



# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

Evidence and Guidance on Working with Parliaments on Budget Advocacy, Monitoring and Oversight for Children's Rights: Synthesis of Findings

Andrés Mejía Acosta

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Programme Division, New York 2016

DISCLAIMER: The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this working paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF or of the United Nations. The text has not been edited to official publication standards, and UNICEF accepts no responsibility for errors. The designations in this publication do not imply an opinion on legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers.

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

## **Acknowledgements**

This report was written by Andrés Mejía Acosta (King's College London) under the guidance of David Ponet (UNICEF New York) and Matthew Cummins (UNICEF New York).

This exercise benefitted immensely from the support and inputs from UNICEF staff, including: Shafiqul Islam (UNICEF Bangladesh), Sylvain Nkwenkeu Fils (UNICEF Burkina Faso), Michel Guinand (UNICEF Ecuador), Hideyuki Tsuruoka and Tinatin Baum (UNICEF Georgia), Charles Drzadosi (UNICEF Ghana), Fara Emile Tenguiano (UNICEF Guinea Bissau), Randa Nubani (UNICEF Jordan), Dren Rexha (UNICEF Kosovo), Erika Strand and Ana Maria Guemez (UNICEF Mexico), Diego Angemi and Maricar Garde (UNICEF Uganda), and Yoshimi Nishino (UNICEF Vietnam).

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. A Political Economy Framework for Understanding Parliamentary Engagement</b> 2	
2.1. PF4C strategies, the budget process and budget outcomes .....	2
2.2. Understanding the main PF4C outcomes .....	4
2.3. Budget transparency and outcomes for children .....	5
<b>3. The Role of Legislatures in Enhancing Advocacy, Monitoring and Oversight of Budgets for Children</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1. The impact of legislatures in the budget making process .....	8
3.1.1. Individual motivations .....	9
3.1.2. Committee structure and staffing capacity .....	10
3.1.3. Regime type, division of powers and party competition .....	11
3.1.4. Budget approval and the electoral calendar .....	12
3.2. The impact of non-legislative actors on the budget process .....	13
3.2.1. The executive .....	13
3.2.2. Line ministers and sub-national authorities .....	13
3.2.3. The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) .....	14
3.3. The broader enabling environment: State revenues and state capacity .....	15
3.3.1. The nature of government revenues .....	15
3.3.2. Quality of government institutions .....	15
3.4. Discussion: Budget politics matter .....	16
<b>4. UNICEF Experiences with Parliamentary Engagement</b> .....	<b>18</b>
4.1. Mapping the extent of UNICEF’s program involvement around PF4C .....	19
4.2. UNICEF’s country experiences with parliamentary engagement .....	20
4.2.1. What does UNICEF advocate for? .....	20
4.2.2. Country engagement strategies: Working WITH parliaments .....	21
4.2.3. Country engagement strategies: Working AROUND parliaments .....	23
4.2.4. Capacities of UNICEF COs .....	24
<b>5. Strategies to Influence Parliaments on Budgets for Children</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Annex. Interview Questionnaire</b> .....	<b>33</b>

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

## Acronyms

CO	(UNICEF) Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EITI	Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative
HDI	Human Development Index
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MP	Member of Parliament
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
OBI	Open Budget Index
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys
PEM	Public Expenditure Management
PF4C	Public Finance for Children
PFM	Public Financial Management
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## 1. Introduction

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) recognizes that the proactive, transparent and balanced management of a country’s public finances is instrumental for promoting and protecting children’s rights. To that effect, UNICEF’s public finance for children (PF4C) agenda seeks to tackle “budget and public financial management (PFM)-related bottlenecks and barriers to ensure that inputs are translated into intended outputs and positive outcomes for children.” In 2014, UNICEF produced [\*A Global Stocktake of UNICEF’s Programme Activities on PF4C\*](#) to identify the relevant institutions and arenas where PF4C takes place, the range of influential policy and political stakeholders, a proposed “pathway of change,” and some preliminary trends and policy lessons emerging from the experience of COs (COs) working on PF4C.

This working paper seeks to document the current and potential role that parliaments around the world (Legislatures, Congresses and Assemblies) play to advocate, approve, monitor and oversee the allocation of public funds for the realization of children’s rights. Legislative bodies have tremendous potential to facilitate deliberations across multiple groups such as business groups, academics, policy lobbies and civil society organizations (CSOs) to develop broad-based consensus around budgetary priorities (Wehner 2005). Parliaments, however, often lack the capacity or resources to ensure the adequate design and planning of programs and services to serve the needs of the most vulnerable (Stapenhurst 2004). Some of the initiatives considered to enhance the transparent and accountable influence of parliaments in the budget process include building horizontal and vertical alliances between relevant actors, surfacing and compiling valid information, supporting legal empowerment and providing international support (Carlitz 2013).

This paper adopts a political economy approach to identify why and when different stakeholders engage with parliaments to enhance children’s welfare. The aim is to identify legislative and non-legislative factors that contribute to effective PF4C activities at the country level. The collected evidence comes from a comparative assessment of practices across different political systems as well as from the experience of select UNICEF COs.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses the characteristics and advantages of adopting a political economy approach for understanding parliamentary engagement. Section 3 looks at the different roles played by legislatures, legislators and other institutional factors along the stages of the budget process to explain the link between an enabling environment, greater budget transparency and improved public finance outcomes for children. Section 4 offers a more detailed and qualitative assessment of why and when PF4C activism is likely to work, based on the experiences of UNICEF COs. Section 5 summarizes the qualitative and quantitative data collected in the previous sections in order to offer effective advocacy strategies that are sensitive to specific countries and types of budgetary processes. Section 6 concludes.

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

Note that the findings from this paper are further reflected in the companion product, “Working with Parliaments on Budgets for Child Rights: A Guide for UNICEF Country Offices,” which provides detailed analysis and guidance to inform programming at the country level.

## 2. A Political Economy Framework for Understanding Parliamentary Engagement

The main contribution [\*A Global Stocktake of UNICEF’s Programme Activities on PF4C\*](#) is to argue that “greater transparency, efficiency, equity and adequacy of investments” can effectively help advance children’s rights. While this is a powerful narrative, there are practical challenges that need further attention. From a public policy perspective, the ideal of transparent, efficient, equitable and adequate investments for children requires considerable negotiations to reconcile the preferences and political priorities of different stakeholders as well as a favorable environment to facilitate consensus; for UNICEF, this underscores the need to develop a skillful engagement strategy. This section seeks to briefly illustrate how different actors, institutions and the environment interact to produce improved investments for children (a theory of change) and how effective PF4C strategies can contribute to that effort.

### 2.1. PF4C strategies, the budget process and budget outcomes

The effective impact of PF4C strategies on the budget process and budget outcomes is mediated by a series of legislative, non-legislative and external constraints. From a political economy perspective, budgetary actors have different motivations and priorities to advance these strategies.

Conventionally, public expenditure management (PEM) approaches—adopted by the World Bank in the 1990’s—promoted the adoption of tighter fiscal rules, advocated for budget players with stronger policymaking powers and recommended the dissemination of budgetary information as ways to ensure greater fiscal discipline and efficient spending (Schick 1998).<sup>1</sup> More recently, two important changes have taken place to better understand the workings and outcomes of the budget process:

1. An explicit recognition of other desirable budget outcomes that go beyond fiscal discipline or effectiveness to include budget transparency and equity; and

---

<sup>1</sup> PEM recommendations would include, for example, the strengthening of rules for fiscal discipline through predetermined ceilings or targets according to Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) or program evaluations, or the strengthening of agenda setting powers for finance ministers and line managers. Yet, Schick documents in great detail the ways in which such rules were often circumvented for political gain, particularly during electoral years (Schick 1998).

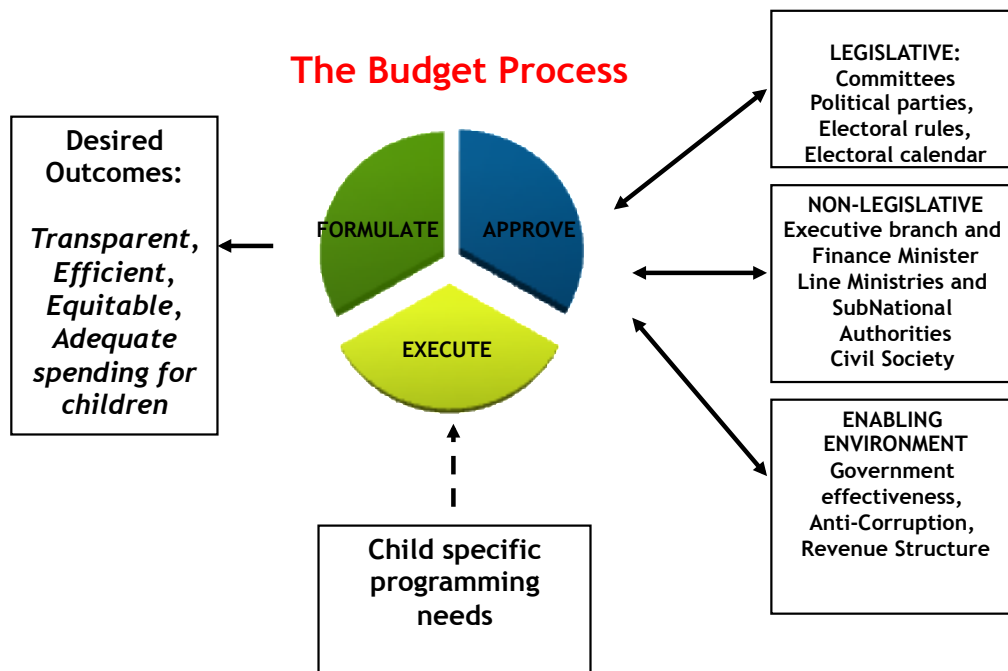
# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

2. An explicit recognition that budget actors operate under formal and informal rules of the game, have multiple motivations (and constraints) to collaborate (or not) and that these strategies constantly change depending on the broader environment (Hallerberg, Scartascini and Stein 2009).

Figure 1 offers a simple approach to understand budget making as a process where policymakers *formulate, adopt and execute* different spending priorities. The budget process is where actors can assess, influence and monitor effective budget allocations for children on a regular basis. The motivations, incentives and strategies of budget actors to collaborate with one another (or move away from good practices) is determined by different rules and institutions found: (i) within the legislative arena (such as committees or parties); (ii) outside the legislature (such as the executive branch or sub-national governments), and (iii) at the structural level (such as the overall effectiveness, transparency and stability of governments). Finally, the relevance of these budget dynamics change according to the nature of program-specific needs, as it is substantively different to a budget for a specific project, a multi-year program or an emergency/relief situation.

As detailed in the following sub-sections, the interaction of these factors will lead to different budgetary outcomes.

**Figure 1. Understanding the workings of the budget process and outcomes**



Adapted from Spiller and Tomassi (2003) and Stein et al. (2005)



## 2.2. Understanding the main PF4C outcomes

PF4C strategies aim to contribute to adequate, efficient, equitable and transparent government investments in children. From the perspective of budget actors, these can be desirable but also conflicting objectives to reconcile.

