

Advocacy on the right to food based on the analysis of government budgets

The content of this handbook is based on FAO's guide *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food* by Ann Blyberg and Frank Mischler, with the valuable contribution of Helena Hofbauer and Vivek Ramkumar.

José María Medina Rey and María Teresa de Febrer (PROSALUS, Spain) adapted it to the “handbook” format. The translation into English of this handbook was done by Stephen Carlin and Beth Gelb.

The purpose of this handbook on BUDGETS is to present some of the aspects on which the public budget is an important factor in recognizing the right to food. Here we will address advocacy initiatives based on an analysis of public budgets.

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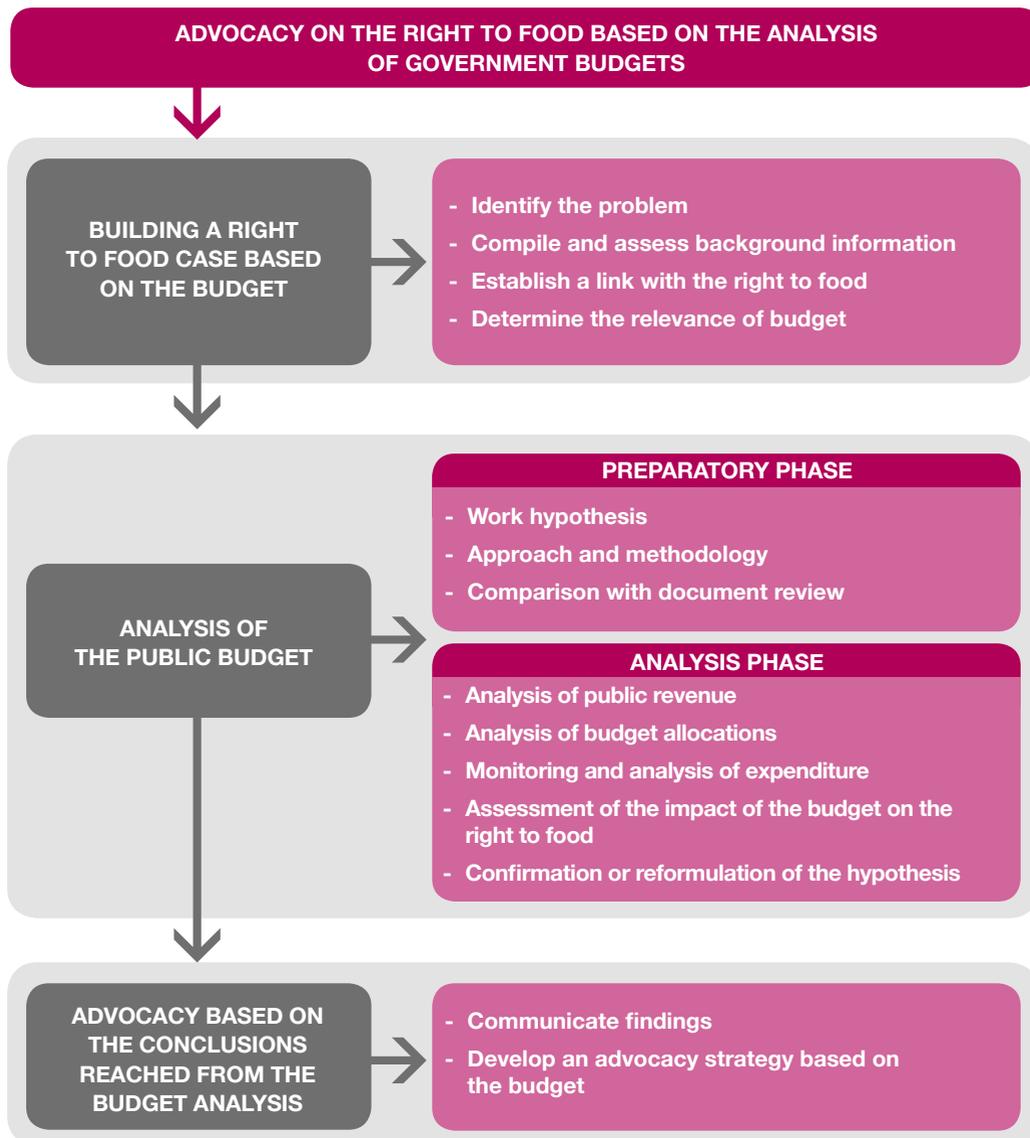
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The FAO glossary on the right to food is available at:
<http://www.fao.org/righttofood/knowledge-centre/glossary/en>



