



Fish monger, Efua Kwansima, dries fish in Abuesi, Ghana in 2014. Photo: Jane Hahn for Oxfam America

BUDGET MONITORING & ADVOCACY LEARNING REVIEW

Case Study: Agriculture Budget Advocacy in Ghana

This case study provides a summary of the approaches and tactics used by Oxfam and partners in Ghana for budget monitoring and advocacy related to the agriculture budget, the key outcomes achieved so far and lessons learned. The information presented here is based on a case study conducted by Pol de Greve and Maxwell Agbenorhevi of Context, International Cooperation in 2017, internal documentation and additional interviews with Oxfam staff. It is part of a broader learning review of budget monitoring and advocacy work conducted by Oxfam and allies in the areas of ODA, South-South Cooperation and Agriculture.

BACKGROUND

Ghana is a lower-middle income, democratic country in Western Africa with a population of approximately 29.2 million people¹. The country relies heavily on the rich agricultural economy with more than half the population depending on it as a main source of living. Ghana also depends heavily on revenues from its natural resources (solid minerals and petroleum) and development aid in funding agriculture development and food security. The Government of Ghana's national budget and spending priorities in the agriculture sector are heavily influenced by domestic revenue mobilization from taxes, petroleum and mineral revenues and development aid. The government of Ghana has over the years committed to improving the agriculture sector through various policy commitments, including the Maputo Declaration on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Like all signatories to this framework, Ghana committed to improving agriculture through allocation of an increased percentage in funding of at least 10% of the government's annual budget to bring about a growth rate of 6%². Ghana continues to lag behind on its CAADP commitment with an average growth rate performance of 4%, and there are additional concerns that the funding provided is not supporting women and men smallholder farmers. In December 2016 Ghana elected a new president, Nana Dankwa Akufo-Addo from the New Patriotic Party as well as a number of newly elected Members of Parliament.

Oxfam in Ghana and core partners have collaborated to implement a budget monitoring and advocacy program with an overall goal of enabling women and men small-scale producers, civil society, and citizens in Ghana to collectively influence national budgets, development aid, and government spending priorities, including petroleum revenue to leverage additional resources for small scale agriculture development and food security. To achieve this goal, Oxfam and partners aim to influence changes in four areas³:

1. Better and improved agricultural development policies and programmes are put in place that benefit women and other small-scale producers,
2. Create civic spaces where civic actors meet and collaborate with each other and from where they engage with and influence duty bearers,
3. Increase the capacity of actors and stakeholders to evaluate and proactively influence the quality and equity of agricultural budget of government and donors, and
4. Share evidence and intelligence with farmers, citizens and decision makers on national agriculture budget dynamics and its implications and implementations standards.

This case study is part of a multi-country Budget Monitoring Learning Review and provides a summary of the approaches and tactics used by Oxfam and partners in Ghana for budget monitoring and advocacy related to the agriculture budget, the key outcomes achieved so far and lessons learned. The information presented here is based on a case study conducted by Pol de Greve and Maxwell Agbenorhevi of Context, International Cooperation in 2017⁴, internal documents⁵ and additional interviews with Oxfam staff.

STRATEGIC APPROACH AND TACTICS

The following are the main approaches and tactics used by Oxfam and partners for their budget monitoring and advocacy.

1. **Joint advocacy with allies and partners:** Oxfam in Ghana works in partnership with a number of organizations, including SEND Ghana, Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana, Friends of the Nation (FoN), The Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition (GTLC), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), and African Centre of Energy Policy (ACEP). Oxfam and partners work together at key moments and as much as possible divide the roles based on the strengths and expertise of each group.
2. **Research and analysis to inform evidence-based advocacy:** Oxfam and partners use research and analysis to better understand and document national budget allocations and expenditures for agriculture, climate adaptation, and programmes that benefit small-scale women food producers; to understand how donors are investing in agriculture in Ghana; and to increase awareness on issues related to the budget among key stakeholders. This has been done through budget tracking by farmers on concrete projects, impact assessments, value for money analysis and budget analysis. Examples include the following:
 - a survey report on agriculture expenditure tracking and CAADP Compliance
 - a study to track public Investments and climate change adaptation finance flows for agriculture and small-scale women producers in Ghana; and
 - a set of short video documentaries on value for money social audits for agricultural projects funded by petroleum revenue (<http://www.oilmoneytv.org/>).
3. **Strengthening the capacity of civil society and journalists:** Oxfam and partners have provided capacity building trainings for members of civil society and journalists from the Ghana Agricultural Rural Journalists Association aimed at enhancing their ability to engage in effective advocacy and partnership building with state and non-state actors at all levels in agriculture sector budgeting⁶.
4. **Citizen Engagement:** In an effort to involve citizens in determining priorities for the agricultural sector and mobilize them to take action, Oxfam and partners have organized a number of activities such as social media campaigns, public rallies, policy dialogues bringing together farmers and fisher folk to dialogue directly with government officials and political candidates⁷ and collating and submitting input of citizens, farmers and civil society to the government at key moments in the budget process.
5. **Media:** Depending on the target they are trying to reach, Oxfam and partners use different mediums, including social media, radio, TV and newspapers, to increase awareness on the issues, including research results and civil society asks related to the budget.
6. **Pre-Election Campaign:** In 2016 Oxfam and partners developed and implemented a multi-pronged, multi-regional engagement strategy in the lead up to the December national election that included a number of asks on their core issues (including agriculture)⁸. Oxfam and partners undertook a number of activities including a review and advocacy related to the manifestos of the lead political parties, media engagement, engaging citizens in political debates, and the development of a 10 point agenda on agriculture and food security (by the farmers' association). In addition, a Constituency Agenda Setting guide was developed, which highlighted the key priorities of farmers and served as a tool for engagement with political parties and their aspirants during the election period. 300 smallholder women and men farmers were trained on how to use the guide and produced Election Promises Redemption MOUs, which were cards that captured the election promises of candidates meant to represent a social contract between the electorates and the candidates.

