



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
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e-Newsletter

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Budget Transparency in the *Guardian* and the *Economist*

Recent weeks have been great for budget transparency advocates. Two major international media houses, the [Guardian](#) and the [Economist](#), published pieces emphasizing the need for greater budget transparency and citing the International Budget Partnership's (IBP) Open Budget Index.

Last in Series of IBP Capacity Building Workshops in Tunisia

IBP recently convened a group of Egyptian and Tunisian activists with budget advocates from seven countries for a learning exchange, the last in a series of workshops that IBP has run over the last eight months. The issues covered in the workshop were access to information, the use of media in budget advocacy, the links between human rights and budgets, and citizen mobilization around budget issues. In the session on access to information, the panelists spoke about the challenges in obtaining budget information in their countries, working in difficult environments, and how to engage effectively with government officials. In the session on media, the speakers discussed how their organizations work with media outlets, and how they use various outreach techniques to advocate for change. Panelists on the human rights roundtable shared insights into how their organizations used budget analysis to strengthen their moral, human rights-based arguments. In the roundtable discussion on citizen mobilization, activists spoke about their efforts, mostly at the subnational level, to engage citizens in budget issues and monitoring.

The workshop allowed participants to think about the many ways that budget work can be carried out in their own communities. IBP hopes that this learning exchange, along with the previous trainings, have given activists from Egypt and Tunisia a range of tools for more effectively advocating for change.

Welcome New IBP Staff Member!

Join us in welcoming Anjali Garg to IBP! Anjali is the Open Budget Initiative program officer for Asia. Prior to joining IBP, Anjali was an economist in the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of International Affairs, where her work focused on Israel, Libya, Tunisia, and Palestine. Anjali also previously worked at the International Monetary Fund in the Middle East and Central Asia Department.

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Updates from Events around the World

IBP's Executive Director Reflects on the Open Government Partnership 2013 Summit, by Deidre Huntington, International Budget Partnership



From 31 October to 1 November, more than 1,000 delegates from more than 60 countries gathered in London for the [Open Government Partnership \(OGP\) 2013 Summit](#). The aim of the Summit was to reflect on what is working and what is not with the OGP, and to inspire all participants to return home equipped to pursue an even more ambitious reform agenda.

IBP Executive Director Warren Krafchik, who is also the outgoing civil society chair of the OGP, shared his thoughts and perspectives on the Summit in an interview.

Deidre Huntington: In your opening plenary speech, you said that OGP needs to intensify its efforts in transforming government-citizen engagement, aiming higher to achieve more, protecting civil society space, and triggering OGP's collective action potential. Do you feel progress toward these goals was made at the Summit?

Warren Krafchik: In my speech I tried to outline an agenda for OGP going forward over the next two years. It was not intended as an agenda to be achieved at the Summit. The Summit was an opportunity for civil society and governments to have an honest exchange on the progress we have made and the challenges we face in implementing OGP. Many of the sessions at the Summit provided an opportunity to discuss these issues directly and by the end I believe there was broader recognition that each of these issues should be priorities going forward. We left the Summit with a better understanding of the contours of each problem, and a stronger resolve to address them through action at both the country and the international level.

Huntington: What role will the five working groups that were launched at the Summit play in pursuing the goals above?

Krafchik: The focus of activity in OGP has shifted to the country level. The responsibility for implementation now sits with civil servants and civil society within each OGP country. The role of the working groups is to encourage effective implementation by providing a space for technical support and peer exchange — the kind of support that can really get down to the technical content of implementation. Countries and civil society have much to learn from each other. OGP is a treasure trove of experience, and the working groups are an opportunity to harness and share these lessons, within the context of a race to the top.

Huntington: What were a few of the challenges raised in the civil society meeting that preceded the Summit?