Governments should invest *adequately* to ensure that funding for child-focused programs is provided in a sufficient, predictable and timely fashion over time. From the perspective of policymakers, increasing spending levels requires negotiating the necessary fiscal space to privilege some investments over others (i.e. teachers' salaries versus school infrastructure) and finding funding sources (i.e. new taxes, cuts to other programs, donor contributions). Behind these choices are different sets of interests that influence political decisions.

Secondly, governments should promote *equitable* levels of investment to ensure that different population groups are targeted according to their specific needs, geographical location, poverty levels, etc. From a policymaking perspective, there could be a bias to favor well-organized, politically influential groups (who live in cities, for example) instead of benefiting less privileged populations that are more remote, less organized or politically less influential (e.g. the rural poor).

Governments should also seek to promote *efficient* investments as a way to achieve good value for money, both in terms of achieving the best intended outcomes but also to provide goods and services at competitive costs. To maximize spending efficiency, policymakers require detailed knowledge about per capita costs of provision, investment rates of return, accurate output measures and so on. But budget decisions to justify investments in one sector over another based on performance indicators are also subject to the influence of interest groups, beneficiaries and ministerial bureaucracies.

Finally, governments should promote *transparent* investments. Budget transparency refers to the way in which funds are estimated, allocated, managed and accounted for. Transparency also refers to the extent to which the general public may gain access to timely and accurate budget information. Greater transparency may be temporarily compromised in a post-conflict situation or in the wake of a significant humanitarian crisis (famine, flooding) when it becomes more important to make an efficient and adequate use of government monies and donations to provide emergency relief. In the long run, budget transparency may be reduced in the presence of natural resource wealth, the absence of democratic institutions and the discretionary decisions made by influential policymakers. In these cases, wasteful spending, misallocation and corruption may eclipse increased investment in children's priorities.

## 2.3. Budget transparency and outcomes for children

Budget transparency, one of the key components of improved investments in children, usually refers to a combination of: (i) the detail, timelines and availability of *budgetary information* made public by governments; (ii) the existence and authority of formal institutions (including legislatures and supreme audit institutions) to *monitor* the allocation and expenditure of public resources; and (iii) the existing opportunities available to civil society and the general public to engage and *participate* in decisions about how public resources are raised and spent (Khagram, Fung and de Renzio 2013). There is a wide set of budget transparency initiatives that range from state-led processes—such as developing Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS)—to citizen-led initiatives (operating through civil-society organisations or social movements) that publish popular versions of government budget documents to naming and shaming public officials found guilty of misallocating public funds or even organizing Children Budget Units, such as the Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA) (Carlitz 2013). Other initiatives, such as participatory budgeting, are state-led initiatives that promote individual or collective involvement of citizens and civic associations to influence “over at least part of a public budget through an annual series of scheduled meetings with government authorities” (Carlitz 2013, Goldfrank 2006).

The most comprehensive indicator of budget transparency is the Open Budget Index (OBI), reported to be “the only independent, comparative, and regular measure of budget transparency, participation and oversight in the world” (Open Budget Initiative 2014).<sup>2</sup> Although the OBI does not directly focus on public spending commitments or monitoring of investments in children, it is a useful point of departure to understand some of the political economy challenges of improving budget transparency. The OBI is a quantitative score that aggregates qualitative survey findings and document analysis carried out by hundreds of experts across 100 countries since 2005. The index captures information across three dimensions: transparency, oversight and participation.

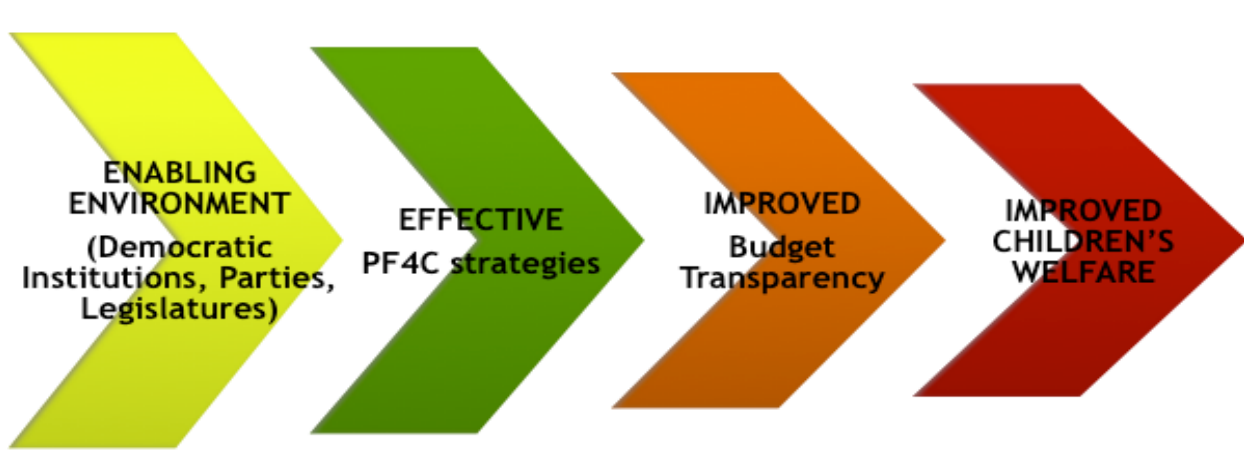
Empirically, the OBI is directly related with the improvement of socioeconomic outcomes and human development indicators. In general, countries with higher budget transparency scores tend to have an improved score on the Human Development Index (HDI), a composite indicator that measures life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling and gross national income per capita. Countries with greater budget transparency also tend to display higher rates of adult literacy (as a percentage of people of both sexes older than 15 years) and a higher number of expected years of schooling. Finally, budget transparency is associated with lower infant mortality rates and poverty reduction. Countries with low scores tend to have high under-five mortality rates (per 1,000 live births) as well as the highest percentage of population living below \$1.25 PPP per day.

---

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/open-budget-survey/>.

While it is clear that budget transparency has a positive impact on improved quality of investments in children, there is a mix of structural, institutional and political factors that contribute to increased transparency (Carlitz 2013; Khagram, Fung and de Renzio 2013). At the structural-institutional level, there are several government institutions, including highly organized legislatures, competitive political parties and independent audit institutions that can directly influence the motivations and strategies of policymakers to enhance budget transparency. These institutional motivators are likely to work best in well-educated and democratic societies, with strong civil society traditions and strong civic values. Finally, the adoption of effective PF4C strategies to improve budget transparency is embedded in this institutional framework. Figure 2 illustrates the proposed “theory of change” by which PF4C strategies can contribute to improved budget allocations for children.

**Figure 2. The role of institutions and PF4C strategies in enhancing budget transparency and children’s welfare**



To be sure, PF4C strategies are most likely to improve budget monitoring, stakeholder participation and access to information in more democratic countries where there is plural party competition, rule of law and effective division of powers. Conversely, nominal government efforts to disclose information, allow parliamentary hearings or encourage civil society participation are likely to have a minimal impact on transparency interventions if policymakers do not have the motivation or ability to challenge official government policies. These factors are explored in greater detail in the next section.

### **3. The Role of Legislatures in Enhancing Advocacy, Monitoring and Oversight of Budgets for Children**

While the budget process can be portrayed as a cycle where the executive branch, the legislature, the civil service and society all play a role (Stapenhurst 2004), in practice,

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

presidents, prime ministers and finance ministers are generally the main decision makers in a country's budgetary process. Operating from the executive branch, these influential policymakers possess the technical expertise to make accurate forecasts, they have the formal and legal prerogatives to initiate and dominate budget discussions, and they have authority over line ministries, bureaucracies and territories to demand budget estimates. In most cases, the executive branch has the legal and political tools to influence political bargains and, in many cases, can unilaterally change budget allocations or withhold budget execution (Wehner 2010).

In contrast with this predominance of the executive branch, it would be wrong to assume that legislatures<sup>3</sup> play a secondary, almost subservient role. Scholarly works have shown significant variation in the budgetary powers of the legislative branch, both ex-ante during the process of formulation and amendment of budgetary allocations, but also ex-post during monitoring and budget oversight (Hallerberg et al. 2009, Wehner 2006 and 2010). Through the budget process, elected representatives from different parties and regions have the opportunity to bargain the extraction, allocation and redistribution of scarce funds for the benefit of their constituents. Budget activism of the legislative branch has also been on the rise in countries with relatively new democratic institutions or emerging from civil conflict (Stapenhurst 2004).

UNICEF's PF4C strategy correctly identifies the legislature as one of the key political arenas where elected officials can effectively advocate for greater, more efficient and equitable allocation of resources to advance children's rights. However, the comparative evidence, as well as the interviews carried out with select UNICEF COs for this paper, suggest that, in practice, actors can maximize their influence over the budget process if they engage with legislative actors and key government officials in the executive, line ministries and sub-national governments depending on the institutional configuration of each country. Other actors, such as CSOs and donor and cooperation agencies, can also play an important accompanying role to influence the formulation, adoption and allocation of child-focused expenditures.

In general, there are three different sets of factors that can have a positive (or adverse) influence over the budget process: (i) the impact of legislative factors per se, including the roles and motivations of individual legislators, the committee structure, the political parties, the electoral cycles, etc.; (ii) the non-legislative factors, such as the role of the executive, line ministries, sub-national governments and civil society; and (iii) the role of the broader enabling environment, including the nature of government revenues and the quality of government.

---

<sup>3</sup> Unless explicitly stated, "legislature" will be used as a generic term to describe both the workings of parliaments or congresses irrespective of whether within parliamentary or presidential systems.

## 3.1. The impact of legislatures in the budget making process

In a democracy, the legislative branch (whether called a parliament, congress, or assembly ) is responsible for three main functions: (i) legislation (proposing, reviewing and enacting laws, budgets, amendments and regulations); (ii) representation (to give voice to the preferences of the public); and (iii) oversight (a key institution of accountability and transparency). All three functions are directly linked to the budgetary process as they implicate budget formulation, actual expenditure of the budget and post-facto review of the budget. Indeed legislatures are responsible for “reviewing whether the government’s allocation of resources is consistent with their constituents’ demands as well as with the country’s developmental objectives; scrutinizing government expenditures and revenues, ensuring that money is allocated to programs with legislative approval, and identifying instances of financial dishonesty and irregularity” (Stapenhurst and Titsworth 2001).

There is great variation regarding the extent of effective engagement of legislatures in the budget process (Wehner and Byanyima 2005, Stapenhurst 2004). In some countries, the legislature effectively writes the budget, whereas in others they tend to approve executive budget proposals without modification. While in some legislatures, most of the debate takes place on the floor of the house, in others the emphasis is on review in committee. Some legislatures scrutinize the budget across several committees, whereas others centralize the process through a powerful budget (or finance) committee (Stapenhurst 2004). In general, about 85% of legislatures make no or minor changes to executive budgets, with only 15% making major changes (Wehner 2005). The absence of legislative activity, however, does not mean that the legislature is less relevant. Depending on the political system, legislators or parliamentarians will have repeated opportunities to debate and seek change to policies when these are first introduced, or to amend them when legislation is being reviewed (Wehner 2005).