INTRODUCTION

Recognition of the right to food as a human right and its inclusion in the international legal system and national laws is very important but not enough for everyone to have access to adequate food. In addition to this recognition, governments, in collaboration with civil society, need to develop policies, plans and programmes to guarantee this right, giving priority to the most vulnerable. In the event that such policies do not exist or are poorly designed, improvements must be proposed using right to food parameters.

A tool that can be very effective in ensuring the right to food is **advocacy based on the analysis of public budgets**. Not only budgets, but also policies, plans and programmes come into play here insofar as funds are needed to develop them. Budgets are the most concrete and objective measure of a government's commitment to the recognition of the right to food. However, it is not easy to transfer right to food issues to the budget of a particular country because, while an allocation is made of what can be spent, there are no specifications of what should be spent. Moreover, such allocations do not address the efficiency and effectiveness of actual costs or who the true beneficiaries are.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS	
Budget analysis	Budget work
The study of public budget figures, i.e. revenues, allocations and expenditures.	This includes not only budget analysis but also the monitoring of expenditure, spending impact assessment, community capacity building regarding budget issues, etc.

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, table 1. Rome.

In any case, the causes of hunger and malnutrition are very diverse and budget analysis can guide governments when devising ways to treat those causes. It is also worth recalling that states have specific obligations regarding the right to food, and therefore the study of budgetary funds earmarked for that purpose can be used as an indicator of government compliance or non-compliance with these obligations.

Budget work can be a very useful enabling tool allowing civil society organizations, legislators and human rights commissions to have an impact on the realization of the right to food.

The Right to Food Guidelines, especially Guideline 12 on national financial resources to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, are an important resource to use in promoting the right to food through budget work.

RIGHT TO FOOD GUIDELINES

Guideline 12. National financial resources

12.1 Regional and local authorities are encouraged to allocate resources for anti-hunger and food security purposes in their respective budgets.

12.2 States should ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources, particularly in the area of food security.

12.3 States are encouraged to promote basic social programmes and expenditures, in particular those affecting the poor and the vulnerable segments of society, and to protect them from budget reductions, while increasing the quality and effectiveness of social expenditures. States should strive to ensure that budget cuts do not negatively affect access to adequate food among the poorest sections of society.

12.4 States are encouraged to establish an enabling legal and economic environment to promote and mobilize domestic savings and attract external resources for productive investment, and seek innovative sources of funding, both public and private at national and international levels, for social programmes.

12.5 States are invited to take appropriate steps and suggest strategies to contribute to raise awareness of the families of migrants in order to promote efficient use of the remittances of migrants for investments that could improve their livelihoods, including the food security of their families.

It is also important to bear in mind that all individuals are entitled to have access to information and to evaluate budgets (including the budget documents themselves), policies, programmes, plans and preliminary budgeting reports that affect access to food,

such as those relating to the field of agriculture, food security and emergency food supply. In other words, not only should we analyse what the government does with respect to the budget but also how it goes about it.

People's right to participate in the decision-making process is recognized in the context of human rights as evidenced by Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Right to Food Guidelines.

Governments are faced with obstacles of various kinds when addressing the right to food, arising from domestic needs or interests that must be met as well as international commitments. Internal and external pressures are great and this can give rise to competing interests to obtain budget resources to realize the right to food. Therefore, different areas of civil society urge governments to increase budgetary allocations so that all people are truly able to exercise their human right to food.

In this initial stage, aimed at building a case as to how public budgets affect the right to food, the most important task is to identify the problem, gather and review relevant information and establish how the right to food issue relates to public budgets.¹

1.1 IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Normally the problem does not exist a priori nor is it clearly limited or defined. The issue can be approached from different perspectives:

- from that of civil society or human rights organizations;
- from that of legislators who may have been informed of the problem by an individual request for help;
- from that of human rights commissions that may have been informed of a problem through complaints made by individuals or groups, or through reports in the media.

