

BWG Annual Report – 2013.

Objective 1: The effectiveness of the accountability system including planning, expenditure, performance, integrity and oversight of government at both central and local level is systematically analyzed and monitored, and the resulting evidence is used by a broad base of civil society and advocacy groups to improve the effectiveness and quality of their advocacy.

The 2013 Annual Plan:

In keeping with objective 1 of the strategic plan for 2011/13 – as outlined above, the following is an update of the progress of implementation of activities agreed upon in the 2013 Annual Plan of the Budget Working Group (BWG).

- **Preparation of the Citizen's Budget**

There has been a commitment by the Ministry of Finance to produce the Citizens' Budget for every financial year. This initiative was taken over by the Ministry starting with the 2011/12 budget.

The department keeps following up with the Ministry of Finance regarding this activity. Early October this year, the Ministry of Finance contacted PF BWG to input on the draft document of the Citizens Budget for 2013/14. BWG members met with the officials from the Ministry and discussed the draft document for finalization.

The document has been printed. An effective mechanism is being devised to ensure that copies reach as many stakeholders as possible and that the document is being used to inform the upcoming budget.

- **Localization of the Open Budget Index (OBI)**

This activity aims to measure the transparency of the budget process at local level, looking specifically at the issue of access to budget information as well as the mechanisms that are in place to influence citizen participation in the process. In May this year, a field visit was done in Mbeya rural, Ileje and Mbozi in which filling in of the questionnaires started. This was done in collaboration with our partner MIICO. The exercise of filling in the questionnaires is still on going.

In October this year a field visit was made and data collection has been done for Mbozi and Ileje districts. As for Mbeya rural, there has been a challenge as the responsible organization that was supposed to collect data has not submitted the questionnaires. A report is being put together to share the findings in the areas where data collection was possible as well as documenting the lessons that were learnt from the pilot study. These will be shared with the officials of the respective LGAs for further discussion and suggest improvement measures to ensure budget transparency at the local level.

- **Budget working Group pre Budget statement**

The BWG published a pre-budget statement condemning the move by the Parliament not to discuss the report by the CAG during the Bunge Budget session. The parliament during a media briefing on Monday, 4th of April 2013, through the National Assembly's Assistant Director of Information, Mr. Deogratius Egidio

explained to the journalists that due to limited time and the change of timetable, the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) report was not going to be discussed during the ongoing budget meeting.

This decision by the Parliament was condemned because the report carries with it important information that may inform the next budget allocations. The key messages that the statement carried include: Non discussion of the CAG's report despite his revelation of corruption and embezzlement of public funds, consequences of abolishing the Parastatal Organizations Accounts Committee (POAC) and the fact that the Parliament seems to take for granted the trust that has been given to it by the public. This press statement was also translated into Swahili and published in the press on 18th April 2013.

- **The Annual Review of Budget Support.**

In October this year, Policy Forum organized for a session between CSOs and Development Partners in preparation of the Annual Review of the Budget Support. This was done ahead of the meeting between government and DPs on the same subject. Since CSOs are not part of the review meeting, it was suggested that they (CSOs) meet with DPs and provide them with inputs for the annual review.

This session between CSOs among them members of the BWG and DPs was held at the British Council on 11th October 2013. Inputs were provided on what CSOs would like to provide as input to the GBS Annual Review to be held on 18.11.2013 and the future nature of cooperation between CSOs and DPs around GBS issues

It was a good opportunity for CSO to air views and also to lobby DPs to influence the government to open up more space for CSOs in GBS and other relevant dialogue processes.

- **Analysis of 2013/14 National Budget**

The Secretariat usually dedicates the breakfast debate for the month of June to be prepared by the Budget working Group. For this year, the breakfast debate that will be prepared by the BWG will fall on July 2013 because of the changes in the budget cycle. It has been agreed by the group that for this year, we try finding one of the Members of Parliament (MP) to attend and share with the audience views on the new budget cycle. There will also be a discussion on the Parliamentary Budget Office which has been an agenda for the CSOs for quite a while. The presentations and discussions will all be uploaded on our website (www.policyforum.or.tz).

The BWG prepared policy briefs based on the 2013/14 budget. The briefs will be widely shared and discussed amongst stakeholders to better inform the budgeting exercise, topics covered are on:

Education the brief examines some of the missed opportunities that if taken, can help transform education in Tanzania.

Tanzania and the problem of Tax exemption: it looks at whether the government's budget is in line with the declared revenue policies, particularly from the perspective of tax exemption reduction.

A brief on Health: explain the perspective on the ministry of Health social welfare in their budget proposal for 2013/14, and urge the ministry to elaborate more on how funds will be spent.

Water brief: Tanzania Water sector Budget analysis for phase 1 of the water sector development programme.

All these policy briefs can be found on our website through this link. <http://www.policyforum-tz.org/budget-briefs>

- **Analytical think piece**

Following the changing landscape of Tanzania's development cooperation, especially by the emergence of new players Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, collectively known as BRICS, PF has been enthusiastic to analyse the current interest of the BRICS- on Tanzania (and vice versa - Tanzania's enthusiasm with these countries), by providing a perspective on increasing knowledge and understanding of BRICS' role and impact in Tanzania, an East African and low-income nation.

This analysis has been finalized and is now with the printers. It is expected that launching of the document will be done in Feb 2014 during a monthly breakfast debate.

- **Governance Study**

Policy Forum produces the Tanzania Governance Reviews (TGR) report every year focusing on governance and accountability issues that occurred throughout the year. Preparation and production of the 2012 report was done this year and the report has mainly featured more prominently the work our members do particularly focusing on evident success and challenges faced by organizations doing advocacy work at both local and national level, on topics to do with demanding accountability and articulating citizens' voice.

The report was launched on 29th November 2013 during a breakfast debate at the British Council which was well attended. It stimulated discussion amongst different stakeholders ranging from academicians to ordinary citizens. It is expected that the report will be disseminated widely as well as preparing a brief based on it for advocacy purposes.

CHALLENGE.

- Members commitment-minimal-organizational versus BWG work

LESSONS LEARNT.

- BWG has learnt that, the choice of advocacy strategies depends on the country's existing social and political context and the government's willingness to work with CSOs. Public campaign works most effectively where the media is vibrant and citizens use their voices to demand for

accountability. Lobbying and negotiation (engagement) applies when the government is willing to work with CSOs and oversight bodies are stronger and have power to influence changes.

- Effective Budget advocacy should be aligned with the budget cycle. If one wants to influence changes, understanding the budget process matters as it facilitates synchronization of budget advocacy with the budget cycle. For example, if one wants to influence budget allocation during the planning phase, then one should know the timing of the planning process at both central and sub-national level in order to understand various events happening during budget planning.
- Budget advocacy is very unpredictable and one can never be certain of what will be implemented or advocated at any time as things keep changing. As a result organizations must be flexible and ready to address the ongoing changes.
- Politics has a lot of influence in budget work one must always take this into contention.