



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

e-Newsletter

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Welcome to the first issue of the International Budget Partnership's newsletter. These newsletters, to be released every other month, will be posted on our website at <http://www.internationalbudget.org/resources/newsletter.htm>. Our main interests are to create a space to disseminate information and keep each other informed about the publications, projects, and initiatives undertaken by different NGOs working with budgets around the world. In order to meet these purposes, each newsletter will include an update of IBP activities, a brief case study or success story from one of the many groups doing budget work, and links to new papers or other materials relevant to budget analysis. We encourage other groups to share their success stories and to send us papers, as well as announcements of workshops, conferences or other events related to budget work for upcoming issues.

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Meet the IBP Staff

Since this is our first newsletter we thought it appropriate to provide some background on the International Budget Partnership and its staff. The IBP started in 1997 and is part of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities which was founded in 1981 in Washington, D.C. The IBP assists nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers in their efforts both to analyze budget policies and to improve budget processes and institutions.

The full-time staff of the Center's International Budget Partnership consists of project director Isaac Shapiro, senior budget specialist Stefan Falk, and program associate Rocío Campos. Joel Friedman is a senior fellow at the Center who is working part-time on the IBP. The project also draws on other Center staff — such as the Center's deputy director, Iris Lav; its legislative director, Ellen Nissenbaum; and its deputy director of communications, Michelle Bazie — for help with particular aspects of the project.

Third International Conference

The Third International Conference of the IBP took place in Bombay, India from November 5-9, 2000. It brought together 90 delegates from 25 countries. The focus of the conference reflected the special interest of many NGOs in assessing how priorities for public spending as expressed through the budget can affect the lives of the poor. Therefore, the emphasis was on using budget analysis to address poverty and economic and social human rights. The first international conference of the IBP, which focused on networking and sharing general experiences, was held in Washington, D.C. in 1997. The second conference was held in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999, and had the theme of transparency and participation in the budget process in developing and/or newly-democratic countries.

The third conference was co-hosted by the New Delhi office of the Ford Foundation and four Indian NGOs: the Center for Budget and Policy Studies in Bangalore (CBPS), Developing Initiatives for Social and Human Action in Ahmedabad (DISHA), Vidhayak Sansad in Bombay, and Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action in Bombay (YUVA). A detailed summary of the conference's plenary sessions and workshops is being organized in a CD-ROM, the contents of which will be featured on our website. In the meanwhile, you may review the agenda.

The IBP in Stockholm

The IBP recently finalized a budget primer for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Stefan Falk presented his paper, [An Overview of Budget Issues](#), at three in-house seminars in Stockholm, from December 4-6, 2000. The seminars drew 40 participants from various departments in SIDA.

The primer is part of a joint project between the IBP, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa and the policy unit at SIDA. This project consists of two parts. The first part is the preparation of the budget primer, and the second consists of two pilot budget activities in two Southern African countries. The project is running from April 2000 to the beginning of 2001. An important objective for the IBP is to promote a broader understanding of budget issues within a key donor, with the hope that this will facilitate further cooperation between SIDA and NGOs working on budget related issues.

The primer is the IBP's introduction to budget-related issues with particular relevance to the work of SIDA. It is a document on fiscal analysis, the budget process and applied budget work. It emphasizes the implications of these issues for international development assistance and cooperation. The purpose is to present a coherent and systematic overview of the different aspects of budget analysis and budget work. Considering the wide scope and the largely non-technical content, it is intended to be of interest to a wider SIDA audience, groups in civil society, and independent researchers.

A Success Story in Tanzania: The Gender Budget Initiative

The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) is an NGO that has been pioneering a Gender Budget Initiative (GBI) since mid-1997 in close collaboration with other Tanzanian NGOs who are part of the Feminist Activism Coalition. The GBI was developed in the context of cost-sharing and retrenchment policies implemented as part of structural adjustment programs in the 1980s. These programs precipitated a dramatic cutback in vital social services, particularly health care and education, at the same time that liberalization and privatization caused massive layoffs of government workers.

In this context, it was seen as essential to strive towards developing a national budgeting system that would take into account the needs of marginalized groups, particularly women and youth. For women, the concept was not to develop a separate women's budget, but to integrate issues of equitable distribution of resources into all steps and stages of the budgetary process. To achieve this goal, TGNP targeted key sectors and Ministries — Planning Commission and Treasury, and the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture, and Industry and Trade — and collected data from the government sectors as well as selected rural and urban districts. From the beginning, government actors were integrated into the process as researchers, providing access to data that would otherwise be considered confidential and building ties between TGNP and technocrats working in those areas.

After this research was completed, TGNP disseminated its research reports to key actors in these sectors and began a process to ensure that the reports' findings were well understood and that would have an impact on the budget. In addition to meeting with government officials, working sessions were held with various groups of MPs and members of parliamentary committees to encourage them to take into account gender concerns when participating in government processes. In 1999, TGNP published and distributed a popular book called, *Budgeting with a Gender Focus*, which outlined the gender gaps in the budget in a format that was easy to read and understand.

Due to TGNP's methods, the organization has gained a great deal of access into government structures and strategic decision-making bodies, arenas often closed to NGOs. The organization has been invited by government and donors to be part of the Public Expenditure Review (PER) process and the Tanzania Assistance Strategy (TAS) process. Most notably, the organization was recently hired by the Ministry of Finance to serve as a local consultant for a project to include gender issues in six sectors of the budget through capacity building with technocrats. The sectors highlighted for review are Health, Education, Water, Agriculture, Community Development, and Local Government. The national budgetary guidelines developed by the Ministry of Planning for the development of the year 2001 budget have specifically mandated that these sectors include consideration of gender in their budgets. The long-term plan of the Treasury is to do this for all government sectors.

This case study was adapted from, *A Taste of Success: Examples of Budget Work of NGOs*, IBP © 2000, pp. 53-58. For more information about GBI, visit <http://www.tgnp.co.tz> or contact:

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New Featured Links on the IBP Website

A Taste of Success: Examples of the Budget Work of NGOs

Compiled by the IBP

Short case studies from Croatia, India, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, and Tanzania, compiled by the IBP to illustrate successful experiences of NGO budget work.

A Guide to Participatory Budgeting

By Brian Wampler

The guide explores the mechanisms of Brazilian participatory budgeting, the results of this approach, and its potential applicability elsewhere to incorporate citizens into the policymaking process and distribute public resources to low-income neighborhoods.

When Is Growth Pro-Poor? Evidence from the Diverse Experiences of India's States

By Martin Ravallion and Gaurav Datt

Nonfarm economic growth in India had very different effects on poverty in different states. Among initial conditions conducive to pro-poor growth, literacy plays a notably positive role.