1. For further details on these steps, please see Handbook 7 of this collection on evaluating the right to food.

Once the problem has been identified, all of the information initially available should be arranged in the clearest possible way.

1.2 COMPILE AND ASSESS BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Having identified the problem, one must collect all the information that may help in gaining a deeper understanding of it and framing it in the political, economic and social context of the country or city in question, thus highlighting the opportunities and limitations that may be faced throughout the process. This compilation and review of relevant information should enable us to confirm and delve deeper into the problem or correct and readdress the initial identification.

Although the exact type of information that may be needed cannot be determined a priori because it depends to a large extent on each case, the following information should be taken into consideration:

- **relevant governmental policies and plans;**
- **relevant government statistics** on issues related to the right to food (poverty, hunger and malnutrition);
- **the legal framework of the country**, i.e. both the laws and appeal mechanisms available;
- **information on the public budget, the budget process and those responsible for it.** Budget work requires knowledge of the legal framework governing the development, approval and enforcement of the budget, its degree of transparency and participation, and the parties responsible.

1.3 ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED IS RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO FOOD

It is quite likely that the problem identified relates to more than one human right. The decision to focus on the right to food is one that must take account of individual or collective priorities and possibilities for action within the scope of one or another right.

Once it has been determined that the situation analysed raises an issue related to the right to food, we need to take a closer look at what national legislation says about this right and what international or regional right to food treaties the state has ratified, and hence what obligations it has in this connection.

SOME RELEVANT QUESTIONS ONCE IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT THE ISSUE IS RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO FOOD

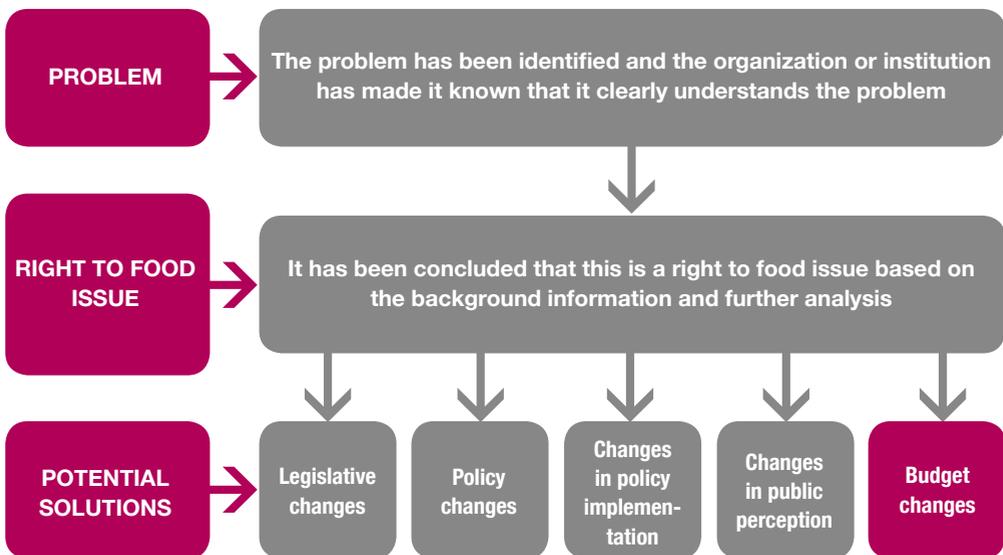
- Are there provisions in the constitution that guarantee the right to food?
- If so, how do they relate to the subject?
- Is there a right to food policy or any legislation in this respect?
- If so, what does it say in this regard and how does it relate to the subject?
- What international or regional treaties has the government ratified?
- What do these treaties establish with regard to the right to food?
- What specific articles focus on the problem under scrutiny?
- What specific obligation(s) on states may apply to the problem?
- What aspects of Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) General Comment 12 may apply to the subject?
- What do the Right to Food Guidelines say about what the government should do regarding the issue identified?

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 1. Rome.

