



CSBAG BUDGET NEWS BRIEF



150th EDITION | 18th -24th January 2016

Advocating for a People Centered Budget that Dignifies Humanity



CSOs trained in effective budget advocacy

Finance Fights Dollarisation

A total of 34 CSO representatives (22 male and 12 female) from 14 national, regional and district based CSOs working on budget issues benefited from a 3 day capacity building training in budget analysis and advocacy.



Group photo of CSOs that benefited from Budget Analysis & budget Advocacy training at Noah's Ark in Kapchorwa district 19th -21st Jan 2016

Budget advocacy in Uganda is critically challenged by the lack of comprehension among the general public and NGOs/CSOs on budget process and contents. The inadequate ability of the general public, and especially the NGOs/CSOs, to understand the budget process and issues has often affected the effective push for a people centered budget especially at the local government-making influencing change in the budget process, monitor financial performance, and holding the government accountable for the management of the public fund quite complex.

To address this challenge, last week a total of 34 CSO representatives (22 male and 12 female) from 14 national, regional and district based CSOs working on budget issues benefited from a 3 day capacity building training whose overall objective was to improve knowledge and skill of participants on budget analysis, the new budget cycle, the roles of NGOs/CSOs in budget and lastly to share experiences in strategy, tools, and tactics for budget advocacy.

The training which was supported by the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) targeted the CSOs under the DGF Voice and Accountability component that included Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition (RACC), Friends for Christ Ministries (FOCREV), The Apac Anti-Corruption Coalition (TAACC), Teso Anti-Corruption Coalition (TACC), Transparency International, African Centre for Trade and Development (ACTADE), Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), Lira NGO Forum, Uganda Debt Network, Council for African Policy (CAP), Kind Initiative for Development-Uganda, National Forum for People Living with HIV/AIDS Network in Uganda (NAFOPHANU), Accountability for Action Project (AAP) and Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET) among others.

Through this training a platform to broaden the knowledge of selected CSO activists for budget accountability and transparency of public accounts and expenditures was created. Specifically the CSOs were

equipped with knowledge and skill to analyse budgets, calculating sector shares, analyzing budget trends; and subsequently developing sound alternative proposals based on the analysis and research undertaken, understanding the new budget cycle as per the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 as well as skills in undertaking effective budget monitoring.

Despite the complexity attached to this training, the CSOs expressed interest for each topic handled. Mr. Richard Eriau, a representative from the Teso Anti-Corruption Coalition shared that through this training, he gained knowledge and techniques of generating evidence to support CSO advocacy efforts.

Two renowned budget resource persons with vast experiences in budget work- Mr. Daniel Lukwago of Nonner Consults and Edward Ngobye, of the Parliamentary Budget Office were the lead trainers at this capacity building event. They provided comprehensive presentation on how the national budget is prepared, along with associated regulatory framework, opportunities for CSO engagement which stimulated significant interest and questions from participating CSOs. They also shared critical resource materials and led a strategic discussion to enable CSOs reflect on practical local and national experiences they can adopt for their budget advocacy work

The need to document institutional successes for institutional memory and for future reference as well as identifying both individuals and the institutions within government as influencers in the budget advocacy process were highlighted as key techniques in budget advocacy.

Also two major events happened at this training as CSOs engaged the media to voice their discontent about Government's efforts towards the primary education

system. CSOs including CSBAG, SD-CODE, RAC, UDN and UNATU were hosted on '95.4 Elgon Radio' to discuss Education Sector Performance with a special focus on Universal Primary Education. Also a press conference was held over the same matter and panelists decried poor performance of pupils particularly in the Eastern region who have continued to perform poorly. For example Kapchorwa district where this training was hosted recorded only 71 candidates in Division One out of the 2,876 pupils that sat for PLE in 2015.

At these two media events, CSOs called for improved teacher salaries and welfare, curbing of school dropouts especially due to child labour, early child marriages and other factors. According to the 2014/15 Education Sector Budget Performance Report, the proportion of pupils who enroll in the first grade and reach Grade 7 regardless of repetition stands at 33.1% (Boys 33.2%; Girls 32.9%). The other major factor was the need for parents' involvement in their children's education. Stanley Odeke from Council for African Policy stated much as it's the responsibility of the state to deliver quality basic education for, the parents and the community must take part. Parents must ensure that there is good learning environment the children which is key in the performance of a child. Moses Okoed from Uganda Debt Network argued that there is need for government to revise its UPE policies if government has to achieve its objectives of UPE.

CSBAG believes that as the demand for better government budgets continues to rise from civil society organisations, it's increasingly becoming apparent that capacity strengthening to interrogate and analyse budgets from a pro-poor and gender sensitive perspective is critical if CSOs are to rise to the challenge.

The Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury Ministry of Finance issued a directive to all accounting officers at central and local governments requiring that all contracts for works, goods and services with effect from 15th January 2016 should be awarded in Ugandan shillings.

This according to the letter circulated to the accounting officers was out of the need for the government to control the pressure on the Ugandan shilling resulting in its depreciate and budget short falls which culminate into supplementary expenditure.

According to David Walakira the CSBAG Budget Specialist "This is good and its part of what we have always asked for. Now Bank of Uganda needs to follow suit and issue a directive stopping items like paying rent for businesses, hotel accommodation and meals in dollars. This will ease the demand for the shilling and make available enough dollars for the contractors and other traders to do business. The other option is to restrict/protect our capital account by restricting the repatriation of capital from Uganda by Multinationals. We need to restrict how much they can take out and require that the rest is reinvested in Uganda".



Lucas Chelangat, ED Sebei Diocese Community for Development addressing a joint press conference at Noah's Ark Hotel Kapchorwa on 21st January 2016



Left : Moses Okoed, Regional Coordinator, UDN discussing challenges in the education sector during the talk show on Elgon Radio. Right: Gerald Twebaze from Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition on 19th Jan 2016