*Parliamentary ex-ante budgetary powers:* A legislature can have a greater ex-ante impact on the budget process if, for example, it has strong and capable financial committees to decide fiscal parameters, tax policy and the allocation of available funds. This is the cited case of the United States Congress where the impact of Congress on aggregate and allocation choices can be substantial (Schick 2002, Wehner 2003). In Scandinavia, much of continental Europe and the United States, for example, legislatures have constitutionally unfettered powers to shape budgets. In the Westminster tradition, however, parliament can reduce existing items, but it cannot include new ones or increase existing ones; many Commonwealth countries have emulated this arrangement (Wehner 2005). Another type of amendment provision, adopted in some francophone and Latin American countries, tends to constrain legislative powers to modify budgets so as to promote the maintenance of the deficit or to protect aggregate totals proposed by the executive (Wehner 2005).

Other legislatures, conversely, have stronger powers and capacities to carry out in-depth ex-post assessments of public spending. While these legislatures, such as most Westminster style parliaments, have a very weak role to influence budget policy, their emphasis and

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

influence is greater on operational issues acting through Public Accounts Committees, for example (Schick 2002, Wehner 2003). Others have hybrid systems. The German Bundestag, combines ex-ante and ex-post scrutiny functions in a single Budget Committee. The benefit of this approach is to achieve a better balance between the scrutiny of policy and its implementation (Wehner 2005).

*Parliamentary monitoring and oversight:* There are several institutional mechanisms to ensure budget monitoring and oversight. In many countries, government accounts and financial statements are audited by a “supreme audit institution,” such as the auditor general (in Commonwealth countries) or Courts des Comptes (in francophone countries). It is estimated that legislatures in most countries (at least 84% in presidential systems and more in parliamentary ones) analyze financial reports and make recommendations based on audit findings (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst 2016). In Commonwealth countries, the auditor general reports directly to the Public Accounts Committee, which reviews audit findings, hears testimony from different government departments and sends its report to the full parliament for action (Stapenhurst and Titsworth, 2001). There is, however, huge variation in rules and practices affecting the operation of Public Accounts Committees across countries. These committees can be most effective when they have the dedicated support of parliamentary research staff, their reports are made freely available to the public and the media, they are publicly debated in a parliamentary session, and a formal government response is issued, such as from the Treasury or MoF (Stapenhurst 2004).

At the end of the day, monitoring and oversight procedures are likely to work better in the context of an enabling institutional and political environment. The incentives of budget actors to hold each other to account, for example, will diminish if the majority of parliamentary seats belong to the government party, in which case parliament may ratify executive decision-making (Cox and McCubbins 2001). By contrast, the legislative branch is more likely to challenge and closely monitor government action in the context of divided government, if the governing party, for example, lacks a legislative majority or needs the support of a coalition. Other things equal, legislatures or parliaments are also likely to balance executive influence when they represent more plural interests, different regions, political parties and ideologies. The next section discusses the ways in which legislatures and legislators effectively influence the budget process, particularly when it comes to approval and monitoring of budgetary allocations.

### *3.1.1. Individual motivations*

Legislators’ motivations toward budgeting depend on the extent to which legislators themselves are more accountable to the demands and expectations of their constituents (voter-oriented) or their political association (party-oriented). Party-oriented legislators tend to respond directly to the demands of their leaders and vote according to the agreed party line, mostly because their own political careers depend on that. This is generally the case when legislators are elected under proportional representation systems, especially if the votes obtained by each legislator are pooled and distributed according to a list of ballot



names previously established by the party leadership. The influence of party leaders is greater when the parties control access to campaign funding and decide on committee allocations for their members once elected to parliament (Hallerberg and Marier 2004). The party-oriented incentives become even stronger where the government party has the majority of seats and, therefore, there is a high cost of individual dissent should legislators decide to disobey the party line. This structure of incentives also results in greater party cohesion (Wehner 2005).

At the other end, voter-oriented legislators tend to act independent of party influence, particularly if they were elected under plurality (first past the post) systems without a clear influence of party leadership in their nomination. If, for example, a legislator had to raise her/his own campaign funds and/or attract their own voters without a significant contribution from the party, the legislator is likely to be responsive to those individuals or interest groups that voted her/him into office. In these cases, party affiliation is not a strong factor to determine voting behavior on the floor or in committees.

Increasingly in new or less institutionalized democracies, it is often argued that legislators may only be “accountable to themselves” if, for example, party labels convey very little meaning in terms of preferred policies or political parties have a poor reputation vis-à-vis the electorate. Legislators are also likely to act “on their own” when voters do not closely follow the legislative activity, and when they heavily depend on a certain group to pay for their electoral campaigning. Understanding individual motivations is important to identify which legislators are more likely to respond to advocacy requests.

Paradoxically, voter-oriented legislators may be, on average, more receptive to embrace child-friendly budgetary amendments to increase spending or improve transparency of related spending, but they will have a harder time assembling the necessary votes of support from other members; conversely, party-oriented legislators may have the numbers to effectively influence a budgetary amendment, but political support will have to be negotiated with the party leadership first.

### *3.1.2. Committee structure and staffing capacity*

Strong committee organization can enhance parliamentary influence on budgetary matters. Conversely, the budgetary influence of the legislature tends to be weak where budgetary discussions mainly take place on the floor of the house (Krafchik and Wehner 1998). There are several factors that help explain stronger budget committees, including the length of individual membership, whether they have formal access to all relevant information, whether they are allowed sufficient time for budgetary deliberation and whether they have sufficient resources to support specialized staff. The strength and number of committees also strengthens legislative influence over the budget. In some cases, the budget or finance committee has overall responsibility in the budget process, whereas in others, budget responsibility is spread across different sectoral committees on departmental budgets.

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

Finally, the legislature may rely on a dedicated Public Accounts Committee to ensure that the approved budget is effectively and completely implemented (McGee 2002, Wehner 2003).

Access to independent budget analysis can support legislators in assessing the integrity of the figures in the draft budget, deciding whether changes might be desirable and evaluating the budgetary implications of proposed amendments (Wehner 2005). Finally, the existence of a Congressional Budget Office increases the effective influence of parliament on budgetary matters. Finally, legislative research capacity can be supplemented with input from independent think tanks, academics and private sector economists (Wehner 2005).

### *3.1.3. Regime type, division of powers and party competition*

Beyond the issue of whether legislators are party or voter-oriented, there is a series of institutional and structural constraints that affect the legislature's ability to amend and monitor budgetary allocations (Wehner and de Renzio 2013). The separation of powers between the executive and the legislative is one of these factors affecting the budget making process. Although the separation of powers does not automatically lead to high levels of legislative-executive conflict, it is argued that parliamentary regimes offer more incentives to cooperation because the political survival of the Prime Minister depends on sustaining the majority support of the parliamentary majority (or the governing coalition). In other words, the lack of political agreement around the budget bill is tantamount to a "vote of no confidence," which in turn may trigger the demise of the government and a new election. By contrast, in presidential systems the President's term in office does not depend on the support from a congressional majority, and executives can depend on other legal attributes to push for budget approval even in the absence of full congressional support (Haggard and McCubbins 2001). The actual prospect of collaboration is also determined by the "separation of purpose" principle or the extent to which the party in government also has a majority of legislative seats. According to Haggard and McCubbins (2001), a legislative majority is the political glue between the president and the legislature.

There are mixed fiscal effects of unified government. On the one hand, it has been argued that a more compliant (less confrontational) legislature can help to achieve fiscal discipline, particularly if the legislative party has little incentive to deviate from the preferences of the government (Poterba and Von Hagen, 1999). Others have argued that unified governments are generally less open to budget transparency whereas a more diverse, plural legislature would contribute to stronger fiscal scrutiny (Wehner and de Renzio 2013, Santiso 2005). According to the OBI, the countries that have a single party in the legislature with more than 90% of the seats are also the most likely to have low budget transparency scores (IBP 2014).

Finally, the move from a single party to a multiparty democracy can significantly increase the level of legislative influence on the budget process. For example, Wehner and de Renzio (2013) have found that this can increase budget transparency scores, measured by the OBI, by 40 points. More plural legislatures can also have an important influence on the approval of budgetary amendments (Alston et al. 2009, Wehner 2010) and the effectiveness of



budgetary oversight (Santiso 2005), where parliaments play an effective oversight role and can independently examine audit reports (Wehner 2005).

### *3.1.4. Budget approval and the electoral calendar*

The timing allowed for budget approval is a key dimension for effective legislative engagement. Comparative experience suggests that a meaningful analysis and scrutiny of the budget proposal requires a minimum of three to four months. In addition, budget discussions should be tabled with enough anticipation to allow planning and minimize discretionary decisions on interim executive spending (Wehner 2005). In practice, the executive can effectively push for its budget bill when it reduces the space for effective legislative scrutiny, as reported in many cases.

The electoral cycle is another factor affecting the prospects for legislative engagement in the budget process. There is abundant literature documenting how legislative actors become more responsive to constituency demands and are more prone to increased spending during electoral years (Mejia Acosta and Coppedge 2001, Amorim Neto and Borsani 2004), whereas there are greater incentives for fiscal prudence at the start of an administration. The legislative incentives toward increased spending during electoral years are greater in the context of plurality elections and presidential systems (Alesina et al. 1999). Executives are more likely to want to spend more during election years if government action can help their re-election prospects and if they lose, increased debt or deficits would be another government's problem. The exact timing of the electoral year, however, is easier to predict in a presidential system as the Executive is elected for a fixed term in office, whereas Parliaments have the possibility of calling for early elections if the Prime Minister has lost the confidence of the party.

To summarize, legislative bodies are more likely to influence the budget process during election times, when they are made up of multiple political parties and in presidential systems through representation in the legislative committee system. In the context of single party majorities, particularly in parliamentary systems, the influence of legislatures is more constrained as the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister in particular, have unchallenged predominance over the budget process. There is little empirical evidence available documenting the impact of electoral years on other aspects of legislative engagement such as increased monitoring or oversight.

Finally, the discussion so far has focused on the budgetary role of legislatures *in democratic regimes*. Needless to say, a shift to an authoritarian regime would significantly compromise parliamentary effectiveness. For example, it is reported that budgetary transparency scores on the OBI are reduced by 18 points when countries go from democracies to non-democratic regimes (Wehner and de Renzio 2013). The next section discusses other factors outside parliamentary roles that could effectively influence the budget making process.

## 3.2. The impact of non-legislative actors on the budget process

This paper is mostly focused on the budgetary role of legislatures. The comparative and empirical experience of budget making, however, underscore the importance of other actors and arenas that seek to influence the budget process in a direct or indirect manner. Specifically, budget players who are unable to influence the process through the legislature will seek different entry points of influence, which can include working with the executive, line ministers, sub-national authorities, CSOs, media and/or international donors (in the case of aid dependent countries). The following sections offer a brief but comprehensive analysis of these additional factors and their impact on PF4C strategies.

### 3.2.1. *The executive*

Although the conventional account of executives (Presidents or Prime Ministers) as “budget dictators” has diluted over time, it remains a powerful explanation to summarize their leading role in the budget process. It is assumed that Presidents or Prime Ministers command unchallenged authority over the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in the context of large party majorities or solid government coalitions, but the MoF acquires a more coordinating role in the context of multiparty fragmented coalitions (Hallerberg 2009). In both cases, but particularly in the first, the MoF becomes the most influential budget player since it has the formal authority to discuss and set budget targets, aggregate and revise the different budget proposals made by government sectors, elaborate the budget bill, and be directly in charge of executing—and in some cases reassigning—budgetary allocations. The influence or relative electoral independence of the MoF is greater in Presidential systems since the Minister *is not a Member of Parliament* but rather a direct appointee of the President and as such, directly accountable to him or her.