KEY OUTCOMES

Budget Policy

While there have been limited changes as yet in government policies, there is evidence that the coalition (Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana) has been successful in influencing the government on the design and implementation of particular programmes (e.g. the fertilizer subsidy programme) and to make commitments to improve investments in agriculture. All the major political parties to the 2016 election prioritized agriculture in their manifestoes. The New Patriotic Party, which won the elections, has since rolled out a few priority initiatives towards revamping agriculture sector in Ghana and has pledged to complete a number of concrete projects responding to asks of civil society, such as a dam for each farming community to promote all-year round farming in northern Ghana and a program to integrate Information Communication Technology (ICT) into the sector to boost production and also better the lot of farmers ⁹.

According to de Greve and Agbenorhevi, there is also evidence of increased recognition of civil society by the government of Ghana and willingness to create more space for civil society to raise their voice and provide input in budget processes (policies, budgeting, allocation, etc.), and that Oxfam and partners have contributed to this outcome through their budget efforts¹⁰. Examples of this include the Ministry of Agriculture inviting CSOs working with Oxfam to ongoing budget and policy dialogues and a response from the Ministry of Finance to the annual "citizens inputs to the national budget" submission.

'Partners like SEND Ghana, PFLAG, FON, ACEP and GTLC are among the strongest CSOs engaged in agricultural budget advocacy and analysis in the country ... Their influence is widely acknowledged by other non-state actors (notably donors) as well as by Government...'

Pol de Greve and Maxwell Argbenorhevi

Budget Accountability

In their evaluation of the Ghana team's efforts, de Greve and Agbenorhevi, concluded that while there is still much work to be done to improve financial and social accountability of policymakers, progress has taken place in the following areas¹¹:

- More and wider spaces at different levels and stages in the budget cycle for engagement with and influencing of decision makers in Ministries, Departments, and Agencies and of political actors
- Agenda setting for policy influencing increasingly done by the stakeholders (smallholders – women) themselves (and not for them)
- More awareness and understanding among smallholder farmers and other civil society actors of the nature and the importance of agriculture sector policies and budget process at national and local levels and its impact on their livelihoods
- Farmers and electorate at large are better informed on current issues related to agricultural policies and budgets

In addition, Oxfam has contributed to increases in the technical skills of CSOs in budget analysis and monitoring and supporting networking among CSOs and the government in the public budgeting process¹². Oxfam and partners have strengthened the capacity of media and journalists to conduct budget monitoring (short documentaries on value for money analysis were done by journalists who participated in budget analysis and monitoring training).

LESSONS LEARNED: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

This section outlines the key contributing factors to the progress made so far and the challenges the team has faced, as well as recommendations provided by de Greve and Agbenorhevi and Oxfam staff of how the groups can increase their effectiveness in the future.

Political Opportunities

Oxfam staff noted the importance of developing a strategy that is based on a strong understanding the context within which the team is operating, including the key points in the budget cycles (including the opportunities for input), relevant MOUs that have been put out by the government, and the relevant institutions and government stakeholders that could be potential targets or allies (as well as what influences them). Furthermore, the team noted the importance of keeping up-to-date on changes in the context and activities by government (e.g. a new executive order) and being prepared to act quickly to ensure that Oxfam and partners are aware of potential influencing opportunities as they arise and can quickly make a choice of whether or not they should (or are able to) act.

