

A2. What is budget advocacy? Who does it and why?

For at least 20 years, a number of citizen groups and CSOs have expressed concern about the way in which governments decide and use public resources. A global community of practice of civil society budget work has developed and evolved, and their research, analysis and advocacy strategies have become more and more sophisticated. Today, well over 200 CSOs direct the vast majority of their work to budget advocacy on a wide array of issues, using different methods, tactics and approaches. Civil society groups that focus more on sectors or issues (such as health, education, human rights, gender equality, poverty) have also adopted budget analysis and budget advocacy as components of their work.

The key reference for civil society budget advocacy around the world is the IBP, which advocates for budget transparency and accountability at global level and supports a variety of civil society groups engaged in budget-related research and advocacy, including work on budget transparency. As one of the key references for this work, their definitions of budget advocacy are useful.

Applied analysis is undertaken with the explicit intention of advancing policy goals, such as assisting the most disadvantaged in society. It is not simply research for the sake of research. While applied budget work demands quality analysis, it also requires that its findings be presented in a way that maximizes its impact on the policy debate (83).

The logic of budget advocacy work is to use information and persuasion in order to ensure that needed services and interventions are delivered by those who are meant to deliver them. The impact that civil society groups are trying to achieve with budget advocacy therefore almost always involves a causal chain of events. By influencing the decision-making sequence and the process of public service delivery, budget advocacy groups generally aim to trigger impact via the existing infrastructure and/or delivery mechanisms of the public sector. They try to make the system operate more optimally for the people it is meant to serve (84) (2015).

When CSOs can combine an in-depth knowledge of a policy issue, such as health or education, with a solid knowledge of budgets and an effective advocacy strategy they can positively influence policy decisions. Strengthening civil society's ability to analyze budgets and participate effectively can play an integral role not only in policies and service delivery but also in constructing a more open and participatory democratic society (85) (2019).

These definitions indicate a key element of budget advocacy: it necessarily entails some budget analysis, as it is the results of analysis that provide the evidence on which to base solid arguments for change or impacts of the budget. Chapter 2 of this toolkit provides content and tools to understand and begin to undertake simple budget analysis relevant for UHC. For the

purposes of CSO budget advocacy, it is important to understand what types of organizations engage in budget advocacy and their motivation. These include the following.

- **Civil society budget organizations**, concerned primarily with budgets, budget systems and budget accountability in general. They advocate for opening of budget information, increasing citizen participation in decisions about the budget and better accountability for overall use of public resources.
 - The International Budget Partnership (IBP)
 - Fundar, Centre for Analysis and Research, Mexico
 - Centre on Budget and Governance Accountability, India
- **Sector- or issue-specific CSOs**, concerned with social development, such as health, education, water and sanitation and gender equality. They are not commonly recognized as budget organizations, but they undertake budget analysis and advocacy to achieve policy changes in these sectors. Extensive budget advocacy has developed in the health sector, much of it linked to the Millennium Development Goals and the SDGs.
 - Population Action International
 - Save the Children
 - Haki Elimu, United Republic of Tanzania
 - Groupe de Recherche en Economie Appliquée et Théorique, Mali
- **Human rights organizations** (and organizations with a human rights approach) promote, protect and advance human rights, such as economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights. They use budget analysis and budget advocacy to advance these rights or to measure the extent to which a government is advancing towards them. A body of work has emerged in civil society linking human rights and budgets; see for instance Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and government budgets (86).
 - Instituto de Estudos Socio-Economicos, Brazil
 - Muslims for Human Rights, Kenya
- **Community organizations** are usually subnational or local groups comprising members of the community. Their concerns commonly include the provision of basic goods and services such as housing, schools, clinics, medicines and basic water and sanitation. They engage in advocacy and citizen mobilization and have recently begun to use simple budget analysis to further their demands.
 - Omar Asghar Khan Development Foundation, Pakistan
 - Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, Samaan Samarthan and Supporting Association for Thematic and Holistic Initiatives, India
 - Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government, Philippines
- **Social movements and coalitions** are CSOs that include broader movements on issues or more formal national or international coalitions campaigning for a cause. They also engage in budget advocacy, with both movements to foster greater budget transparency

and accountability and those for specific issues or themes, the latter advocating for better use of resources for global concerns such as UHC and other health-related issues.

- Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN)
- African Health Budget Network
- People's Health Movement
- Treatment Action Campaign, South Africa
- Uganda Debt Network, Uganda
- Red de Justicia Fiscal de América Latina y el Caribe