



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

IS BUDGET ADVOCACY RIGHT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION/ISSUE?

Budget advocacy's appeal to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is increasing steadily. Many CSOs are becoming interested in learning more about and engaging in budget advocacy. However, budget advocacy is not always the magic wand that we can use to address issues. To really know whether budget advocacy is for your organization and an effective tool for addressing a specific issue you need to consider some of the following points related to both your organization and the issue you are tackling.

Your Organization

We use the word "organization" here to refer to a CSO or a non-governmental organization (NGO). In addition, it can also apply to a network or a coalition of CSOs, NGOs, or other partner organizations. Before you rush into doing advocacy, you need to ask yourselves some questions about your organization, including the following:

1. Is advocacy or budget analysis organically linked to your organization's mission?
2. How willing and equipped is your organization at the moment to take the anticipated and, often unanticipated, risks of running up against some of the power holders who are usually heavily vested in the budget resource allocation processes?
3. Has your organization been involved in campaigns or activities to change or introduce policies or legislation?

Your Issue

Budget advocacy is not the answer to all problems. Some of the following questions might help you see if budget advocacy can help in addressing your issue:

1. What are the root causes of the problem?
2. How much of these root causes can be attributed to problems in the budget and, therefore, addressed by budget work? If yes, exactly what is the budget-related factor?
3. Can you address the issue *without* working on the budget? How?
4. In an initial assessment of the situation, how easy is it to make favorable budget changes?
5. Will your work on the budget provide an opportunity for citizens to engage with policymakers?
6. How lasting and sustainable can the desired budget changes be?
7. In addition to your budget advocacy work, what else do you need to do to ensure a lasting change and impact?

The Environment

1. Does the political environment give adequate space for citizens and CSOs to raise questions about public policies and budgets?
2. Has civil society been recognized as an important actor in policy-making processes?
3. Do CSOs have the capacity to participate in the policy making process, and to build strong constituencies around the issues they advocate for?
4. Are there active and well-developed advocacy coalitions (from CSOs only, or CSOs and other entities including academic institutions, media, and government agencies) available to participate or support your advocacy?
5. Do you have legislation supporting (or restricting) freedom of access to information?