Krafchik: It is hard to generalize across civil society organizations (CSOs) at the meeting because country experiences are really so diverse. I believe that the spirit of the civil society day was balanced — most CSOs are engaged in OGP and optimistic about the potential gains. However, they are also concerned that some countries, at least, are not serious about their OGP commitments. They may seek the international recognition of participating in OGP but may be unwilling to expend the energy and political capital. Concerns were also raised about the quality of the consultation process. Many countries do not have experience or are not committed to engaging with the broadest spectrum of civil society, or these consultations are not consistent. Finally, concerns were raised about the nature of the commitments — many of which are not ambitious or do not focus on real priorities for open government.

Huntington: You and others have said that both the eligibility requirements for countries joining the OGP and provisions for sanctioning OGP countries may need to be adjusted to better protect civil society space, among other things. Was there any progress made on this?

Krafchik: The Summit was not the place to make progress on these two issues. These are about the rules of the game and will need to be resolved at the Steering Committee level. The Summit did however clarify that a large number of civil society organizations present (and at least some of the governments) feel that we need to rethink how these rules of the game might be re-crafted to better ensure the success of the partnership.

Huntington: IBP, OGP, and other organizations have been pushing for good governance to be part of the post-2015 framework. Do you think the OGP Summit and the discussions that came out of it will help in this advocacy?

Krafchik: I hope so, but I do not know that yet. As I mentioned in my speech, OGP could have a major impact on the post-2015 discussions. I think that there is broad and strong civil society support for this, and at least some governments are committed to this. The question is how can OGP activate this interest? I think that we will need some structure that can develop an OGP position that reflects the full spectrum of countries involved and identify effective ways to use this to send strong and consistent messages and proposals within the context of the UN process. We have to be careful not to expand the OGP bureaucracy but we do need a means to bring strong support from as many OGP countries as possible to the United Nations.

Huntington: With you moving out of the civil society co-chair seat, what role will IBP play in the OGP in the coming years?

Krafchik: IBP will continue to support OGP both at country and international level. We will work with our partners in countries, and with governments directly where that makes sense. I will continue to be on the Steering Committee for one more year to support the international process.

Huntington: Any previews on what we can expect to be on the agenda for the next Summit?

Krafchik: The next Summit is likely to be in two years and will be hosted by Mexico. By that time, we should have the Independent Reporting Mechanism reports on each country's second action plans. So, expect a robust discussion on performance. Next year's OGP meetings will focus on the regional level, with a smaller "Heads of State" event on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

First Impressions: the Open Government Partnership Releases Initial Progress Reports, by Joseph Foti, Program Manager, Open Government Partnership

The OGP is a multilateral initiative launched in 2011 that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, OGP is overseen by a Steering Committee, including representatives of governments and civil society organizations.

To become a member of OGP, participating countries must endorse a high-level Open Government Declaration, deliver a country action plan for concrete reforms developed with public consultation, and commit to independent reporting on their progress through the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM).

It has been one year since the IRM brought on its first staff member and began assembling the International Experts' Panel. In October the IRM released for public comment the first eight progress reports for each of the founding countries and hired over 40 national researchers for the very large, upcoming cohort of IRM reports. Though early on in the process, the IRM has been able to assemble a few very preliminary impressions.