1.4 DETERMINE WHETHER THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED IS SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO THE BUDGET

The aim here is to ascertain whether the budget has played a key role in creating the problem. Once the organization has defined the problem and compiled and reviewed the relevant information establishing that this is a right to food issue related to the budget, it will be in a position to move forward with the budget analysis. However, if it is found that changing the budget will not help resolve the situation, or it is not realistic to expect changes in the government budget, it would not make sense to spend time on the budget work.

WILL BUDGET WORK REALLY HELP?



Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*. Rome.

Owing to the complexity of budget work, we would advise that the organization concerned first check whether its personnel have the knowledge and capacity to perform such work. If they do not, the organization should seek outside support or even consider a coordinated effort with some other interested organization that does have these capabilities.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR BUDGET WORK

Adaptation to the natural scope of work	The organization must assess whether its natural scope of work (national, regional or local) corresponds to the field in which the budget work must be performed.
Capacity to engage in dialogue	The organization must assess whether it is able to dialogue with the relevant government agencies in this case, i.e. if it is able to get relevant information from them and establish a dialogue on the issue.
Expertise with regard to economic, social and cultural rights (especially the right to food)	The organization must make certain that it has a solid understanding of economic, social and cultural human rights in general, and the right to food in particular.
Capacity for research and socio-economic analysis	The organization must identify whether it has the necessary technical skills to perform the complex statistical and budgetary analyses necessary.

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 1. Rome.

While the organization reviews its own abilities, it should also analyse the outside environment in which it operates. In this sense, it must consider:

- the general political environment in which the research is conducted because the final results of the work will depend largely on the government's degree of accessibility and openness to civil society;
- the degree of citizen participation in the formulation, adoption and implementation of the budget, i.e. whether the relevant government agencies facilitate this participation;
- the budget work of civil society: in other words, identifying those civil society organizations that are doing budget work in a particular area.

Once it has been determined that budgetary aspects are relevant to our right to food case, we must then address the budget analysis. This second phase is divided into two parts: initial preparation (working hypotheses, approaches and methodologies, document review) followed by the budget analysis *per se*.

2.1 PREPARATION FOR ANALYSIS

The organization conducting the analysis formulates a work hypothesis or initial premise regarding how the government budget relates to the right to food issue; this link should be determined by the time the budgetary work has concluded.

RELEVANT QUESTIONS TO ESTABLISH THE LINK BETWEEN THE BUDGET AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD ISSUE

- What specific role does the government budget play in the problem?
- What part of the problem relates to the budget?
- What actions or omissions of the government budget play a part in the creation of the problem?
- At what point in the budget process (formulation, approval, expenses, audit) does the problem arise?
- At what level (national, regional or local) does the problem arise?
- What should the government do to help improve the situation?

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 2. Rome.

Decide on budget work approaches and methodologies

Work approaches and methodologies are determined by the nature of the right to food issues being dealt with in accordance with the objectives of the organization, its capabilities and the environment in which it operates.

- **Approaches** to budget work can be:
 - national, regional or local, depending on the organization's scope of interest;
 - determined on the basis of income, allocations or expenses, depending on the area(s) of interest.
- **Methodologies**, in this case, the type of budget work that an organization wishes to perform, such as the following:
 - analysis of budget figures in a time interval, in relation to socio-economic groups or sectors;
 - comparison of expenditure and allocations;
 - tracking government spending;
 - assessment of the impact of government spending on specific programmes related to the right to food.

RELEVANT QUESTIONS TO ESTABLISH BUDGET WORK APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

- Does the organization want to focus on what is happening regionally, nationally or locally?
- Does concern revolve around how the government raises revenue, how budget allocations are made or how they are spent? Is it advisable to focus on more than one of these areas?
- Do you need to analyse the budget for one or more years to establish trends?
- In addition to budgets, is it also necessary to analyse monthly or quarterly government reports and/or the end-year audit report to compare expenditures with appropriations?
- Should government spending be independently monitored? If so, should this be done with or without the participation of other stakeholders?
- Are work approaches and methodologies determined considering the nature of the right to food issues being dealt with, the objectives of the organization, its capabilities and the environment?

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 2. Rome.