### 3.2.2. *Line ministers and sub-national authorities*

Almost by definition, these players lack a direct influence on the budget process, but can exert indirect pressure on the executive to amend, revise and insert budgetary amendments or to demand improved accountability in budget management. In the case of ministries, they can exert effective budgetary influence if their party (in the case of a coalition government) is an important member of the government coalition. But if the minister is a member of the government party or even worse, a non-elected political appointee in a Presidential system, they are less likely to have any meaningful leverage over budget bargaining.

Similarly in the case of sub-national officials, they are likely to influence the budgetary process if they hold some kind of political leverage over the government. In the case of the members of the opposition, this will be the case if their legislative party is a critical member of the government coalition (Jones 2001) or if they represent a district that holds a critical electoral advantage for the government in power. Again the influence of sub-national authorities is likely to be seriously diminished if/when these politicians form part of the

government already, and their prospects of success will depend on their individual skills and abilities rather than their own electoral base of support.

### *3.2.3. The role of civil society organizations (CSOs)*

CSOs can be instrumental to request increased or improved investments to benefit children and to monitor budgetary issues in order to demand greater accountability. As discussed earlier, the scope for CSO influence is ample, ranging from state-led to citizen-led initiatives. The specialized literature identifies three conditions under which CSO can have an effective influence on the budget process. The first factor is the extent to which CSOs can build alliances, whether horizontally, through civil society coalitions, or vertically, through partnerships with government officials (Carlitz 2013). Cross-cutting, horizontal alliances could be instrumental to expand citizen support, mobilize resources and strengthen their capacity. This level of civil society coordination can effectively contribute to their timely budgetary engagement and successful advocacy (Carlitz 2013, Robinson 2006). Vertical alliances—between the state and civil society groups—are equally important to cement the link between citizens’ demands and the political commitment of political parties, local authorities or legislators to deliver on them (Joshi 2013). While there is an inevitable risk of cooptation or isolation of civil society groups by the state, it is nevertheless important to build sustainable relationships with the administrative apparatuses of government to demand greater transparency and improved service delivery (Carlitz 2013, Joshi and Houtzager 2012).<sup>4</sup>

Empirical evidence shows that higher budget transparency scores are associated with both greater civil society activism and general government accountability. The Global Integrity Scores for “civil society,” “public information and media,” and for “government accountability” are positively and significantly associated with high OBI scores. However, there is no evidence that the former has a causal positive influence on the latter. It would also be wrong to presume that reversals cannot occur. Even in countries normally characterized by strong and vibrant civil society participation such as Ecuador, Mexico or Turkey, the government has directly or indirectly undermined the positive influence of civil society activism on improving budget transparency indicators. At the other end of the spectrum, active civil society participation in non-democratic regimes can be instrumental to spark transparency and accountability demands, but civil society activism will be insufficient to produce effective change in the absence of political actors to support and implement such changes. Lastly, Kolstad and Wiig (2009) emphasize that, in order to improve budget accountability and transparency, people need the cognitive ability to

---

<sup>4</sup> For instance, the successful experiences of MKSS in India in 2010 and PB in Brazil suggest the significance of access to information for citizens to analyze and monitor budgets and the relevance of developing an incremental relationship of cooperation with the state.

process complex information and have the institutional support to ensure effective transparency, including mechanisms to punish corrupt public officials.

### **3.3. The broader enabling environment: State revenues and state capacity**

Going beyond the roles of budgetary and non-budgetary actors, there are two more factors that are likely to expand or constrain the scope for parliamentary engagement on budgetary issues: the nature of state revenues and the quality of government institutions.

#### *3.3.1. The nature of government revenues*

The amount and the origin of government revenues coming into the budget process will affect the government's capacity and motivation to adopt, maintain and implement effective PF4C strategies. For example, if government finances largely depend on non-tax revenues (such as foreign aid or revenues from the extractive industries), there are reduced incentives to account for their fiscal management (Collier 2006, Moore 2007). Conversely, when governments regularly collect tax revenues from its citizens and firms, they are more likely to respond to their needs and demands when budgeting (Brautigam 2008, Moore 2007). The available empirical evidence confirms that, on average, resource rich countries score 17 points lower on the budget transparency score (OBI) compared to non-resource rich countries (Khagram et al. 2013, Wehner and de Renzio 2013). The evidence also suggests that the negative effects of resource abundance are reduced when countries are compliant with the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI). The EITI is a global governance effort to set transparency and accountability standards for this industry.<sup>5</sup>

#### *3.3.2. Quality of government institutions*

A second element affecting an effective parliamentary engagement on budgetary issues is the quality of government institutions, including the extent to which the government has an independent judiciary and/or has made significant efforts to reduce corruption (Kolstad and Wiig 2009). The World Bank has developed an index of Government Effectiveness, which combines 15 different assessments and surveys that measure the quality of public services, policy formulation and implementation, the quality and independence of the civil service, and the credibility of the government's commitment to its stated policies.<sup>6</sup> Countries that are highly ranked in government effectiveness also tend to score highly on budget transparency indicators (OBI).

The other indicator of government performance refers to the country's perception of corruption, measured by two closely related indicators. The first is the World Bank

---

<sup>5</sup> See <https://eiti.org/about>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#doc>.

Governance Indicator for Control for Corruption, which measures the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain as well as the strength and effectiveness of a country's policy and institutional framework to combat corruption.<sup>7</sup> A related indicator is the Corruption Perception's Indicator, which focuses on corruption in the public sector defined as the abuse of public office for private gain.<sup>8</sup> Unsurprisingly, the empirical evidence shows that the least corrupt countries have high budget transparency scores. The implication for PF4C strategies is that producing results will be more difficult in more corrupt countries, either because there is more space for rent seeking practices or because a greater share of budgetary activities is not channeled through legal or formal structures.

### **3.4. Discussion: Budget politics matter**

Parliaments can play a critical role to enhance children's welfare by increasing budgetary spending, re-allocating funds to more cost-effective programs, monitoring compliance and investigating mismanagement. Figures 3-5 synthesize some of the public finance literature to show how individual motivations and institutional factors can have a positive (+) or negative (-) influence on the budget process at different stages. Note that an empty cell (x) denotes that there is no tangible impact or non-documented evidence of impact.

Figure 3 suggests that Members of Parliament (MPs) who have a voter-oriented profile (elected through plurality systems or acting more independent from party directives, for example) have more incentives to influence the budget particularly during formulation and monitoring stages, since this is likely to have a positive effect on their constituencies. Conversely, party-oriented MPs (elected through proportional representation systems or where party leaders play an influential role) are less likely to take individual initiatives and generally tow the party line during budget approval and execution. The political motivations to influence the budget process increase during electoral years, as this is an opportunity to cultivate the vote of their constituencies. Finally, at the parliamentary level, different committees play a role at key stages of the budget process. The specific role will depend on the technical and staffing capabilities and whether the committee is designed to influence budget formulation or rather focus on monitoring and oversight. Some legislative committees (social affairs, health, education, women and children, family, etc.) are likely to influence budget formulation, whereas Public Account Committees are likely to influence monitoring and oversight. Budget committees remain influential throughout the process.

---

<sup>7</sup> See <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/>.

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

**Figure 3. Motivations and potential impact of parliamentary budget actors**

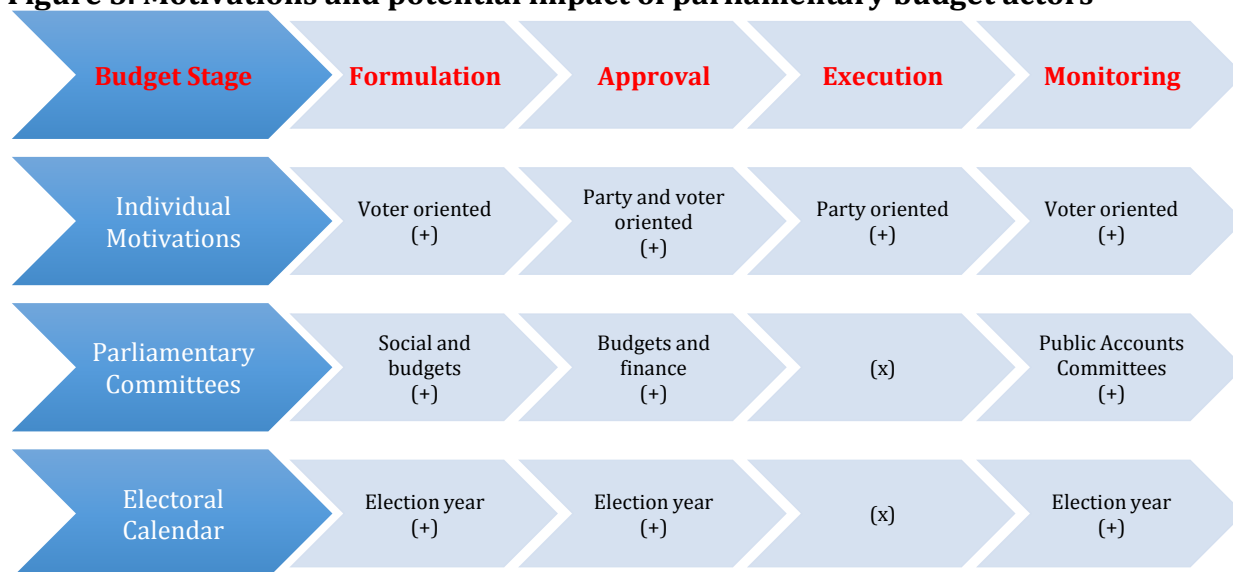
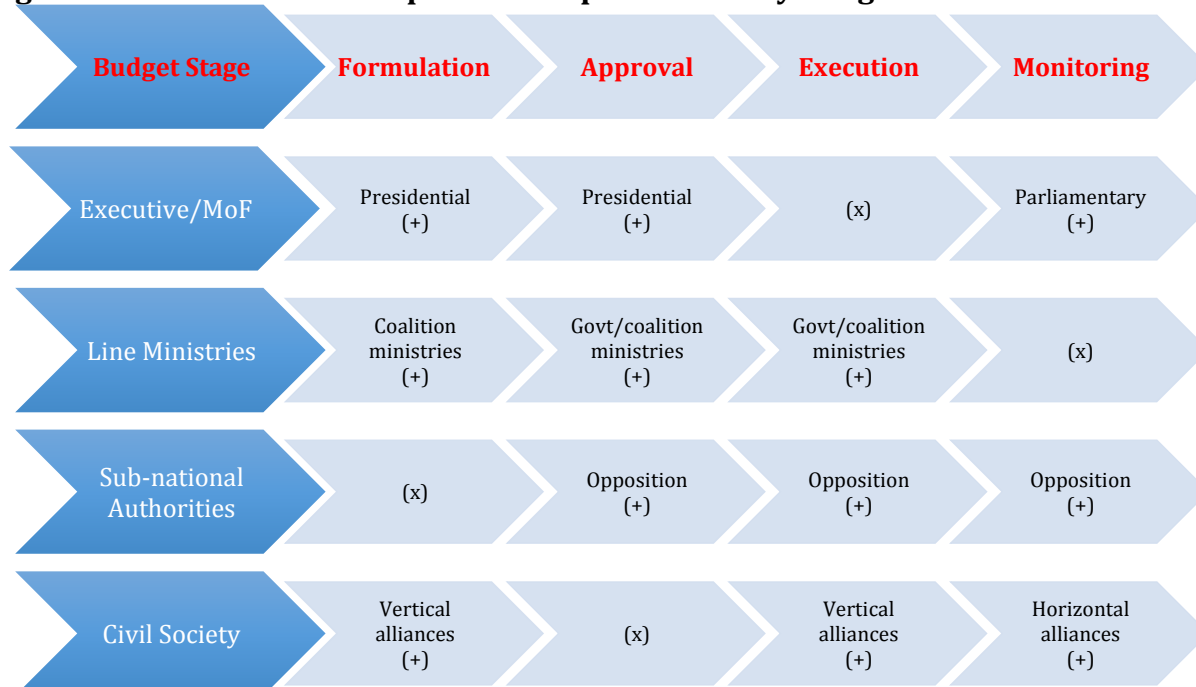


