

Chapter 24

Case Study Theme 4: Youth Budgets – Ghana and Uganda

Box 24.1 SDG 10 Reducing Inequality

Target: 10.2 Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, ethnicity, origin, or economic or other status

Sector: Finance

Issue: Unequal financial allocations to meet young people's needs

Strategy: Youth budgets in Ghana and Uganda

24.1 Introduction

The two examples in this chapter look at how a youth perspective on budgeting can help integrate youth priorities, through young people's assessment of needs within a sector and the translation of those needs into financial value. This involves participation in budget programmes to ensure that youth-specific expenditure is costed into budgeting through evidence-based processes.

The case of Ghana is a grassroots process that influenced local government budgets, and ultimately began influencing national programmes and budgets as well.

The case of Uganda is a national-level initiative to integrate youth budgeting into national frameworks. It is set against SDG 10: Reducing Inequality, as it clearly demonstrates the importance of equitable financing to ensure equal development outcomes for young people.

24.2 Why youth budgeting?

Youth-focused budgeting and youth participation in budget assessment and planning is a central means to ensure that young people obtain equitable outcomes from development processes. The case studies below also provide an indication that there can be no meaningful youth budgeting without the participation

of young people themselves in identifying their legitimate needs and scrutinising government budgets to ensure adequate allocation to achieve targeted outcomes.

These case studies focus on two initiatives:

1. An initiative by Plan Ghana in the Awutu-Senya District¹ to train and mobilise young people to understand youth rights, assess policies and programmes that translate rights into development frameworks and action, and identify allocation, expenditure and outcomes in relation to budgets. This is an example of how an initiative that began at the local government level ultimately affected national budget processes.
2. A national state initiative in Uganda to integrate youth budgeting into national planning.

24.3 What is participatory youth budgeting?

Participatory youth budgeting refers to young people's involvement in budget analysis, budget formulation, tracking expenditure against allocation and assessing the effectiveness of expenditure in relation to outcomes. The aspiration of the youth budgeting process in Ghana was that young people's involvement in budget analysis, formulation and M&E will make neglect of youth issues such as education, access to healthcare etc. in national planning a thing of the past. It was a remarkable attempt to take budgeting away from technocrats and economists and demystify the budget process, so that young people could understand government processes, and participate and contribute to make (in this case) local government budgeting more relevant and responsive to young people's needs. This would allow the mainstreaming of youth concerns into local government financial planning processes and could easily be replicated at the national level.

24.4 The youth budget initiative, Ghana

The project: Plan Ghana, in co-operation with the Social Development Centre, formulated the youth budget process as a pilot for replication in other West African countries.

The project trained young people in budget advocacy, and created the Youth Budget Advocacy Group of Awutu-Senya District (Y-BAGAS).

Method: Ten young men and women aged 12–30 were selected for the project. Analysis of budgeting was linked to a rights-based approach and the study of international human rights instruments that formed the basis of identifying state priorities for young people. Through the training, young people could understand the budget cycle, local and national budget documents, and how these can be influenced at each stage in the process. Participants also learnt means of calculating growth rates and engaging in trend analysis of budget figures. Brainstorming and group exercises highlighted the implications of budgets for vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

The youth budgeting process included the steps set out in Figure 24.1.

The youth groups also used typically youth-friendly methods of communicating their message to authorities, including putting on a role-play activity depicting how their district assembly budget could address the basic needs of children, especially for education, health and water. All these activities were interpreted in the local language, thereby reaching more participants. This activity generated a lot of interest and questions, and the youth responded with practical examples using preliminary findings from their field survey.

Subsequent engagement of these young people in a forum of civil society organisations to inform Ghana’s 2011 budget statement resulted in their voices being heard at the national level. This reportedly led to the retention of critical programmes – such as the Youth in Agriculture programme – due to the advocacy of youth budget groups.² Local authorities, too, began attaching greater importance to young people’s views, as their level of skills in data analysis and advocacy increased.

Institutionalising young people’s participation in budget analysis, advocacy and assessing allocation, expenditure and impact at a much larger scale:

Figure 24.1 Youth budgeting process



- can have transformational impacts in the equitable distribution of resources for young people in development planning; and
- opens young people's eyes to inequities in development planning, and motivates and enables their agency in striving for social equity; this ultimately enhances young people's skills and confidence to participate more fully and effectively in public life.

Philomena, an 18-year-old girl, told the report writers:

I am very glad I took part in this survey, because it helped me to be more conscious about how some children are denied access to basic educational facilities, although government and local authorities are mandated to meet these needs. This situation boosted my morale to advocate more for these voiceless children to be heard.

Mohammed A, aged 21 and a member of Y-BAGAS, evaluates himself:

Ever since I was exposed to the concept of budgeting, I am able to write articles and contribute to some policy discussions. I am proud to call myself a budget expert, because I can without any help analyse my district budget and carry out effective advocacy for children's issues to be considered in budgeting.

24.5 Youth budgets at the national level, Uganda

The project: This national Ugandan example aims to tackle negative youth outcomes through pro-youth budgeting, which is envisaged to address high levels of youth unemployment despite consistent economic growth.³

The project was based on the acknowledgement by the government of the negative implications for the economy if young people are not productive. The government recognised that, to effectively address the challenges and capitalise on the benefits of youth, it must prioritise youth throughout the national budgeting process. The 'Youth Budget Prioritization – the Way to Go'⁴ document is a budget analysis paper by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA)⁵ and analyses the various sections and sectors of the budget with specific youth priority allocations.