Compare the issue with the relevant documents

Once approaches and methodologies have been determined, there are many different types of documents that may be useful depending on the sphere in which the organization is carrying out its work and whether it is focusing on revenue, allocations or the expenditure audit.

As explained in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) report *Research and proposal for budget performance indicators in Latin American countries*, the International Budget Partnership prepares what is called an Open Budget Survey featuring publicly available budget information from the eight key budget documents for the transparent management of public budgets:

1. Pre-budget statement
2. Executive budget proposal
3. Enacted budget
4. Citizen budget
5. In-year reports
6. Mid-year review
7. Year-end report
8. Audit report

POTENTIALLY RELEVANT DOCUMENTS IN BUDGET ANALYSES AT THE STATE LEVEL	
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	STANDARD CONTENT
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)	Plans and policies to promote growth and poverty reduction for periods of over three years. These include information on macroeconomic issues, structure and social policy.
Pre-budget statement	Sets the parameters within which the executive will formulate its draft budget.
Executive budget proposal	Extensive public finance report including expenditure, revenues, deficit or surplus and debt, which the government usually submits for legislative approval.
Support documents	Documents relating to the budget, such as economic studies.
Extra-budgetary funds	Income and expenses recorded separately from the budget, usually supported by dedicated revenue, whether from internal or external sources (e.g. donor countries or agencies).

**POTENTIALLY RELEVANT DOCUMENTS IN BUDGET ANALYSES AT THE STATE LEVEL
(cont.)**

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	STANDARD CONTENT
Time frame of medium-term expenditure	This typically covers a period of three years and attempts to link the plans, policies and budgets.
Approved budget	The budget as it was approved following legislative debate on the executive's draft budget.
In-year reports	Monthly or quarterly reports on income and expenditure.
Half-yearly report/review	Comprehensive report on budget implementation, including a review of economic assumptions.
Year-end report	Income and expenditure report at the end of the year. This usually contains more detailed information than the audit report.
Audit report	Report issued by the country's highest auditing body bearing witness to the robustness of the government's year-end accounts.
Government statistics	These include census data, performance indicators, benchmarks, etc. Statistics, particularly disaggregated data, can be very important in making sense of budget data. The statistics researchers need depends on the case they are working on.

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 2. Rome.

It should be recalled that, in light of the complexity and multisectoral nature of the right to food, it is often necessary to analyse the budget of various ministries, departments or agencies. It is also possible to perform the analysis at lower levels of government, analysing the budgets, accounts and audits of regional and local governments.

What can an organization do if it is unable to obtain all of the information it needs through normal channels? In that case, it should look into academic and university sources, international organizations which have the information needed (UN, World Bank, ECLAC, international Non-governmental Organizations, etc.).

2.2. PERFORMING BUDGET ANALYSIS

Undertaking a budget analysis to better understand the fulfilment of state obligations regarding the right to food is a challenge because the rules relating to economic, social and cultural human rights in general, and the right to food in particular, can be complicated, and budget work may require working with large amounts of complex information and careful attention to certain details. As noted earlier, an organization planning to tackle this job should engage in a prior discussion of its capabilities and, if necessary, resort to alliances with other players who have the necessary qualifications.

POSSIBLE BUDGET LINES	
Public budgets are available in different formats (classifications), and each type of classification provides different information on budget allocations. Government budgets tend to mix the different classifications.	
Administrative classification	Shows which government entity (department, ministry or agency) is responsible for spending a funding allocation and will ultimately be held accountable for its use.
Economic classification	Provides information on the nature of an expenditure, and arranges expenditures and receipts of the entity into significant economic categories (e.g. operating outlays, investments, transfers of goods and services, different types of taxes, loans and subsidies, etc.).
Functional classification	Specifies how much is being allocated to different purposes in accordance with the priorities of the budget entity.

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 2. Rome.

The most suitable approach would be to start with the obligations of the state concerning the right to food: What should the government be doing to help realize the right to food? Is it doing what it is supposed to be doing (i.e. fulfilling its obligations) in terms of the way it develops and manages the budget?

The government's human rights obligations may vary depending on whether the focus is on those arising from domestic legislation or international treaties.²

The first step of the analysis will be different depending on the dimension of the budget involved in the case: public revenues, budget allocations or expenditures.