Figure 4 outlines the role of influential actors who sit outside the parliamentary arena. The most important is obviously the executive, through its agent, the MoF. The finance minister, particularly in Presidential systems can be very influential during budget formulation, assessment and execution. It is believed that a President is likely to be more influential than a Prime Minister in terms of the available legal and partisan prerogatives to shape the budget process. Conversely, Parliamentary systems are better equipped to exert some monitoring and oversight over the budget process. Other actors, such as line ministers, could be particularly influential over budget processes if they are coalition partners or come from government ranks. Conversely, sub-national authorities tend to have greater influence to demand the adoption, execution or monitoring of budget allocations when they represent an important coalition of voters (usually from the opposition) interested in bringing governments to account. Finally, CSOs are likely to be strategic players on budget formulation and execution when they form “vertical” alliances with parliaments, ministries or elected officials, whereas they can be more effective to demand accountability from government officials when they form “horizontal” alliances with other CSOs.

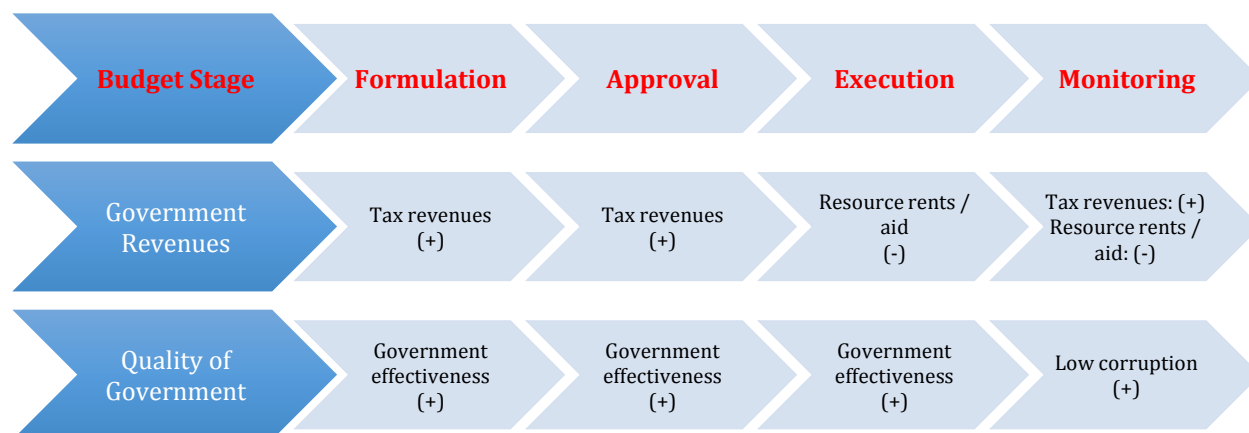
Finally, Figure 5 focuses on the impact of the government environment on the budget process. It shows that in a context where government revenues come from tax collection (as opposed to revenues from the extractive industries or foreign aid), citizens are more likely to demand transparency and accountability in the use of their contributions. Finally, an environment of generalized government corruption or poor government institutions would also undermine the government’s effectiveness to manage the budget process. These structural conditions are country specific and rather resilient to change over time.

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

**Figure 4. Motivations and impact of non-parliamentary budget actors**



**Figure 5. Budgetary impact of the enabling environment**



## 4. UNICEF Experiences with Parliamentary Engagement

The experience of UNICEF COs suggests that parliamentary engagement does take place, but it is not systematic and the outcomes are mixed. Overall, the evidence reviewed shows that: (i) parliamentary engagement takes place through different entry points but primarily through committee level; (ii) it is aimed at both policy formulation and monitoring; (iii) the success of advocacy depends on the majority nature of the government party; and (iv)



parliamentary engagement can be a useful entry point to influence other government branches. This section seeks to understand which direct and alternative approaches have worked best (or not) for COs when trying to influence, engage and monitor the work of Parliaments on budgetary issues.

For this purpose, interviews were carried out with 11 UNICEF COs that were directly working with or trying to influence parliaments on budget issues for children. This included: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Jordan, Kosovo, Mexico, Serbia, Uganda and Vietnam.<sup>9</sup> The selected countries featured a combination of high and low levels of PF4C activity, with varying levels of budget transparency; the sample also included democratic and non-democratic regimes as well as resource rich countries and fragile states.

Interviews sought to illustrate three different aspects of the PF4C work that UNICEF COs are doing: (i) the nature of budget advocacy, influence and monitoring taking place; (ii) the manner in which UNICEF staff navigate through political economy constraints or opportunities to maximize their influence on budgetary issues; and (iii) the lessons learnt and missing aspects that could improve UNICEF's work in this regard. Before analyzing the interview data, the next section offers a brief overview of the varying nature of UNICEF's work on the ground.

## **4.1. Mapping the extent of UNICEF's program involvement around PF4C**

The previous section showed that the challenge of promoting greater transparency, efficiency, equity and adequacy of investments varies according to different institutional configurations (presidents, parties, parliaments, elections) and some structural factors (including state capabilities and revenue structure). This section looks at how PF4C strategies adapt to different types of program funding structures and needs. Previous work on the political economy of reducing malnutrition shows that scaling up nutrition campaigns requires a different funding architecture than attending to a food crisis or promoting intersectoral cooperation to deliver conditional cash transfers (Mejia Acosta and Haddad 2013). Similarly, the funding of medium or long-term education plans, with a heavy investment in teacher salaries, requires a different funding approach compared to fortifying food with micronutrients. In general, there are three types of funds:

1. Cross-sectoral funding is usually programmed for the medium to long term to promote investment in specific sectors (such as education, health) or cross sectoral themes (such as social protection, child protection, nutrition resilience). These types of funds usually require specific costing and forecasting to ensure effective budget formulation and approval. Once the allocation enters the budget system, the monitoring and oversight takes place through established formalized channels and mechanisms.

---

<sup>9</sup> The interviews took place during February 2015. Each interview was approximately 45 minutes long and conducted over telephone or skype based upon a previously circulated questionnaire (see Annex).



2. Program and project specific funding is commonly designed to meet well-defined targets like vaccination campaigns or micronutrient initiatives that are carried out over a specific short period of time. This type of funding would not be necessarily incorporated into sectoral funding (and therefore would demand less attention during budget formulation stages), but demands greater lobbying efforts for resource allocation at the ministerial level. These type of funds are also open to scrutiny and oversight through results based budgeting, for example.
3. Emergency relief funds are typically allocated during large emergencies, natural disasters or conflict. These funds are generally much larger in scale than program or project funding; they are also normally externally funded and managed outside regular public finance channels (thus skipping domestic budget formulation and approval stages altogether). Here, the more pressing concern is to monitor and ensure transparency and accountability in the use of these funds.

Finally, there has been little progress made to discuss the extent to which additional and alternative sources of fiscal revenues (e.g. special taxes and royalties applied to extractive activities, donor or philanthropic aid, remittances) could be earmarked to increase and secure funding for children's programmes. These alternative schemes can expand the fiscal space available to governments but may also pose new challenges for the design of PF4C strategies, including effective monitoring of such funding mechanisms. While this question was posed during the interviews, the selected COs reported no such experiences.

## **4.2. UNICEF's country experiences with parliamentary engagement**

The interviews sought to answer the question of how to effectively engage parliaments on budget issues to support child rights. The responses are organized in three parts: (i) the nature of budgetary engagement (what offices do); (ii) modalities of direct and indirect parliamentary engagement (how they do it); and (iii) the CO's perspective of advantages, challenges and needs (what works). A template of open-ended questions was applied in all cases (see Annex), and the report documents the existing variation (although the sample falls far short of being representative in terms of country experiences).

### *4.2.1. What does UNICEF advocate for?*

The main source of variation was the objective of advocacy efforts. Most interviews reflect concerns about improving the transparency and accountability of spending, but the main difference appears to be whether they advocate for increased spending or for improving the quality of the spending (better efficiency and equity). Some countries, such as in Ghana, Vietnam, Georgia, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh and Ecuador, tend to focus on increasing fiscal space to support child-focused programmes. Calls for greater spending can be well received by parliamentarians, particularly when targeted spending could enhance their own basis of electoral support.

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

However, advocating for more efficient and equitable spending is a more complex matter. Addressing quality issues requires support from different government sectors (such as state bureaucracies) as well as private sector groups and labor unions, for example. The case of budget advocacy in Mexico is quite illustrative. The CO initiated efforts to improve investment in children as far back as 2009. Through multiple partnerships with private sector groups, think tanks and government officials, UNICEF Mexico advocated for greater inclusiveness of spending, including substantive investment on education, children's health and nutrition, and social protection. The advocacy efforts were accompanied by regional studies showing the relevance for cross sectoral types of investment. UNICEF's work, in collaboration with the MoF and the Federal Congress, contributed to an amendment to the 2012 federal budget allocating over 15% of the total annual budget to these key issues. The measure also established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the quality of expenditure.

While it is generally accepted that cross-sectoral spending can have a greater and more effective impact on children's welfare, this type of funding is also more difficult to quantify and track. Sectoral spending, on the other hand, is easier to advocate and monitor because it responds to specific constituencies within government ministries. Sectoral spending also generates concrete links of accountability between service providers (improved post-natal care, increased number of teachers) and beneficiaries (mothers, primary school children). Investments in social protection were often cited as an example of effective cross-sectoral spending, but in many cases the investment referred exclusively to cash transfer allocations. While there is abundant evidence of the positive impact of such schemes to improve welfare, it would be wrong to consider this an example of cross sectoral spending without examination of a broader set of required government investments and an adequate monitoring and tracking strategy to ensure transparency.

### *4.2.2. Country engagement strategies: Working WITH parliaments*

The experience of UNICEF COs working with parliaments is generally limited, short lived and with mixed effectiveness. The staff interviewed are well aware of existing political and institutional constraints and opportunities in their countries (such as the presence of single party majorities or the implications of working with government coalitions), but this knowledge is not explicit or systematic.