The team has also creatively used other political opportunities that might not initially be associated with the national agriculture budget to help them achieve their goals, such as the Oil for Agriculture campaign which resulted in a commitment from the Government of Ghana to allocate a portion of the country's oil revenues to smallholder agriculture. As mentioned above, Oxfam and partners also organized a multi-regional strategy around the 2016 elections which resulted in agriculture commitments. Through their election activities they were able to generate wide media coverage and citizen participation in political debates around agriculture and food security, as well as national media coverage on radio, television and print through the publication of the results of their reviews of the two leading political parties manifestoes and the performance of the ruling party. Furthermore, the launch of the Constituency Agenda Setting guide was a useful moment to engage the political parties with farmers' concerns and created a space for all major political parties to share their views on how to work with smallholder farmers. Oxfam and partners divided the work to enable them to cover more regions in the country and to carry out multiple types of activities (e.g. media, research, events).

Strong Evidence Base

Research and analysis produced by Oxfam and partners have been useful in better understanding the effectiveness of some investments in agriculture (through budget tracking, value for money analysis and impact assessments) and in ensuring policy asks of civil society are relevant and evidence-based. According to Oxfam staff, having this evidence base has made it more difficult for policymakers to refute the claims and asks, and partners have noted that the Ministry of Finance is using data they have generated, and in some cases have asked for this data. In order to ensure that the analysis is viewed as credible by government stakeholders, Oxfam and partners are intentional about the type of data used and how it is collected. As much as possible, they use government policy and budget documentation, internationally-recognized data, and gather data from people who are actually implementing or beneficiaries of particular

programmes.

A number of challenges still remain, including limited financial accountability on the part of the government of Ghana. While Ghana has made strides in increasing transparency through signing up to the Open Budget and Open Governance initiatives, providing access to all budget information online and through other governmental portals (as well as hard copies of the budget statement and audited public accounts of state institutions in Ghana), there is still limited monitoring of the impact of government policies. Furthermore, the lack of gender statistics and gender disaggregated baseline data in policies and budgets has exacerbated challenges to translating gender sensitive budgeting into policies. De Greve and Agbenorhevi recommend increased sharing and learning from others' specific expertise in gender sensitive budget advocacy and analysis as well as in budget tracking and accountability, as well as external support and capacity strengthening on budget tracking and social and financial accountability assessment. They also suggested that Oxfam advocate for others (e.g. donors) to invest in improving capacities and mechanisms for improved gender statistics in Ghana. Oxfam and partners are positioning their future work to address some of these challenges and will include gender responsive budgeting as a priority area of work going forward.

Joint Advocacy with Partners

According to Oxfam staff, the key to success is working in partnership with a strong set of national and local organizations and groups who engage in agriculture and budget advocacy and analysis and who work at the local level in Ghana. Oxfam provides financial support to partners and resources to support capacity-building (including opportunities for partners to learn from one another) in order to ensure that relevant organizations have the resources they need to meaningfully engage in their budget advocacy work. Oxfam is very selective in when it plays a leading role publicly in their strategic advocacy efforts with partners, oftentimes opting not to be seen out front. This both respects the leadership and expertise of partner organizations and is strategic in ensuring that the work is not perceived as being driven by a foreign organization¹³.

In their evaluation of the work in Ghana, de Greve and Agbenorhevi provided a number of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the group's work and Oxfam's role within it¹⁴. They recommend that the group strengthen their strategy by reflecting on and better articulating their policy framework (including core issues, targets, influencing pathways) and joint priorities, as well as increasing the level of coordination and more systematically aligning their areas of strength and expertise. They suggest that Oxfam can "play a more pro-active role in fostering collaborative action between partners (including Oxfam itself)" and if possible, provide multi-year programme funding commitments to partners rather than project-based, to increase sustainability and efficiency of their work.

Direct Engagement with Government

In order to ensure the advocacy is understood to be driven by Ghanaian citizens, direct engagement with policymakers is led by partner organizations. Oxfam and partners engage mainly with officials in the Ministries of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP), as well as members of Parliament. A key challenge in engaging with government officials has been that many of them, particularly members of Parliament who have oversight responsibility for the budget do not possess the required skills

needed to track budgets; while it is beyond the scope of Oxfam and partners to fill this gap, they have provided some capacity building support in terms of budget analysis.

According to the Oxfam team, it has been effective for Oxfam and partners to take a constructive approach with the government of Ghana in which they are supporting positive government initiatives and providing suggestions for improvement, rather than taking a confrontational approach. Historically, the relationship of civil society organizations and government institutions has not always been friendly, which has often led to CSOs being dismissed as anti-government. The constructive approach has helped to create space for dialogue with key decision-makers.

De Greve and Agbenorhevi recommend that the team's updated strategic framework (1) include objectives aimed at increasing knowledge about agricultural policy formulation processes at the district level, particularly in respect to the District Assembly Common Fund¹⁵, and that (2) they consider seeking more proactive participation of donor agencies, private sector, and other stakeholders in addition to the government of Ghana.