It provides:

- specific dollar amounts allocated to youth within each sector;
- an overview of the various youth-serving programmes catered for within the budgetary period; and
- information on unfunded youth priorities to facilitate advocacy for additional budget allocations for youth.

24.6 Example observations and recommendations

Jobs: Among the recommendations provided in the paper by the UPFYA, one example of a gap identified was between amounts committed and actual spending on some programmes such as the Promotion of Green Jobs and Fair Labour Market. The planned cost for ten years was 863 billion Uganda shillings (USh), with USh86.30 billion being allocated each year. However, with only a small percentage being provided for in the 2016/17 budget, there was a gap of USh62.80 billion, which would restrict the reach of the programme.

Reflecting these observations, the UPFYA has recommended additional allocations in accordance with the previous budgetary commitment, particularly given the urgency required to address youth unemployment challenges.

Health: Another example is the analysis of the health budget. The health sector budget saw increases over a financial year which were committed to improving service delivery to adequately target new HIV infections, maternal/child/family planning and care, as well as to rehabilitate health facilities. However, the UPFYA observed that the amount allocated to health centre upgrades intended to offer improved SRH services did not have an allocation in the following year, which would mean that access to SRH services would still be a challenge for young people, particularly those in rural areas. Recommendations included funding for a national health insurance scheme to be created as a 'safety net' for young people who are unable to access health services.

Outcomes: Youth-focused budget analysis provides evidence to promote financial transparency and accountability of government spending for young people, thus enhancing government accountability towards youth. It can also act as a

point of advocacy for prioritising youth-focused allocations across sectors and empower young people with information on youth budgeting.

The Ugandan example demonstrates that government will be better able to deliver outcomes for youth, as these processes facilitate:

- a comprehensive youth analysis from the planning stage, with youth budgeting as a key part of the process, whereby cross-sectoral implications are outlined from the onset;
- adequate financial allocations, which ensure effective implementation; and
- even greater allocations to ensure youth-specific planning and meeting youth targets through the years in development planning.

These youth-focused budget analyses can put forward recommendations on funding increases or decreases, based on a programme's success and impact. For example, youth budget prioritisation can highlight key unfunded priorities, such as health centres in the case of Uganda. It also raises the level of transparency and accountability on the part of the government, along with its financial commitment to youth development.

This approach helps governments answer the questions: Are we meeting the needs of youth through federal and national spending? Are the right areas being sufficiently and effectively funded? What is the impact and value of youth-specific initiatives that have been completed and assessed? and How are each of our agencies prioritising youth and delivering impacts for youth with budget support?

24.7 Implications : what enablers/disablers influenced the process?

Considering the Enablers Framework, the societal, structural, institutional and impact factors set out in Table 24.1 help us understand structural and organisational enablers in youth budgeting as exemplified in the two stories from Ghana and Uganda.

Table 24.1 Youth budget case studies: analysis of enablers and disablers

| Enablers/disablers | Elaboration |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Societal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of young people as partners in development |
| Structural – macro | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments at the level of national planning and finance bodies for youth-centric planning across sectors |
| Structural – meso | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will to integrate youth mainstreaming into national planning |
| Organisational – structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehension of the specific ways in which young people are affected by planning and budgeting that do not take their concerns into account • Understanding the critical role of young people in designing programmes and budgets for those programmes • Linking local processes to national planning • Setting in place youth-participatory mechanisms • Building research capacity for youth-specific programme and budget analysis |
| Organisational – process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing mechanisms for youth-centred planning and budgeting • Adequately costed programme commitments for young people across sectors |
| Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cross-sectoral and co-ordinated outcomes for young people |

Governments and youth sector organisations planning to implement youth budgeting would need to:

- collaborate with the youth sector to apply a youth lens to inform planning and budgeting;
- set in place capacity building for finance and planning staff on youth development and building in multi-sectoral youth-specific concerns to national planning, including putting in place youth participation structures;
- work with specific sectors to ensure capacity building for youth-specific planning and budgeting;
- ensure that local government lessons are considered and integrated into national planning; and
- ensure youth-friendly approaches to working with young people through the introduction of youth work processes (Chapter 6).

Notes

- 1 Bani-Agudego et al. 2011.
- 2 Coalition of Youth Development Organisations in Ghana 2012, 4.
- 3 Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2010.
- 4 Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs 2016.
- 5 The UPFYA is an advocacy platform focusing on influencing youth mainstreaming issues and approaches ‘through legislation, budget appropriations and oversight’. It has been functioning since 2008 and comprises 78 youth members of parliament.

References

- Bani-Agudego, C, GC Yorke, and AA Koudhoh, (2011), *Seeing from Our Perspectives: Youth Budget Advocacy in Ghana, in Participatory Learning and Action*, 2011, available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03202.pdf>
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- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2010), *Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope: A Cross-Sectoral Situational Analysis on Youth in Uganda, Vol. II, The Report on the Uganda National Household Survey 2009/2010*, available at: http://www.iyfnet.org/sites/default/files/YouthMap_Uganda_Vol2.pdf
- Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (2016), ‘National Budget FY 2016/17: Youth Budget Prioritization the Way to Go’, UPFYA Budget Analysis Paper No. 1/June 2016.