Lessons for OGP

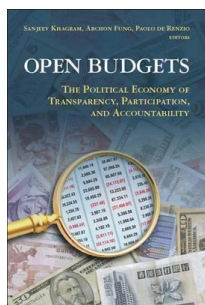
- **Ownership and mandate:** The success of action plan implementation has largely depended on which part of the administration has the coordinating and decision-making powers. In countries where this has been limited to the public administration ministry, reforms have been primarily internal and not necessarily fundamental to the reform of democracy.
- **Co-creation and co-implementation:**
 - *Amount of collaboration:* Countries have varied widely in the amount of collaboration in developing their action plan, from highly collaborative (specifically around OGP) to more modest but still commendable collaboration, to almost no collaboration. Some countries show strong evidence of learning along the way, like the U.K., which increased the amount of consultation and breadth of organizations consulted considerably during 2012 and 2013.
 - *Awareness raising:* Broadly speaking, awareness of OGP, or its promotion as a platform for advocacy, is lacking. It does not seem that many countries are promoting OGP as a platform for pushing for reform. The United States seems like an exception, with a number of commitments that were developed by reaching well beyond the capital and bringing in advocates from various areas.
 - *Feedback on consultation:* Almost none of the assessed countries provided summaries of commentary. A commendable exception, Mexico, provided very direct feedback to participants on how their proposals were incorporated into the widened action plan (*Plan Ampliado*). This best practice in consultation is required by OGP's Articles of Governance and is surprisingly lacking.
- **Pre-existing vs. new commitments:** Action plans are full of pre-existing commitments. This is not all negative, as inclusion in an OGP plan can accelerate implementation, or add layers of transparency, participation, and accountability, and certainly is consistent with the OGP Articles of Governance. However, it is clear from the interviews carried out as a part of the IRM process, that pre-existing commitments are a source of disillusion and disappointment with the process and could be a long-term credibility issue for OGP.
- **Political ambition vs. technical ambition or difficulty:** The first eight action plans assessed by the IRM had a number of politically ambitious commitments. These also tended to be the commitments that were not implemented or for which governments submitted — in their self-assessments — alternate actions (not included in the original action plan) as evidence of completion. The danger is that this dynamic will reward countries with less politically ambitious plans and reduce OGP to a platform for promotion of e-government at worst, and an open data promotion initiative at best.
- **Eligibility requirements and performance:** The first eight IRM reports did not find any evidence that eligibility requirements for becoming a partner country are a predictor of country performance on self-defined commitments or on OGP process. This is not to say that the eligibility requirements are irrelevant, but that their usefulness is bounded: they are not predictors of openness or commitment to OGP.

While valuable, it's important to state again that these are preliminary insights. Still, the first eight IRM reports indicate a number of issues that OGP should monitor and dig into deeper as it moves into the next phase of action plan development, implementation, and monitoring.

***Open Budgets at the World Bank*, by David Robins, International Budget Partnership**

IBP senior research fellow, Paolo de Renzio, recently presented the findings of the book [*Open Budgets: The Political Economy of Transparency, Participation, and Accountability*](#) at a brown bag lunch hosted by the World Bank's Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) Public Sector Anchor and the Community of Practice on Fiscal Transparency. De Renzio is a co-editor of the book. Joining de Renzio on the panel was Barak Hoffman, who contributed a chapter on budget transparency reform in Tanzania and is a Public Sector Specialist for the PREM Africa Region, World Bank.

They spoke to a packed room on the findings of their research, including how and why improvements in fiscal transparency come about, and under what conditions and through which mechanisms does increased fiscal transparency lead to improved government accountability and responsiveness. Also appearing on the panel as discussants were Anand Rajaram, a Governance Practice Leader with the PREM Africa Region, World Bank, and Robert Hunja, a Manager at the World Bank Institute.



Somewhat surprisingly, there have been few exhaustive studies on the origins of fiscal transparency and the outcomes of budget advocacy. *Open Budgets* attempts to fill this hole by combining the findings from a set of quantitative studies on the effects of political factors, resource abundance, aid dependency, sovereign credit ratings, and human development outcomes on budget transparency across countries, with eight in-depth qualitative country case studies looking at countries' transparency reform trajectories over the past two or three decades.

[Read](#) or [watch](#) de Renzio's presentation.

IBP Launches Webinar Series on Advocacy Impact, by Jennifer Sleboda, International Budget Partnership

On 19 September, IBP held the first webinar in its new Impact Pathways Webinar Series, which focuses on drawing lessons on how civil society budget advocacy can have impact from IBP's [case studies](#). The webinar, "Using Litigation for Budget Advocacy," highlighted the cases of three organizations that have used litigation successfully in their budget advocacy campaigns: *La Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia* (Civil Association for Equity and Justice, or ACIJ) in Argentina and the Treatment Action Campaign and the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa.

