

B1. What the media can do

“Media” encompass all means of information and communication available to people, including mobile and Internet technologies (98). The media can engage in health budget accountability by:

- empowering audiences,
- giving audiences a voice and
- creating space for decision-makers and citizens to discuss challenges and find solutions together (99).

They may help audiences to understand their right to health, health budgets and the link to their health. It will enable them to understand how they can and wish to have opportunities to hold budget decision-makers to account.

The participation of media in communication on health and development activities can strengthen the voices of ordinary citizens and ensure their involvement in decisions that affect them, their families and their communities. People who are directly affected by an issue should be able to understand the ability and experience of the media and build on it. Participation increases the impact of health and development activities and leads to long-term sustainability as individuals and groups become actively committed and increasingly capable of improving their health and living conditions (100).

Two-way and multi-way conversations are critical, and the media can ensure that both citizens and budget decision-makers can discuss health service provision. Journalists can also share evidence about whether governments are meeting their budget commitments for health and, if they are not, help citizens to question them about why they are not.

Interviews, podcasts, social media posts, radio, television, features, investigations, “vox pops” and other media formats must be guided by the principles of public interest, made interesting, engaging and relevant and respect the ethical values of journalism.