national budget to Local Governments to facilitate execution of district budgets so as to enhance efficient and effective service delivery.

2.1.3 Local Governments' over reliance on Central Government grants:

Local Governments rely largely on Central Government grants to finance district budgets. Besides, district approved budgets often suffer budget cuts due to the fact that local revenue mobilisation which could augment Central Government transfers is low. This is because the amount of local revenue collection heavily relies on the level of agricultural production which is performing poorly in the Sub-region due to distorted weather patterns. Strictly speaking, limited revenue mobilisation, just as in other parts of the country, has constrained service delivery by districts in the Sub-region.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Local Governments should source out for Development Partners who can support and finance certain projects to relieve pressure on the already limited resources.
- ▶ There is need to increase allocation of non-wage unconditional grant to Local Governments to support the implementation of revenue enhancement plans most especially procurement of associated logistics like vehicles, motorcycles, development of revenue infrastructure like markets. This will augment the inadequate locally generated revenue collected by Local Governments.

2.1.4 Political interference/ pronouncements that negatively affect budget implementation:

While Politicians and technocrats are expected to partner in service delivery. It is apparent that there is conflict of interest in the delivery mechanism of service provision between politicians and technocrats. At the peak of political activities, politicians make pronouncements which cannot be fulfilled. For instance, Sub Counties are expected to remit 35% of local revenue collection from traders to the district. However, some district politicians promise voters that such licence fee collections will be scrapped. In Pallisa district, interference was evidenced in the management of local revenue collection in the town council where political pronouncement undermined revenue collection due to suspension of registration of businesses.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Politicians should stop making pronouncements outside the law which affect local revenue collection so as to enhance service delivery.

3.0 Key Service Delivery Concerns for Bukedi Sub-region

During the regional strategic meeting with CSO representatives, some concerns affecting communities were noted in the sectors of Health, Education, Agriculture, and Water and Sanitation in addition to the cross cutting issues highlighted above.

3.1 Health Sector

Generally, the quality of health service delivery in the Sub-region is poor characterized with inadequate resources allocation¹, lack of or limited medical equipment to facilitate effective medical diagnosis, limited life-saving necessities and poor maintenance of infrastructure including storage facilities for drugs. This poses a health hazard to patients who expected to use health facilities. In addition, Government has given National Medical Stores the monopoly to supply drugs but the push system being implemented promotes disbursement of some irrelevant and/or inadequate drugs than required. Other specific concerns included;

3.1.1 Inadequate Maternal Care:

- i) Observations across the region indicates that most expectant mothers neglect professional antenatal care services from health facilities and instead prefer Traditional Birth Attendants in most rural settings. Expecting mothers who have had previous successful home deliveries find it unnecessary to visit a health facility for antenatal services. On the other hand, while it is a requirement for expectant mothers to attend antenatal care together with their spouses for counselling in preparation for unborn babies, male spouses often refuse to accompany their wives. To this end, mothers are forced to stay home without any antenatal care. In some cases, husbands hire boda boda service providers to act as husbands at the health facilities who continue demanding commission even after delivery. This has become a lucrative money making venture. This has been evidenced in Kasasira HC III and Kabweri HC II in Kibuku district.

Recommendations:

- ▶ Local Governments should allocate sufficient resources for sensitization programmes for both men and women on the importance of attending antenatal care services offered by well-trained medical personnel at HCs. In addition, as a resource saving strategy, district leadership should collaborate with the local leadership like religious and traditional leaders to organise such programmes since these are in touch with the population.

3.1.2 Inadequate staff:

Health units have been established to address immediate community health needs; however, effectiveness in handling general illnesses and maternal related cases is hampered by the inadequate number of medical personnel. The standard staff number for a HC III is 19, but most HCs have inadequate technical and support staff amidst high population growth which exerts pressure on the already under funded health facilities. This is in addition to limited or lack of life supporting commodities like drugs and other equipment. For instance, in Kibuku district, Kabweri HC II should have 13 staff but has only 7 staff while Nakwasi HC III in Butaleja district should have 19 staff but has only 9 health workers, 1 Askari and 2 cleaners.