The objectives of the webinar, which was facilitated via GoToTraining's online platform, were for participants to pull lessons from, and synthesize this learning across, the litigation case studies, in order to connect what they learned to their organizations' own budget advocacy.

A total of 17 people participated in the webinar, representing seven civil society organizations (CSOs), one donor organization, and IBP, as well as six countries (Argentina, Egypt, India, Mexico, South Africa, and the U.S.).

What was initially planned as a two-hour session turned into a lively three-hour discussion on how to connect budget analyses with litigation, ways to conduct litigation in the face of organizational constraints (e.g., financial resources, access to lawyers), and the diverse situations and contexts in which litigation can be used as an advocacy tactic, among other topics.

Presentations on how organizations have used litigation for advocacy were given by the researcher of the ACIJ case study, as well as staff members of ACIJ, the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, *Sonora Ciudadana* (Mexico), and two South African organizations, the Social Justice Coalition and the Public Service Accountability Monitor.

Overall, the webinar was a success, both in terms of the new learning platform and content. As one participant explained, “I liked the fact that we engaged instantaneously with each other despite the distance. . . .It was also lovely to engage with some of the people whom we read about in the case studies . . . [and] I appreciated the points that showed us how to litigate and when to do so.”

While the discussion was robust, it was difficult in such a short timeframe to dive deeply into all of the issues that arose. To address this in future Impact Pathways webinars, IBP plans to organize the webinars around specific questions, rather than broad themes. This will allow us to frame the conversation more tightly and allow participants to extract more concrete lessons for their work. In response to participant feedback, there will also be fewer presentations and more time for questions and discussion.

The Impact Pathways Webinar Series was developed collaboratively by IBP’s Capacity Building and Learning programs in response to requests made by IBP’s civil society partners. In particular, partners requested opportunities to examine in-depth IBP’s impact case studies, in order to learn about the specific strategies and tactics used by the CSOs in the case studies, as well as to reflect on what makes budget advocacy successful and how the lessons can be incorporated into their own budget advocacy work.

Initially, IBP had planned a three-day workshop in which partners would analyze up to 10 case studies. However, in order to test webinars as a new learning medium, include a broader range of participants in the discussions, facilitate more frequent and less resource-intensive learning opportunities, and focus on fewer case studies at one time, IBP decided to transform the workshop into a webinar series.

Watch this space for information on the next webinar in the Impact Pathways Webinar Series!

Data to Improve Governance

PCIJ’s Money Politics Online: Using Big and Small Data for Transparency, Numeracy, by Malou Mangahas, Executive Director, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism

Six months ago on World Press Freedom Day (3 May 2013), the [Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism](#) (PCIJ) launched the website [Money Politics Online](#), a citizen’s resource and research tool on politics, public funds, elections, and governance in the Philippines. It is PCIJ’s boldest venture yet into the realm of big data, open data, and data journalism.

A nonstock, nonprofit media agency, PCIJ was founded in 1989 to help nurture a culture for investigative reporting. Since then, PCIJ has produced over 1,200 investigative reports and dozens of short and full-length documentaries and books, and conducted over 120 training seminars for journalists across East Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. Investigative reporting has enabled PCIJ to harness journalism for transparency, good governance, and the power of data and information.

Five years ago, PCIJ began growing Money Politics Online one database at a time. The initial harvest of information included 59 gigabytes of unique data sets on 6,500 public officials, public funds, governance, and elections from as far back as 1998. The project has continued to grow, and in 2011, the Open Society Foundation gave PCIJ a three-year grant to develop the first version of the website.

PCIJ built Money Politics Online to promote the Filipino citizen’s right to information and meaningful participation in governance. It connects the dots and loops in the stats of stories that form the core of PCIJ’s work: how the government spends public funds; the wealth of elected and appointed officials; campaign finance and elections; public contracts and contractors; politics and political families; and progress and regress in the national household. The website was conceived and built because PCIJ believes that a few public goals could help good journalism, good citizenship, and good governance to take firm root.