2. For further information on obligations, please see Handbook 1.

Analysis of government revenues in light of right to food obligations

Governments can obtain their revenue from various sources: taxes, fees, public companies, concessions on natural resources or other types of operations, official development assistance, etc. Of these, tax collection is no doubt the main source – hence the potential importance of analysing the implications of each type of taxation.

The way in which a government raises its revenue must be considered within a human rights context. A few hypothetical examples of revenue decisions which could imply non-compliance with human rights obligations will aid in understanding this:

- **Increasing revenue by establishing or raising a value-added tax on certain basic foodstuffs** could cast doubts on the government's fulfilment of its obligation to respect the right to food, given that poor people would be the most affected because they spend a higher proportion of their income on basic necessities. Because of this indirect tax they would have to spend more money on these products, thus undermining their economic capacity to cover other basic needs.
- **Despite rising GDP in a country, the government does not provide for a corresponding rise in revenues.** In this case, it would be fair to say that the government is not “using maximum available resources” to meet its right to food obligations as mandated by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
- **Despite the willingness of international donors to contribute to specific programmes, the government does not accept the additional aid because macroeconomic strategy sets a ceiling on government spending.** Macroeconomic strategies are the framework in which public budgets are developed and have a great impact on budgets, hence the importance of evaluating them from the point of view of the realization of human rights.

Analysis of government budget allocations in light of right to food obligations

Budget allocations are the government's way of communicating how it intends to spend available funds and are a demonstration of its priorities, which should include human rights. Analysis of allocations provides insight into the probable or potential impact these will have on the right to food; the real impact will become known once the funds are spent.

If the subject under analysis is a specific project, it will be individually listed in the budget and be easier to identify. However, if we are analysing a broader issue, we should be aware that there may be relevant budgetary allocations under different headings, ministries or

departments. Therefore, the analysis must be thorough and take into account the different budget classifications that can provide information on the allocations of interest to us.

It should be noted that in many cases, problems are not due to budget allocations, but can be traced back to policy or programme design. It is difficult to assess whether the design of a policy, programme or project will facilitate the exercise of the right to food, thus the need for sufficient research and analysis as well as a deep understanding of the context in which said policy, programme or project is to be developed.

An important aspect of allocations earmarked for the realization of the right to food is the principle of non-retrogression,³ i.e. the government may not move backwards in the progressive realization of this right. This highlights the importance of a comparative analysis of budget allocations over the course of several years to check whether allocations are rising or falling, making the necessary adjustments for inflation and population growth.

ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION

Inflation means that, as years go by, less can be bought with the same amount of money because the cost of commodities, goods and services progressively rises.

Therefore, in order to make an accurate comparison of government budgets over a number of years, budget figures must be adjusted for inflation. To do this, the most commonly used tool, usually issued by governments themselves, is the consumer price index (CPI) or sometimes the inflation rate. We begin with a number of consecutive years to be analysed using the figures corresponding to the initial year as a reference (which would be equivalent to 100) and, if there is inflation, successive years will feature indices of over 100 which will help us to “translate” the values of the budget under scrutiny to data comparable to those of the reference year.

PER CAPITA ALLOCATIONS

In addition to inflation, it may also be advisable to consider that the country's population is evolving, normally growing, meaning that budget allocations over several years, which may appear to be of equal amounts, may actually be providing less coverage since they have to meet the needs of a larger population. In the case of an allocation of the same amount to two provinces or departments for a food subsidy programme, it is important to consider the population of each province to avoid discrimination in terms of per capita allocation.

It is therefore useful to calculate per capita allocation by dividing the sum of the approved allocation by the number of people in the target population.

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 2. Rome.

3. For further details see Handbook 1, section 1.4.1.

Monitoring and analysis of right to food expenditures

It is very important to track budgetary expenditures because rarely do they match allocations. Even if our analysis of budgetary allocations leads us to believe that the government is making a significant effort to comply with its right to food obligations, an analysis of expenditure could prove that it is not.

It could also happen that, even if expenditure generally matches allocations, upon closer inspection it could be discovered that spending is inefficient and that the quality of the goods and services is well below what one would expect from such amounts of expenditure. The key question in this context is: Is the government spending its funds in accordance with its right to food obligation?