Some COs *have worked directly with established legislative bodies*, such as Uganda's Parliamentary Forum for Children, the Unit for the Control of Budgetary Execution in Ecuador, a Special Committee on Children's Rights in Mexico or dedicated parliamentary committees such as education, health, gender or nutrition in each country. In Ecuador, UNICEF played a key role to support the formation of the Unit for the Control of Budgetary Execution during 2011-12 as a way to track and monitor spending, but the following year it was unable to institutionalize a parliamentary group working to defend children's rights.

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

Part of the challenge of working successfully with parliaments depends on the configuration of political forces. According to interviewees, the predominance of a single majoritarian party, as was the case of Ecuador and Uganda, limits the space for effective influencing beyond the preferences of the government party. In Ghana, the CO has engaged extensively with parliamentary committees to influence their work through the distribution of technical and budgetary policy briefings. In 2012, the education committee offered a positive response to one of UNICEF's budget analyses, which they used to challenge the allocation and distribution of spending made by the Ministry of Education. Although the challenge was acknowledged, a response was not required and no action was taken. As in the previous cases, existing procedures that limit the role of the legislature to influence allocations and monitor budget executions undermined this example of concrete parliamentary influence. In Ghana, as in many other countries, parliaments don't have the ability to challenge the execution of ministerial allocations once this authority goes back to the MoF.

UNICEF has *worked with more plural parliaments* in Bangladesh and Guinea Bissau, working both with government led and opposition led committees. In Guinea Bissau, the parliament is composed of two main blocks, with the government led block holding 58 seats versus 57 for the opposition. Given the narrow majority, the opposition has found spaces to override and amend some of the government's budget preferences since 2013, particularly on social protection. In Georgia, the CO has successfully lobbied a split parliament to improve a child benefits scheme and to begin to develop a preschool law. Although neither initiative has direct consequences over budget approval, they both represent an important reallocation of resources in favor of children. In the latter case, preschool education had normally been the responsibility of local governments, while the Ministry of Education remained reluctant to undermine the decentralization process and take any responsibility over preschoolers. After a successful lobby with both parties, a new Law for Preschool Education was drafted to set quality standards and give the ministry greater responsibility to enforce them.

Many COs have chosen to *work with individual MPs who can play the role of policy champions* to start new legislative proposals or to ensure that UNICEF-led initiatives are not stalled. In Vietnam, the CO has worked closely with the chair and vice chair of the Children's Rights Committee since 2012. Through this relationship, UNICEF has been able to enhance the existing capacity around budgetary and development planning with different members of Parliament and their staff. Similarly in Ghana, UNICEF has worked with parliamentary champions such as committee chairs and prominent policymakers to advance child sensitive issues. However, this influencing strategy may backfire if the selected champions come from the opposition in the context of a majority party; in this case, the key issues may be undermined on a political basis even if other MPs agree with the actual policy proposal. Finally, in countries like Georgia, the CO has eloquently sought to work with multiple political actors across the board to ensure that key issues remain present in the agenda or making sure, at the very least, that single influential MPs do not block key initiatives.

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

### 4.2.3. Country engagement strategies: Working AROUND parliaments

Most of the respondents interviewed recognized that the *MoF* was the most influential budget player, but also conveyed frustration at not being able to effectively engage with this actor. In a handful of countries, such as Mexico, CO staff were able to gain direct access to MoF officials to discuss redistribution and targeting issues, which included fairly technical public finance discussions. However, in many other countries, such as Vietnam, there are recurrent stories of failed attempts to engage with the MoF, either because the minister could not or did not see the need to discuss public finance issues with social sectors that lacked their technical language. In cases of high centralization of budget authority, such as Ecuador, in recent years the lack of access to the MoF could also become the first and last point of blockage to public finance discussions for UNICEF.

With very few and short lived exceptions, such as the Mexican effort to bargain a redistribution of spending, most COs agreed that the MoF may offer access but be less receptive to policy changes. Given the lack of direct access, many COs have tried alternative entry points. These include: engaging directly or through informal ways with the Prime Minister or the Executive Branch, as in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau; influencing line ministries as “soft entry points,” as in Vietnam; and engaging with local authorities, traditional chiefs and city mayors, as in Ghana and Mexico.

Almost all COs noted their budgetary work with *CSOs*, but in most cases it was at arms-length and with a limited scope for success or highlighting their unrealized potential to influence budget processes. Mexico is a clear success where UNICEF actively engaged think tanks to provide good technical expertise in the elaboration of budget proposals. Think tanks, however, are not representative of wider sectors of society, and the budgetary work to inform, influence and mobilize public support has been limited across the board. In some cases, UNICEF has provided CSOs with organizational capacity to advance specific campaigns (Ghana) or to provide support to improve their access to media, research and advocacy (Kosovo).

However, more work with CSOs was noted to be possible and desirable (Ghana and Georgia) to improve the ways in which CSOs can actively engage with media outlets to participate in public events, TV programs, news reporting and newspaper editorials. In several countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Uganda, Vietnam) there is a growing detachment from CSO work as their role is seen as “political” or “unwelcomed” by the government. The participation of civil society groups in budgetary meetings may in some cases make governments reluctant to discuss controversial issues, and this shortcoming is reinforced by the fact that CSOs generally lack the necessary public finance knowledge to actively shape discussions. In Ecuador, UNICEF has in recent years been asked to cut their funding and support to the Social Spending Watchdog because the single party government resented the “political overtones” of challenging government decisions.

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

CO experiences underscore how *good timing and a sense of opportunity* mattered to advance successful budgetary work. In the words of one interviewee, “You can have the best data and technical expertise available, but you still need to be strategic about timing and advocacy opportunities.” The windows of opportunities come in many forms. The most relevant is the proactive use of electoral years. Politicians are more willing to make public finance commitments (toward transparency, increased or improved spending) during electoral campaigns (Ghana, Mexico, Uganda). An upcoming electoral campaign was flagged as an opportunity in Vietnam. Other countries highlighted the emerging opportunities for working with newly inaugurated governments (Georgia, Guinea) or to raise awareness around upcoming regional conferences (Ecuador, Jordan, Vietnam). COs also acknowledged ways in which the electoral timing could work against PF4C, particularly in contexts where an election brings a new cohort of parliamentarians that are unfamiliar with UNICEF’s work (Kosovo, Mexico). In a different manner, transition and interim governments may effectively reduce or eliminate windows for decision making, particularly if fragile governments do not want to make long-term commitments that they could not deliver (Burkina Faso).

Several COs offered a number of practical alternatives to *improve budget transparency through monitoring and oversight*. The main concern was to improve the quality, frequency and detail of available budget information. Important concerns regarding the lack of transparency were raised in Ecuador, Jordan and Vietnam where budget data was not easily available, regularly updated or presented in aggregate form, thus making it difficult for citizens and CSOs to understand or assess. In Georgia, a distinction was made between the government’s willingness to publish macro level budget data (such as sector spending), while it was reluctant to publish micro level data along specific spending lines and projects. This lack of disaggregation facilitated the discretionary (re) allocation of funds and made budget advocacy more difficult. While many countries were aware of global advocacy efforts to improve budget transparency, such as the Open Budget Survey, only UNICEF Ghana had actually developed specific work with the International Budget Partnership to advocate for child-sensitive budgets.

Another alternative to improve monitoring and oversight is the adoption of *performance based and results based budgeting*. However, its adoption and effective impact required a fairly good level of disaggregation and technical expertise to keep track of expenditures. In some countries, like Mexico, it was noted that earmarked budgetary allocations did help ensure the allocation and transparency in the use of public monies. However, it was also recognized that such reporting efforts need to be accompanied by regular monitoring from citizen-led watchdogs like the *Observatorio* (a social spending watchdog) as it formerly operated in Ecuador.

#### 4.2.4. Capacities of UNICEF COs

Almost all COs surveyed reported strong potential for UNICEF to effectively advocate for and promote PF4C strategies with the government. UNICEF’s advantage emerges from at least three factors: (i) a generalized perception of neutrality from different stakeholders; (ii) an



## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

established legitimacy and good work reputation, which reinforces its power to convene diverse stakeholders; and (iii) sufficient technical expertise on public finance issues in some settings.

One of the key factors underpinning UNICEF's success in engaging in PF4C is when staff are fluent in "public finance speak." As the Vietnam CO reported, "If we don't speak the same language, there is no respect." The same sentiment was echoed from COs in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ecuador Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Jordan, Kosovo and Mexico. With few exceptions, most staff expressed their need and willingness to learn more specific aspects of public finance to allow for more meaningful engagement with public finance officials. Once becoming fluent in "public finance speak," COs have been able to successfully opened dialogue with government counterparts on a variety of innovative areas, including intergovernmental fiscal transfers, tax reforms, budget classifiers, results-based budgeting and local government finances to name a few. Although many COs managed to gain technical leverage by contracting a permanent consultant on public finance issues, there is a general sense of the need to strengthen in-house capacity to understand and reflect on different budget tradeoffs to better inform advocacy efforts. In other words, developing staff capacity on PFM is a good investment for the organization.

Another recurring concern at the country level is how to maximize policy advocacy, especially on controversial issues, while maintaining the characteristic neutrality of a non-government organization. To this end, a common approach is to establish strategic and mutually beneficial partnerships with international financial institutions. Take the World Bank: UNICEF Bangladesh benefits from improved access to data and information while providing the Bank with a broader convening power to engage different stakeholders; UNICEF Vietnam has gained improved access to sub-national budget data through its partnership with the Bank; in Kosovo, the Bank has given UNICEF an additional "proxy" influence and access to public finance discussions at the MoF; in Georgia, the partnership has established and strengthened commitments around social protection strategies. It is important to note, however, that in none of these instances did the World Bank or UNICEF initiate a specific partnership to influence parliaments, since the primary channel was the executive branch within government.

One other way to advance and influence public finance debates is through an effective engagement of media, in order to go beyond the production or analysis of quality data and focus more on the "selling" of the analyses to wider groups of society. Engaging more proactively with the media was identified to be an ideal next step, such as in Georgia and Guinea.

One important, worrisome trend was noted, in particular the government directly blocking or denying access to budgetary data, procedures or discussions. This is especially true in countries where the government has a solid control of the party majority in parliament (e.g. Ecuador, Ghana, Jordan, Vietnam). The situation poses a fine challenge for COs that need to maintain their in-country neutrality, but at the same time have the technical expertise,

financial resources and convening power to support better monitoring and oversight of the government's management of the budget. In such situations, entry points to maintain UNICEF's indirect involvement include: actively funding civil society watchdogs; supporting the training of journalists in budget literacy; and facilitating the involvement of organizations, such as the International Budget Partnership, to share monitoring and oversight lessons from around world.