One of those goals is numeracy. While the literacy rate of Filipinos is among the highest in the world, many are not as numerate. But, the most critical issues that impede good governance and development in the Philippines are often issues steeped in numbers, so for citizens to fully engage they must be able to understand these numbers.

Another goal is to promote good recordkeeping in all public agencies as a pillar of good governance. Unfortunately, in the Philippines, there are few good practitioners of archiving, organizing, updating, and sharing data between and among public agencies, and with the citizens and the media.

Money Politics Online is a work in progress. PCIJ continues to upload a steady stream of new data sets, full profiles of local elected officials, and local content on all the provinces, towns, and cities of the Philippines. This work will all be done in time for May 2016, when the citizens of the Philippines will elect a new president, new senators, new congressmen, new governors, and new mayors. With the help of Money Politics Online, the people of the Philippines can write better stories of freedom, transparency, and good governance.

Civil Society Learning from Each Other

Chinese and Indonesian Civil Society Organizations Join Forces to Build Capacity, by Ma Jifang and Zhang Lanying

What are the differences in the context and understanding of budget work between Indonesia and China? Can the experience of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Indonesia be replicated in China? What are the specific human resources and technical expertise needed for budget tracking? What impacts have the Indonesia CSOs had in the past 15 years in budget tracking, and how can their Chinese counterparts learn from their efforts?

With these questions in mind, eight participants from three Chinese CSOs embarked upon a week-long study tour in Jakarta on 16 September.

The purpose of the trip was for the Chinese organizations to learn from their Indonesian counterparts how to:

- mobilize community members to participate in the budget process;
- access budget information;
- work with budget numbers to support civil society's demands;
- determine which advocacy tools and techniques are effective, and how they can be used; and
- establish relationships with government agencies in different ways.

Supported by IBP, the Chinese organizations had all begun piloting budget tracking projects in April 2013. Although all of the groups have experience in working with communities and on public participation, budget analysis was new to them. Eco Canton was established in 2009 and focuses on waste management issues in Guangzhou City. Its current project intends to use information disclosure channels to collect and analyze 2010-13 budget information related to Guangzhou household waste management. Huizhi Participation Center based in Chengdu is committed to public participation and the promotion of social justice and social development. It plans to develop a database of village-level public service funds, as well as case studies on how these funds have been utilized. Shining Stone Community Action Center, a Beijing-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage citizen in public decision making, aims to explore through interviews, group discussions, and documentary research the application for and approval and use of urban community public service funds.



The Chinese delegates met with four key actors in the Indonesian civil society budget movement: Inisiatif, which promotes public policy reform; Lakpesdam, a religious mass organization; Pattiro, which is recognized by both CSOs and government officials for engaging in collaborative initiatives;

Fitra, the leading budget analysis organization; and the Asia Foundation Jakarta Office. Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across Asia. The foundation provides long-term support to these organizations. Civil society budget work in Indonesia began after 1998 and was triggered by Reformasi (when then-President Suharto resigned, ushering in a more open political environment) and the decentralization of budgets. Most CSOs in the country do budget-related work alongside other activities, using this tool to strengthen their advocacy and mobilization, while a few focus primarily on budget-related work.

During the meetings, Chinese participants compared the contexts for budget work and civil society advocacy and identified these differences:

- China's centralization vs. Indonesia's decentralization;
- China's controlled media vs. Indonesia's free media;
- China's one-party political system vs. Indonesia's multiparty system, as well as its free elections;
- Indonesia's enabling environment for CSO development vs. China's weak civil society; and
- The Indonesian government's positive political will to open budgets vs. the Chinese government's unwillingness to open its budgets.

Despite the constraints in promoting budget work in China, participants also saw the spaces and opportunities that are opening up, as the government has begun to encourage innovation to address social problems and to purchase social services from CSOs.