There can be any number of reasons why expenditure often does not correspond with allocations or why the expected impact is not achieved. Following are the most common:

- **Corruption or inefficient use of funds.** Corruption is one of the most widespread causes of diverted funds through procurement irregularities, false accounting entries, etc. Insofar as a government fails to address corruption or spending inefficiency, it is in breach of its obligation to use the maximum of available resources to promote the right to food.
- **Poor financial management resulting in lower than budgeted expenditure.** It could happen that certain government departments do not have the capacity or the will to spend all funds allocated to them for specific purposes, which implies questions about the government's compliance with the obligation to use the maximum amount of available resources.
- **Unauthorized expenditure.** A government can shift funds from one programme to another by means of transfers or complementary budgets. In some cases these changes are unlawful while in others they are legitimate. The latter, despite their legitimacy, may sometimes constitute a breach of the government's right to food obligations.
- **Inflexible rules.** Realization of the right to food can be affected by excessively inflexible rules concerning financial management.

Collaborative efforts can be made with civil society organizations such as national human rights commissions that engage in important investigation and analysis work focused on

government spending, which can also be useful to government institutions. Following are some of the methodologies used:

- **Social and community control units.** These engage communities in discussions with authorities where the latter are held accountable when serious shortcomings are observed in the implementation of programmes.
- **Product and service procurement checks.** If tender call and approval procedures are not carried out properly, the result is usually that too much is paid for goods and services whose quality is not commensurate with their price. In some countries, civil society organizations set up public procurement monitoring processes to control the price and quality of the products delivered.
- **Public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS).** PETS investigate the flow of resources from the central government to local governments, right down to the service rendered by the provider in order to detect possible leaks.

Assessment of the impact of government budget on the right to food

The impact of government decisions regarding revenue, allocations and expenditure is not always immediately felt. However, government obligations include achieving certain results concerning the realization of human rights in general and the right to food in particular. No one would deny that impact assessment is very difficult because many factors can contribute to the lack of access to adequate food (insufficient budget allocations, insufficient funds for the provision of services, inadequate service design and delivery, factors outside of the specific programme, factors outside the general budget). Therefore, impact assessment requires “controlling” other factors that could be affecting the situation, which in some cases is very difficult or even impossible. However, approximations are always an alternative if the right techniques are used.⁴

Budget impact assessment is often the key to effective budget work in relation to human rights.

4. Please see Handbook 7.

ASSESSING BUDGET IMPACT ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD

- Has the government budget interfered with the effective exercise of the right to food of any person, for instance, the application of Value Added Tax (VAT) on basic foodstuffs?
- Is the government budget actually delivering the goods and services that those suffering from hunger and malnutrition need to improve their situation?
- Is government spending contributing to the progressive exercise of people's right to food?

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 2. Rome.

Confirmation or reformulation of the working hypothesis

After following all the above steps, the organization should ask whether the analysis has confirmed the initial hypothesis or not:

- If it has, the organization is ready to engage in advocacy work based on its findings, as discussed below.
- If it has not, in other words if the findings show that the role played by the government budget is other than that foreseen in the hypothesis, the organization should reformulate its hypothesis and think about re-conducting the analysis cycle. If the findings indicate that the government budget was not a major cause in the case studied, the investigation should focus on areas other than the budget.

Once we have reached the conclusion that there is a right to food problem, confirmed that the budget has played a significant role in the creation or aggravation of that problem and analysed the related budgetary aspects, the next step is to determine how to disseminate the findings and contribute to right to food advocacy.

3.1 COMMUNICATE FINDINGS

All investigation and analysis processes produce a great many documents (political, budgetary, accounting) and generate a wealth of information that will determine the final outcome of all the work. Now is the time to draw conclusions and disseminate them in a clear and compelling manner to the target audience, highlighting the main ones to set them apart from the rest of the information generated.

FAO also suggests putting the work undertaken into perspective, particularly when addressing issues that lie somewhere between common knowledge and technical details.