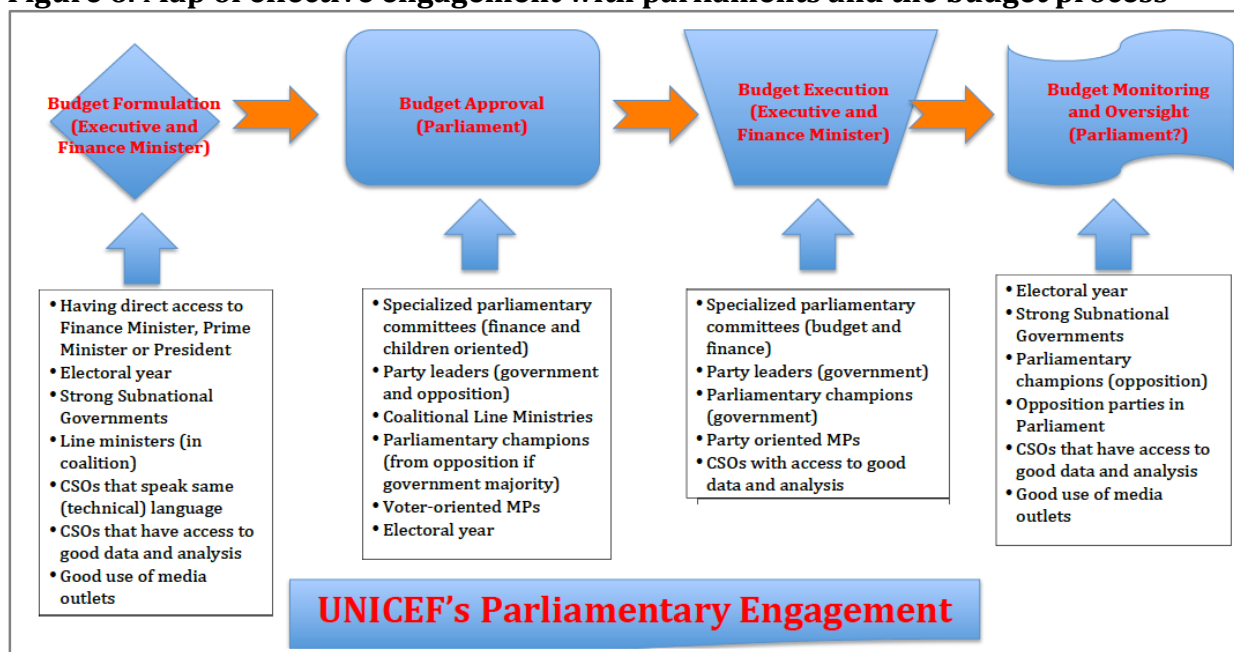
### **5. Strategies to Influence Parliaments on Budgets for Children**

This section presents an overview of strategies that may work well to help UNICEF COs in their advocacy efforts to influence parliaments in the domain of public finance across different contexts. Specifically, it seeks to identify: (i) favorable political and institutional environments that allow stakeholders to influence the budget process; (ii) the engagement strategies that tend to work best; and (iii) specific parliamentary strategies that have helped advance PF4C priorities. Note that this is a summary discussion; the companion product, "Working with Parliaments on Budgets for Child Rights: A Guide for UNICEF Country Offices," provides detailed analysis and guidance to inform programming at the country level.

A core message of this review is that the potential success (or failure) of parliamentary engagement is determined to a large extent by the legislative and non-legislative environment surrounding the budget process. From the perspective of a UNICEF CO, budgetary engagement entails working strategically with multiple stakeholders across different stages of the budget process. Figure 6 illustrates four stages of the budget process and the different stakeholders and strategies that can be decisive to influence at each step.

The budget assessment or formulation stage is generally the most technical and centralized aspect of the budget process. At this point, the executive branch, particularly the finance minister, has formal responsibility and direct leverage to introduce budget amendments. In practice, parliamentary engagement can be very limited at this stage; influencing to increase budget allocations or redistribute funds to improve the quality of spending is usually done directly with the finance minister, the budget office, the planning ministry and/or the President or Prime Minister. The strategic use of partnerships (e.g. World Bank) can help to leverage, demand and monitor budget formulation. Working with sub-national elites (such as mayors or governors) in decentralized or federal countries may also enhance the political space to introduce amendments. The same can be said for the role of line ministers, which can be influential in the context of a coalition government. Working with CSOs, think tanks and research institutions is likely to produce effective advocacy outcomes only when they are able to "speak the same language" as MoF counterparts; otherwise, they are likely to be marginalized from the budgetary process. Finally, a good sense of timing, to anticipate electoral years, fiscal cycles or external opportunities can be crucial to effectively influence the formulation stage.

**Figure 6. Map of effective engagement with parliaments and the budget process**



The budget approval stage is the primary space where parliament can engage with and change budgetary allocations. This is perhaps the most political and dynamic stage of the budget process, where multiple actors converge to influence, bargain and discuss the adoption (or exclusion) of specific budget lines. Most COs have engaged with political party leaders and the chairs of key parliamentary committees including finance, budget and child-related committees (education, health, nutrition, social protection and so on). The success of the interaction will much depend on the partisan composition of the legislature per se. In an assembly where the government enjoys a single party majority, the space for introducing new amendments or challenging existing government positions is quite limited and/or party members are unlikely to challenge the governments' spending preferences. In this scenario, it is preferable to engage with the government directly at the executive level and during formulation stage. Working with "parliamentary champions" (e.g. key parliamentary actors with defined agendas) can also be particularly useful to increase visibility and potentially influence the government agenda in these countries. In more pluralistic environments, working with both the opposition—and government—leaders and MPs is likely to enhance advocacy efforts. In a coalition setting, line ministers from other parties can also be decisive to influence budgetary amendments. And generally, country experiences confirm that political elites are more likely to be responsive during electoral years as they are keen to take the voters' preferences into account.

The execution stage is again a space where the Executive and the MoF have greater leverage to influence the budget process; in most cases the legislature is formally unable to change allocations. Effective advocacy and monitoring at this stage would take place from within the government sphere, such as the creation of the parliamentary Unit for Budget Execution in



# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

Ecuador to monitor and follow up spending. However, since this is mostly a government prerogative, budget execution is likely to be effective within the boundaries set by the government party. Empowering CSOs to carry out sector specific budget monitoring can also contribute to improved transparency of government spending.

Finally, the budget monitoring and oversight stage combines the need for appropriate and timely technical knowledge with effective mobilization of key stakeholders. A critical factor is whether reliable and detailed budget data is available across different stages of the budget process. The Open Budget Survey offers a good source of comparison to look at reporting practices across the globe; UNICEF's work with CSOs, think tanks and the media can be very productive to demand greater government transparency on this front. Country experiences also show that UNICEF has worked with different parliamentary champions, including party leaders, committee chairs and other activists, to demand greater transparency and accountability around the budget process. Promoting a sense of "ownership" across political parties and organized civil society groups is key to ensure they perceive the gains of and ensure the benefits of effective budget monitoring. UNICEF can also contribute with a strategic identification of key partners to analyze, disseminate and communicate budget data in a timely, clear and widespread manner.

## 6. Conclusion

This synthesis paper reviewed the existing evidence on the role of parliaments in the budget process, analyzed some of the political and institutional constraints that limit the roles of parliaments, and complemented this information with a qualitative assessment of the experience of select UNICEF COs that are working with parliaments. The final section offered an overview of potential engagement strategies and entry points to advance the work of UNICEF, which is detailed in the companion guide.

UNICEF officials are well aware of existing political and institutional constraints and opportunities in their countries (such as the presence of single party majorities or the implications of working with government coalitions), and they have adjusted their strategies to overcome these realities. However, the knowledge of "what works and where" is not yet explicit or systematic.

Most COs *have worked directly with established legislative bodies*, such as parliamentary committees, party leaders and even individual policy champions, to maximize their influence. Some of the success stories include the formation of a Unit for the Control of Budgetary Execution in Ecuador in 2012 as a way to track and help monitor budgetary spending, the amendment to an education bill in Uganda or improved spending and monitoring of social protection investments in Mexico. However, not all of these efforts are institutionalized in the long run. According to CO experiences, the predominance of a single majoritarian party (e.g. Ecuador, Uganda) may bring decisive action over a policy initiative;

## PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

however, it could also limit the possibility for influencing beyond the preferences of the government, and the government can change priorities and undermine such efforts. In Mexico, some budgetary initiatives were institutionalized once the technical and political commitment of the MoF was secured. COs have had a marginally better record of success when working *with more plural parliaments* (e.g. Bangladesh, Guinea Bissau) since UNICEF has been able to work with all actors across the political spectrum to challenge government positions and secure political commitment around alternative options. The advocacy efforts to draft a preschool law in Georgia, which gave the Ministry of Education greater responsibility to set higher quality standards, is an example of successfully working across the political divide. Even though the bill had no direct relation to budget approval, it represented a *de facto* reallocation of resources in favor of preschool children. Finally, UNICEF's strategy to work *with individual MPs* has demonstrated partial success to put key issues on the public agenda. However, it is important to note that the strategy of high visibility can backfire if the selected champions come from the opposition and the validity of their proposals is undermined due to political reasons.

While direct work with parliaments has not consistently produced success stories, UNICEF has a solid record of *working with non-parliamentary actors* to influence the budget process. In many countries, COs have established direct links to influential budget players, including the MoF, line ministers and sub-national elites, to effectively influence budgetary allocations. Part of the success consisted in “learning to speak the same (public finance) language” so the CO could play an effective advocacy role. *Other strategic partnerships* with the World Bank, business sectors or civil society groups have been instrumental to achieving success. Mexico is perhaps the most visible success case where UNICEF has actively engaged think tanks to provide good technical expertise in the elaboration of budgetary proposals. Think tanks, however, are not representative of wider sectors of society, and the budgetary work to inform, influence and mobilize public support has been limited across the board. In other countries, a World Bank partnership has been critical to gain access to privileged data and gain the necessary policy influence over government officials. It was also noted that greater engagement media outlets such as TV programs, news reporting, newspaper editorials and public events is desirable to increase the visibility of child-focused initiatives. Finally, UNICEF officials are well aware of how *good timing and a sense of opportunity* mattered to advance budgetary work. As discussed, during electoral years, newly inaugurated governments or upcoming regional conferences, elected politicians are more willing and able to make public finance commitments.

Much work remains to promote and achieve PF4C objectives, but UNICEF is well positioned to continue building on its pioneering contributions to this emerging field. The body of empirical evidence is rapidly growing, there is greater and shared sensitivity about the political nature of budget advocacy efforts, and, perhaps most importantly, UNICEF staff are aware of the demands and capacity gaps needed to address these new challenges.