Sharing mutual experiences inspired and enlightened the Chinese participants. Some learned that budget advocacy is at the core of public participation, while others realized that cooperation with the government and decision makers can be applied in China. Others realized that capacity building for local government officials, community members, and the CSO itself, as well as platforms or mechanisms for dialogue are essential to budget work. All the participants acknowledged that the map of the budget cycle that identified stakeholders and included a timeline of the budget process that the Indonesia CSOs prepared was a very useful tool that they wanted to develop for use in their country.

The study tour proved to be mutually beneficial as the Indonesian organizations were able to learn more about the experiences and challenges of their Chinese counterparts. All of the participants expect to continue regular dialogues with each other and look forward to continued cooperation in the future.

Read about other learning exchanges in IBP's [Learning from Each Other series](#).

Legislative Win for Food Security

Budgeting for Food Security in India, by Ravi Duggal, International Budget Partnership

The civil society struggle to ensure the right to food in India is more than a decade old. In 2009 the United Progressive Alliance promised that it would secure this right if elected through a similar law to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which helps to realize the Right to Work. A bill was introduced in parliament, where it stalled. Finally this year the ruling alliance decided to push hard to pass the legislation. On 26 August 2013, after debate and amendments led by the Right to Food Movement and some members of parliament, the Lower House passed a bill that seeks to secure the nutrition of these groups:

- the *antyodaya* (absolute poor) and priority households (up to 75 percent of rural and 50 percent of urban households);
- all pregnant and lactating mothers;
- children from six months to 14 years old; and
- all malnourished children.

Health Care and Budgets

How Are Village Level Public Funds Being Utilized? A Study of Flexible Funds in Health Facilities in India, by Shweta Marathe, Support for Advocacy and Training into Health Initiatives (SATHI)

In 2005 the government of India began implementing the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), which provides flexible funds to local health institutions to promote accessible and effective health care for the rural population. These innovative funds include the Annual Maintenance Grant (AMG), the Patient Welfare Grant (PWG), and Untied Funds (UF).

About the study

Patients' Welfare Committees (PWCs) have been established in health facilities to ensure proper utilization of the NRHM funds. Through the Community-Based Monitoring and Planning Process (CBMP), it has been repeatedly reported that there have been several problems with the spending of the funds and the functioning of the PWCs.¹ With this in mind, a study was designed to evaluate how the funds are being managed by tracking the expenditures, the decision making processes, and how records of expenditures are maintained. Out of a total of 15 primary health centers (PHCs) under community-based monitoring in Pune District, five were selected by random sampling, and data was collected for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 budget years.

Key findings

- **Infrastructure improvements take place, but without spending on innovations.**
The study found that the funds were typically spent on operational costs and capital outlay, including the purchase and maintenance of equipment, materials, and facilities. Innovative use of the funds for patient's welfare, though expected, was not observed in any of the elected PHCs.
- **Purchases were made without assessing patients' needs.**
In several instances, materials and equipment were purchased by district level officials without consulting the local PHC. Due to insufficient staff, a lack of basic infrastructure, and little to no demand for them, these purchases are currently not being used.
- **Local purchases of commonly required medicines demonstrates a lack of district-level supplies.**
Though guidelines dictate that the funds should only be used to purchase medicine in emergencies, 25 to 30 percent of the funds were spent to procure commonly required medicines.
- **The lack of involvement of PWC members in decision making.**
Only between 10 to 20 percent of the decisions were made by PWC members; and there were even instances of members who did not know that they belonged to a PWC.
- **PWG funds are utilized the least.**
During both budget years, 40 percent of the PWG were utilized in the studied PHCs, as opposed to 70 percent of the UF and 80 percent of the AMG funds. This is likely due to the fact that, as per guidelines, AMG and UF grants are disbursed after deducting the balance amount of the previous year, while PWG grants are disbursed to all health institutes regardless of the balance from last year. Thus if a significant PWG balance was carried forward little of the new funds would be used.
- **Irregularities in record keeping.**
The study found that essential details, including dates and the signature of the receiver, were not included in 70 to 80 percent of the total bills and vouchers. Overwriting was also noted on several bills, and none of the studied PHCs had received visits from any auditors.