To address the shortage of health workers in Pallisa district, a scheme to educate doctors using locally generated revenue amounting to UGX.30 million each financial year. However, the Auditor General's office over turned the resolution citing illegality of the initiative. This initiative was halted yet the objective was that after school, doctors would serve the community for 5 year before seeking jobs elsewhere if they so wished. The number of patients is usually overwhelming for the few medical staff leading limited attention given to patients by health workers.

¹ For instance, for the past 4 years, the budget for health in Pallisa district has remained constant with reductions amidst high population growth and disease burden

Recommendations:

- ▶ Local Governments should allocate resources for recruitment of more medical personnel in district budgets in a phased manner.
- ▶ Central Government should uphold Pallisa Local Government initiatives of training medical personnel using locally generated revenue; however, such medical workers should be bonded.

3.1.3 Poor management of Pit latrine

The state of the pit latrine in Busolwe Hospital in Butaleja district poses a risk of further infection to patients due to poor disposal of wastes. Food remains, faecal matter, used sanitary material, placentas and polythene bags which are disposed in the latrines increase the filling rate of the pits. Eventually, cases of open defecation are common among patients and attendants who are as such at a risk of contracting and spreading diseases such as cholera, skin rashes, among others. Conversely speaking, this is the case in other health centres in the Sub-region.

Recommendation:

- ▶ The District Health Office should allocate adequate resources for effective waste management and facilities in the hospital, in addition to stepping up monitoring and supervision of respective health facilities.

3.2 Agriculture

3.2.1 Unpredictable weather patterns:

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the Sub-region, however, with a high dependence on weather which has increasingly become unpredictable. Because of prolonged drought, the level of agricultural production has been affected and the hunger burden is gradually escalating in households. Local Governments have limited capacity to address the problem. Though in Pallisa district received Relief food Aid from OPM in January 2017, it is worthy noting that the strategy is not sustainable in permanently solving the drought and hunger problem in the long run. Besides, Government installed solar water pump for irrigation in Pallisa district but they were vandalised.

3.2.2 Limited knowledge on value addition for agricultural products and poor storage facilities

Most farmers in the region have limited knowledge of value addition to agricultural products which could enable them attract better prices for their produce. This as a result has left them (farmers) to the whims of

middlemen who exploit through setting extremely low produce price during harvest season. It is of concern to note that such produced purchased at extremely low prices from farmers is later resold at exorbitantly high prices especially during planting seasons. On the other hand, Government is currently in collaboration with World Food Programme in implementing a food security drive by signing a MoU with some Local Governments to provide silos to households on a cost-sharing basis. However, the issue of affordability deters some householders from taking advantage of the initiative. In addition, the establishment of community seed stores has also been frustrated by the low agricultural production. This has seen food prices rise compared to previous years as can be seen in the table below.

Trend of cost of common food stuff in the region (UGX.)

Item	Cost per kg (2015)	Cost per kg (2017)	Percentage Increase
Cassava Flour	500	1600	220%
Posho Flour	1900	3000	58%
Rice	2300	3700	61%

Source: Testimonies from CSO Representatives

Recommendations:

- ▶ Local Governments should allocate adequate resources for sensitization on value addition to enable farmers fetch higher prices for their products.
- ▶ Government should subsidize the provision of silos in the project being undertaken by World Food Program to address the challenge of affordability for more households. This will improve the level of food security/storage and reduce hunger and malnutrition cases in the Sub-region.