RELEVANT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN COMMUNICATING FINDINGS

- Are results relevant with respect to the subject under scrutiny?
- What are the key findings of the work performed?
- Are they relevant in social, political or legal terms?
- Is the presentation of the findings sufficiently clear and understandable?
- What do the findings say about government compliance or lack thereof with its right to food obligations?
- Has any light been shed on current policy and legislative shortcomings in relation to the right to food?
- What policy, legislative, budgetary or other type of modification can be suggested from the findings?
- Are the proposed solutions feasible?

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 3. Rome.

Once the key findings of the research have been established, one can start developing an advocacy strategy based on the budget.

3.2 DEVELOP AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY BASED ON THE BUDGET

While it would appear that advocacy is the domain of civil society organizations, often both legislators and members of other institutions such as national human rights commissions also engage in advocacy work when trying to introduce a change in a law, policy or programme.

The following components must be considered when designing the strategy:

- **The aim of the strategy** is not the problem being investigated but rather the policy objectives that may contribute to its solution. The aim should be rational and address the likelihood of changing the current situation as well as the right time to propose such a change.
- **The message** must clearly outline the problem, its solution and the actions needed to achieve it. Through these three components we can communicate the importance of the issue, how to approach it and the steps required to do so. It is important to clearly express the solution showing its feasibility. A single, clear accessible message should be presented to the target population using understandable data. The message can be supported by graphs and tables, provided these help to visualize it and are not confusing.
- **Identify the target group or audience**, drawing a distinction between primary and secondary audiences. The primary audience consists of the people who make the most important institutional decisions and who have the authority to change the design or rules of a government programme and allocate or disburse funds. In other words, they are the key people that an organization would need to approach in order to achieve the proposed solution. The secondary audience is composed of people who can exert pressure on or influence the primary audience, such as decision-makers who are not directly responsible for the proposed solutions, legislators, opinion-makers, media and civil society. In many cases the secondary audience is key to raising the profile of an issue and increasing the pressure on the primary audience.
- **The action plan** devised to spread the message to the target audience should include:
 - identification of the primary and secondary audience and the people in a given institution who can facilitate access to them;

- identification of potential partners or negotiators for individual meetings;
- identification of the messenger, i.e. the key person for each case and audience who collaborates with the organization to communicate the message in the most effectively way possible;
- setting of the appropriate date and time to publicize the message;
- planning of specific actions for each type of audience (public hearings, personal testimony, press conferences, publication of reports, appearances, public demonstrations, street events, media interviews, exhibits, etc.) and appointment of those responsible for undertaking them.

QUESTIONS TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

- Does the entire work team understand and agree with the action plan?
- What is each person's role in the plan?
- Do we agree with regard to our primary and secondary audience?
- Have we put together a clear and compelling message?
- Does everyone understand and accept the message?
- Who are the messengers for each audience and why have they been chosen?
- Have we drafted the right material for each audience?
- Are we ready to enter into discussion with the government about its actions and omissions relating to the problem under scrutiny?
- Are we prepared to clearly explain the approach, methodology and information used in the budget work?
- Are we able to explain how the problem is a failure on the part of the government to meet its right to food obligations and to explain exactly what those obligations are?
- Are we able to explain why the solution we are proposing could be a way for the government to better fulfil its right to food obligations?

Source: compiled from FAO. 2009. *Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food*, chapter 3. Rome.

A large rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

A large rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal grey lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the red border.

This collection of RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS has been compiled from publications forming part of the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox prepared by FAO's Right to Food Team.

The RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS have been developed under the project entitled "Coherent Food Security Responses: Incorporating Right to Food into Global and Regional Food Security Initiatives", co-funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).



For more information on the Right to Food Methodological Toolbox, visit the website: www.fao.org/righttofood or contact us at: righttofood@fao.org

RIGHT TO FOOD HANDBOOKS

1. The right to food within the international framework of human rights and country constitutions
2. Development of specific right to food legislation
3. Review of the compatibility of sectoral laws with the right to food
4. General aspects regarding monitoring the right to food
5. Procedures for monitoring the right to food
6. Information for monitoring the right to food
7. Assessment of the right to food
8. Advocacy on the right to food based on the analysis of government budgets
9. Who's who in the right to food
10. Right to food training

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