The findings clearly indicate the need for expenditure planning and the involvement of PWC members in the planning process. To this end, the study recommends the following:

¹ Under the NRHM, Community Based Monitoring and Planning (CBMP) process is being implemented in 13 selected districts. SATHI is a state nodal NGO for implementing this process in Maharashtra.

- Orientations and workshops should be organized to help build capacity of PWC members and teach them decentralized health planning.
- Committee meetings should be held regularly and members should actively participate in every meeting.
- Need-based decisions on the expenditure of funds should be made by committee members only.
- Follow up on and implementation of the decisions taken during the meetings.
- Committee members should be trained on the guidelines for the use of funds.
- Transparency in the expenditure of funds should be encouraged.
- There should be a mechanism to monitor the expenditure of the funds.

While the flexible funds provided by the NHRM have significant potential to positively affect the lives and health of people in rural communities, the program's problems should not be overlooked.

Committee members should shoulder their responsibilities actively, and the government should provide timely trainings, emphasize planning, establish mechanisms to monitor the expenditure, and consider all the above recommendations for the better use of the funds. Only then will the purpose of the funds be truly realized.

The author gratefully acknowledges the participating organizations in Pune for their cooperation in data collection and Deepali Yakkundi for data processing and analysis assistance.

For more information on SATHI's work, please visit their [website](#) or [contact](#) the author.

Publications

IBP Publications

IBP has recently added several new publications to the online [library](#). These new Budget Briefs and Policy Notes focus on budget transparency and participation and service delivery in different country contexts:

- [Budget Brief No. 20 – Toward Public Participation in the County Budget Process in Kenya: Principles and Lessons from the Former Local Authority Service Delivery Action Program \(LASDAP\)](#)
- [Key Challenges and Opportunities for Budget Transparency in Tunisia](#)
- [Getting a Seat at the Table: Civil Society Advocacy for Budget Transparency in “Untransparent” Countries](#)

Further Reading from the Field – Relevant coverage of budget issues and civil society's engagement in public budgeting from academia and professional journals

From 24-26 October, the 3rd Global Conference on Transparency Research took place. The conference brought together academics, policy makers, and interest group representatives to discuss and present research on a variety of transparency issues, including access to government information and transparency relationships between governments and private/nonprofit entities and among government entities. The [papers presented at the conference](#) covered a variety of transparency-related issues, such as accountability ecosystems and transparency and trust.

In the article, "[Transparency and Political Budget Cycles at Municipal Level](#)," published in the *Swiss Political Science Review*, authors from the University of Murcia analyze the effect of municipal financial transparency on the magnitude of political budget cycles. Covering Spain's largest municipalities from 1999-2009, the authors use the financial transparency index of Transparency International Spain to show how municipal transparency affects total spending, capital spending, and taxes at the municipal level.

A recent paper, "[The MDGs, Empowerment and Accountability in Africa: Retrospect and Prospects](#)," published in the *IDS Bulletin*, highlights some of the discontent with the governance impacts of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa. The author of the paper highlights the need for closer attention to local contexts, institutions, and actors in Africa and a less donor-dominated approach to a post-2015 global development agenda in the quest to advance democratic governance.

Job Announcement

IBP Position Available: Training Program Officer

IBP is seeking a Training Program Officer for its Capacity Building team, which leads the training and learning support for all IBP country programs that aim to shift national and subnational budget policy, processes, and outcomes toward greater transparency, participation, and accountability. The Training Program Officer is expected to lead on the conceptualization, design, delivery, and evaluation of specific capacity building interventions to be offered to IBP partners.

[Learn more](#) about the position and how to apply.