3.3 Water and Sanitation

3.3.1 Lack of pit latrines by households:

In general terms, hygiene and sanitation is a big problem within the Sub-region. There is high need of safe water coverage to enhance the level of desired hygiene and sanitation. An initiative by Mr, Taliganya Ayub (0782 696 526/0704 625 588) of Pallisa Newtork to constantly advocate for a borehole in Kasodo Sub County, Nabitende Parish, Kasanvu A Village in Pallisa district since 2013 registered success in 2015. This is a case of vigilance which many community members do not exhibit and as such have continued to suffer due to lack of safe water sources.

In the current FY 2016/17, funds have not been transferred from Higher Local Governments to Lower Local Governments in Pallisa district to facilitate sanitation programmes which has aggravated hygiene

challenges. Most households do not have pit latrines forcing many to engage in undesirable practices of open disposal of human wastes. Such other cases which are sources of disease spread can be cited on landing sites in Gogonyo Sub-County in Pallisa district.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Ministry of Health through Local Governments should facilitate the enforcement of the implementation of the 1997 Kampala Declaration on Sanitation and adequate resources should be allocated to Primary Health Care.

3.4 Education Sector

3.4.1 Hunger in Schools which exacerbates Poor performance:

Public Primary schools in Pallisa district have experienced a downward trend in performance for the last 3 years. For instance, in Gogonyo Sub-county has not obtained any first grade in Primary Leaving Examinations in the last three years. This is among other things due to hunger that affects both pupils and teachers. Most households are unable to offer adequate food to their members at large and school children in particular. Besides, poor performance has demoralised some pupils from pursuing education which has led to high dropout rates.

Recommendation:

- ▶ The district leadership should allocate adequate resources to sensitize parents and School Management Committees on the need for passing an ordinance on school feeding programme where parents should be charged with the responsibility of providing meals their school going children.

3.4.2 Inadequate number of pit latrine in schools:

Pit latrines in schools are considered one of the infrastructures for facilitating effective learning; however, limited availability of the facilities was cited during the meeting. For instance, Magambo Memorial Primary School in Butaleja district had only one latrine with 2 stances shared among over 1000 children and staff in January 2017. To make matters worse, the latrine sunk recently due to heavy rains and currently the school has no appropriate latrine. Pupils and teachers are now using an old and abandoned latrine which is highly risky given the pressure the user population puts on it. Already, due to fear that the old pit latrine may sink, children are practicing open defecation which is a source of disease spread. Besides, in Bugosa Primary School which has 1227 pupils in Butaleja Sub County, Butaleja district, pupils share latrines with teachers.

This increases the level of girl child harassment and disease infection especially for female teachers and girls.

Recommendation:

- ▶ The district leadership should immediately report this urgent matter for immediate action by Ministry of Education and Sports. For instance, permission should be sought to shift budget lines to address this problem. Local Governments should carry out a comprehensive inspection drive to guide on which schools need to be prioritised in district budgets as far as pit latrine construction as concerned.

4.0 General Recommendations

- a) Government should finance and enforce the implement of the Kampala Declaration on Sanitation 1997.
- b) Local Governments should develop and enforce by-laws requiring communities – households and public authorities to construct pit latrines without which a penalty is attracted. A committee should be constituted comprising of all relevant stakeholders (Local Councils, political leadership, Health Management Committee members, opinion and clan leaders and CSOs) to ensure collective/joint efforts in inspecting and monitoring the implementation of this initiative.

5.0 Conclusion

We as CSOs in Bekedi Sub-region strongly believe that the above recommendations if considered and implemented by Government and respective Local Government will go a long way in improving service delivery in the region. We acknowledge the fact that it could be impossible or extremely difficult to implement the entire package in a single financial year, however, we shall be grateful if Central Government and Local Governments show commitment towards implementation of these policy options with a defined time frame as we strive to achieve a people centred budget that dignifies humanity.

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VISION:

A Uganda with a people centered budget that dignifies humanity.

MISSION:

CSBAG works towards ensuring that budgets at local and national levels are participatory, pro-people and address the needs and aspirations of all Ugandans especially the poor and voiceless.



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