## References

- Agustina et al. 2012. "Political economy of managing natural resources in Indonesia". Asia Research Centre Working Paper No. 55. London School of Economics. March 2012.
- Alesina, A., R. Hausmann, R. Hommes and E. Stein (1999). "Budget Institutions and Fiscal Performance in Latin America." *Journal of Development Economics* 59(2): 253-273
- Alston, Lee, Marcus Melo, Bernardo Mueller and Carlos Pereira. 2009. Presidential Power, Fiscal Responsibility Laws and the Allocation of Spending: The Case of Brazil. in C. Scartascini, E. Stein and M. Hallerberg (eds.) *Who Decides the Budget? A Political Economy Analysis of the Budget Process in Latin America*. Inter-American Development Bank/ Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Amorim Neto, O. a. H. B. (2004). "Presidents and cabinets: The political determinants of fiscal behavior in Latin America." *Studies in Comparative International Development (SCID)* 39(1): 3-27.
- Arellano, Javier and Andres Mejia Acosta. 2014. Extractive Industries, Revenue Allocation and Local Politics" *A Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization Working Paper*. UNRISD, Geneva.
- Bird, R. (2008). Tax Challenges Facing Developing Countries, Institute for International Business Working Paper 12. Toronto: University of Toronto. Available online: <http://ideas.repec.org/p/ttp/iibwps/12.html>
- Brautigam, D., Fjeldstad, O. H., & Moore, M. (Eds.). 2008. Taxation and state-building in developing countries: Capacity and consent. Cambridge University Press.
- Carlitz, Ruth. 2013. Improving Transparency and Accountability in the Budget Process: An Assessment of Recent Initiatives. *Development Policy Review*. Volume 31, Issue Supplement s1, pages s49-s67, July 2013
- Cox, G. and M. McCubbins. 2001. 'The Institutional Determinants of Economic Policy Outcomes' in Haggard, S., and McCubbins, M. D. 2001. *Presidents, parliaments, and policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dunning, T. (2005). "Resource Dependence, Economic Performance and Political Stability". *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (4):451-482
- Eifert, B., A. Gelb and N.B. Tallroth (2002). *The Political Economy of Fiscal Policy and Economic Management in Oil Exporting Countries*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2899. Washington D.C.: World Bank
- Falleti, T. (2005), "A sequential theory of decentralization: Latin American cases in comparative perspective", *American Political Science Review*, 99:3
- Falleti, T. (2010), *Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Focanti, Diego, Mark Hallerberg and Carlos Scartascini. 2013. Tax Reforms in Latin America in an Era of Democracy. IADB Working Paper. IDB-WP-457. December 2013
- Haggard, S., and McCubbins, M. D. 2001. *Presidents, parliaments, and policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hallerberg, M., Rainer Strauch, R. and von. Hagen, J., 2009. *Fiscal Governance in Europe*, Ch. 2, New York: Cambridge University Press

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

- Hallerberg, Mark, and Patrik Marier. 2004. "Executive Authority, the Personal Vote, and Budget Discipline in Latin American and Caribbean Countries." *American Journal of Political Science*. 48, 3: 571-87.
- Hallerberg, Mark, Carlos Scartascini, and Ernesto Stein. 2009. "A New Framework" In Who Decides the Budget? A Political Economy Analysis of the Budget Process in Latin America, Cambridge, MA: Inter-American Development Bank//David Rockefeller Center.
- IBP (2009) Open Budgets, Transform Lives: The Open Budget Survey 2008, Washington, D.C.: International Budget Partnership. Available online: <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/3269-open-budgets-transform-lives.pdf>
- Kolstad, Ivar and Arne Wiig - Is Transparency the Key to Reducing Corruption in Resource-Rich Countries? *World Development*. Volume 37, Issue 3, March 2009, Pp. 521–532.
- Krafchik, Warren, and Joachim Wehner. 1998, "The role of parliament in the budgetary process." *South African Journal of Economics* 66.4 (1998): 242-255.
- Jones, P.J., (2001) "Political Institutions and Public Policy in Argentina: An Overview of the Formation and Execution of the National Budget", in S Haggard and M. D. McCubbins, (eds.), Presidents, Parliament and Policy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 140-182.
- Joshi, Anuradha. 2013. "Do they work? Assessing the impact of transparency and accountability initiatives in service delivery." *Development Policy Review* 31.s1; s29-s48.
- Joshi, Anuradha, and Peter P. Houtzager. 2012. "Widgets or watchdogs? Conceptual explorations in social accountability." *Public Management Review* 14.2 (2012): 145-162.
- Khagram, S., de Renzio, P. and Fung, A., (2013) "Overview and Synthesis: The Political Economy of Fiscal Transparency, Participation and Accountability around the World" in *Open Budgets: The Political Economy of Transparency, Participation, and Accountability*. Brookings Institution Press.
- McGee, Rosemary. 2002. "Participating in development." *Development theory and practice: Critical perspectives*: 92-116.
- Mejia Acosta, Andres, Vicente Albornoz and Caridad M. Araujo (2009) "The Political Economy of the Budget Process: The Case of Ecuador", in C. Scartascini, E. Stein and M. Hallerberg (eds.) *Who Decides the Budget? A Political Economy Analysis of the Budget Process in Latin America*. Inter-American Development Bank/ Harvard University Press, Cambridge. pp. 295-318.
- Mejía Acosta, Andres. 2013. The Impact and Effectiveness of Accountability and Transparency Initiatives: The Governance of Natural Resources. *Development Policy Review*. Volume 31, Issue Supplement s1, pages s89–s105, July 2013
- Moore, Mick. 2007. "How does taxation affect the quality of governance?." Institute of Development Studies. Working Paper.
- Open Budget Initiative 2014. "The Open Budget Survey 2014." *Washington DC: International Budget Partnership*.
- Ossowski, R., Villafuerte, M., Medas, P., and Thomas, T. (2008) "Managing the Oil Revenue Boom: The Role of Fiscal Institutions". In: IMF Occasional Paper 260. Washington D.C.: IMF.
- Poterba, James, and Jürgen Von Hagen. 1999. "Fiscal Rules and Fiscal Performance." *Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Poterba Fiscal Rules and Fiscal Performance*.
- Rakner, L., L. Mukubvu, N. Ngwira, K. Smiddy and A. Schneider (2004). The Budget as Theatre: The Formal and Informal Institutional Makings of the Budget Process in Malawi.

# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

- Rodden, Jonathan. (2006) Hamilton's Paradox: The Promise and Peril of Fiscal Federalism, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, Ch. 1, pp. 1-14 and Ch. 8, pp. 188-225.
- Rubin, Irene, 'The Politics of Balancing the Budget,' in *The Politics of Public Budgeting: Getting and Spending Borrowing and Balancing*, Fifth edition, 2006, pp. 187-229.
- Sanchez, O. (2006) 'Tax System Reform in Latin America: Domestic and International Causes', Review of International Political Economy 13.5: 772-801.
- Santiso, Carlos. 2005. "Legislatures and Budget Oversight in Latin America." *OECD Journal on Budgeting* 4.2 (2005): 47-76.
- Schick, Allen. 2002. "Can national legislatures regain an effective voice in budget policy?." *OECD Journal on Budgeting* 1.3 (pp. 15-42).
- Schick, Allen. 1998. "A contemporary approach to public expenditure management." *World Bank Institute*.
- Spiller, Pablo T., and Mariano Tommasi. 2003. "The institutional foundations of public policy: a transactions approach with application to Argentina." *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* 19.2 (281-306).
- Stapenhurst, Frederick. 2004. *The Legislature and the Budget*. World Bank.
- Stapenhurst, Frederick, and Jack Titsworth. 2001. "Features and Functions of Supreme Audit Institutions." World Bank PREM Note, No. 59.
- Stapenhurst, Frederick and Pelizzo, Riccardo. 2002. "A Bigger Role for Legislatures." *Finance and Development*, Vol. 39, No. 4.
- Stein, Ernesto, Carlos Scartascini and Mariano Tommasi. (Eds). 2005. *The politics of policies*. InterAmerican Development Bank and Harvard University Press.
- Von Hagen, Jurgen. 2006. Political Economy of Fiscal Institutions. In Weingast Barry and Donald Wittman. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 26.
- Wehner, Joachim and de Renzio, Paolo. 2013. Citizens, legislators, and executive disclosure: the political determinants of fiscal transparency. *World development*, 41 . pp. 96-108.
- Wehner, Joachim. 2010. Cabinet structure and fiscal policy outcomes. *European journal of political research*, 49 (5). pp. 631-653.
- Wehner, Joachim. 2010. *Legislatures and the Budget Process: The Myth of Fiscal Control*. Palgrave, UK
- Wehner, Joachim. 2006. "Assessing the Power of the Purse: An Index of Legislative Budget Institutions" *Political Studies*; Vol. 54, 767-785.
- Wehner, Joachim and Winnie Byanyima. 2005. "Budget Handbook for Parliamentarians, including from a Gender Perspective". Inter-Parliamentary Union and the World Bank Institute.
- Wehner, Joachim. 2005. Back from the sidelines? Redefining the contribution of legislatures to the budget cycle. Discussion Paper prepared for the World Bank Institute.
- Wildavsky, Aaron, 1984. *The Politics of the Budgetary Process*, Fourth Edition. Boston: Little Brown.

## **Annex. Interview Questionnaire**

### ***Part I. Nature of engagement***

1. When advocating for greater or more efficient budget allocations with parliament, what are the primary sectors that your offices has focused on? How long?
  - a. Cross sectoral (social spending, child protection, social protection, gender, nutrition)
  - b. Specific sector/s (education, health, justice)
2. Are these efforts ongoing (e.g. part of annual budget cycle or other planning processes) or time bound (e.g. one-off campaigns)?
3. What is the nature of your work with parliament on budget issues?
  - a. Increasing and improving long-term sectoral/ministerial allocations
  - b. Securing medium-term project/programme based funding
  - c. Managing short-term emergency relief funds
  - d. Other:
4. Where would you say your budgeting work is most effective and why?
  - a. Assessment/formulation/forecasting stage
  - b. Parliamentary Discussion of the budget bill/bargaining with political actors
  - c. Monitoring or oversight or audit of budgetary spending
  - d. Other:

### ***Part II. The budgetary process: Parliamentary engagement and oversight***

1. When working with parliament on budget issues, who do you primarily engage?
  - a. Directly with political parties at national level
  - b. National government (executive, line and finance ministries, planning agencies)
  - c. Cooperation/development agencies
  - d. Civil society groups
  - e. Private sector
2. Who is your main counterpart/s within parliament when working on budget issues?
  - a. Party leaders
  - b. Committees
  - c. Informal caucuses
  - d. Other:
3. What strategies were most effective for your work with parliament on budget issues?
  - a. Strategic national and sector specific development plans
  - b. Discussing expenditure frameworks (annual budget or MTEF) and assisting with budget analysis, review and formulation
  - c. Presenting evidence and advocating for more efficient/equitable spending
  - d. Other:



# PF4C Working Paper Series, No. 1

4. Were there any other factors, actors or opportunities that made it easier to advance your budgetary work?
  - a. Individual willingness or commitment of the president or specific party leaders non-government parties represented in discussions/parliamentary committees
  - b. Personal connections (either formal or informal)
  - c. Electoral concerns/Duration of power of a particular party
  - d. Ease of access, transparency, quality of budget information produced by parliament
  - e. Other:
5. When such “enabling conditions” were absent, how did you overcome these obstacles (or not) to further engagement with parliament on budget issues?
  - a. Directly advocating at the highest level (executive, donors)
  - b. Engaging different strategic stakeholders within parliament (opposition parties, business lobbies)
  - c. Raising civil society awareness to demand action from parliamentarians
  - d. Other:
6. Did the CO adopt any strategies to engage parliament on budget issues that simply did not work? If so, why do you think they failed?

### ***Part III. Other conditions***

1. Does the presence of any of the following [adapt for country] improved or reduced your ability to engage parliament on budget issues?
  - a. Internal or external conflicts
  - b. Abundance of natural resources
  - c. Foreign sources of funding (aid, emergency relief, loans)
  - d. Elections, government change
  - e. Sub-national demands
2. Within your CO, what factors were important to effectively engaging parliament on budget issues? Since when?
  - a. Demand/support from senior management (Representative, Deputy Rep)
  - b. Technical capacity on PFM issues
  - c. Proactive policy/stakeholder engagement
  - d. Accessing and sharing reliable budgetary information
  - e. Other:
3. Which elements, within the CO, would need to be strengthened to expand child-sensitive budgeting?
4. Are there any other comments or questions you’d like to raise on your work with parliament on budget issues?