

A Taste of Success

Examples of the Budget Work of NGOs

Appendix I About the International Budget Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities



THE
INTERNATIONAL
BUDGET
PROJECT

A Project of the
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The International Budget Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities assists non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers in their efforts both to analyze budget policies and to improve budget processes and institutions. The project is especially interested in assisting with applied research that is of use in ongoing policy debates and with research on the effects of budget policies on the poor. The overarching goal of the project is to make budget systems more responsive to the needs of society and more transparent and accountable to the public. The project works primarily with researchers and NGOs in developing countries or new democracies.

Organizational Background

Founded in 1981 in Washington, DC, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has nearly two decades of experience with applied budget and tax analysis. The Center specializes in analysis geared toward policy makers, with an emphasis on how policies affect low- and moderate-income people and communities. The Center examines data and research findings and produces timely analytic reports that are designed to be accessible to public officials, nonprofit organizations, and the media.

Rationale for the Center's International Budget Project

The niche for the International Budget Project reflects, in part, the number of countries that have shifted from being closed to open societies and are constructing more participatory decision-making processes. The goals of this ongoing process extend beyond the establishment of free elections. Open and democratic societies require an informed citizenry, public participation, and governing processes that are transparent.

Because the national budget is perhaps the most important policy document, and the decisions made on the budget have profound effects on a nation's citizens, there is a growing consensus that budget decisions need to be subjected to public scrutiny and debate. However, both in developing countries and in countries that have just become democratic, virtually all NGOs working on budget policy have been in existence for only a few years. Many countries lack such groups altogether. While many researchers and NGOs carry out quality research in various specific policy areas, these same researchers and groups often lack expertise about the budget rules and procedures used in their countries that affect the allocation of resources to these policy areas.

It is in this context that the International Budget Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities was launched in 1997. The project promotes cooperation and the exchange of ideas among the growing number of budget policy organizations and researchers, nurtures the development of applied budget research, and acts as a resource base for such research.

The common goals and challenges faced by budget policy researchers and NGOs interested in budget issues indicate that much can be gained through the exchange of information and practices. These researchers and groups frequently produce similar types of reports and attempt to answer similar questions. They are writing general reviews of

government budgets, assessing the financial arrangements between national and sub-national governments, and seeking to make budget processes more transparent and participatory. They also often share a particular concern with policies affecting the poor. The International Budget Project can point to useful models and approaches and bring these new organizations together so they can learn directly from one another.

For more information about the International Budget Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, visit the website at <http://www.internationalbudget.org> contact:

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