Citizen Engagement

The increases in farmers' awareness and engagement in the budget process has been made possible through work with partners who have existing connections and relationships with groups at the local level. These organizations and groups, particularly those with experience in advocacy, are able to quickly identify how to make what is happening at the national level relevant to stakeholders at the local level and to identify what needs to be put in place to enable citizens to engage meaningfully in the process. Oftentimes the role of Oxfam and partners is not to tell citizens what policy asks to make, but rather to provide them with the information regarding the budget, including how to analyze and understand the budget data and process, so that they can decide for themselves what the asks should be, and then to create the spaces for citizens to voice their demands directly with decision-makers.

Core to the progress made so far is the work Oxfam and partners have done to (1) collate civil society positions on agriculture and food security, such as the input provided into the 2017 national budget; and (2) to create opportunities for direct interaction and dialogue between various groups including farmers and fisher folks, government officials and political candidates, media, and CSOs. For example, in the lead up to the 2016 election Oxfam and partners organized a series of dialogues with political candidates in 3 regions, which provided over 500 farmers and fisher folks the opportunity to engage directly with their parliamentary candidates¹⁶.

Media and Social Media Engagement

Oxfam and partners take advantage of public moments, such as the 2016 election, as well as moments they have created, such as the publication of key research, to attract attention on media and social media. They are intentional about packaging messages and products in a way that stakeholders can best use them. For instance, the team often engages radio programs at local events and uses infographics to share data in social media and other mediums. De Greve and Argbenorhevi suggest that Oxfam and partners may benefit from increased coordination for joint media exposure and increased capacity to use social media.

Increased Sharing and Learning

Both Oxfam staff and de Greve and Argbenorhevi highlighted the importance of creating additional opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges and learning among teams, both within Ghana as well as between country teams in Oxfam and beyond. Both internal and external teams have rich experience that should be shared across and with others doing similar work to allow for increased knowledge and capacity to improve the work already being done. The Oxfam team in Ghana has made extra efforts to document the outcomes and lessons from their work, including using different mediums such as videos and stories and bringing in external consultants to support their efforts; and they have taken advantage of existing platforms (e.g. the Oxfam intranet, Workplace) and created additional opportunities to share their experiences and lessons with others through presentations and webinars.

NOTES

- ¹ Ghana Population 2018 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). Accessed April 12, 2018. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population/>.
- ² de Greve, Pol and Argbenorhevi, Maxwell (2017). Global LEAP Mid-Term Review: Case Study Report Strand III: Agricultural Budget Monitoring and Advocacy (The Case for Ghana).
- ³ Ibid
- ⁴ Ibid
- ⁵ This includes annual and quarterly reporting documents, internal after-action reviews, and an unpublished thesis conducted by a staff member (see Note 12 for details).
- ⁶ Topics covered during these trainings included: opportunities for public participation in the budget cycle, key budget terms and concepts, budgets analysis and interpretation, dissemination of budget analysis outcomes to different stakeholders and building strategic partnerships for effective advocacy.
- ⁷ The dialogues focused on issues such as: 1) declining annual agriculture budget, 2) farmers and fisher folks dialogue with parliamentarian aspirants in 12 constituencies across the 3 agro-ecological zones of Ghana⁷ to raise issues about their lives, 3) and another dialogue for the validation of the development aid effectiveness research findings with key donors such as USAID and EU offices in Ghana.
- ⁸ Farmers Association and GTLC focused in the savannah zone; Friends of the Nation focused on the coastal zone and fishing communities. Farmers Association also focused on 2 coastal regions i.e. western and Volta regions
- ⁹ Other commitments included a factory using agriculture raw materials to feed industry and a planting for food and jobs campaign targeted at reaching out to and creating 750,000 jobs for the youth.
- ¹⁰ de Greve, Pol and Argbenorhevi, Maxwell (2017). Global LEAP Mid-Term Review: Case Study Report Strand III: Agricultural Budget Monitoring and Advocacy (The Case for Ghana).
- ¹¹ Ibid, pages 8-10.
- ¹² Adam, M. A. S (2018). Effectiveness of Budget Monitoring and Social Accountability Capacity Development: A Case Study of Oxfam in Ghana Budget Monitoring and Social Accountability Program. Unpublished Professional Master's Thesis submitted to the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in partial fulfilment for the award of International Executive Master in Development Policies and Practices, Geneva, Switzerland.
- ¹³ Oxfam has in the past been perceived as a British organization in Ghana
- ¹⁴ de Greve, Pol and Argbenorhevi, Maxwell (2017), pages 14-17.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, page 7.
- ¹⁶ These included 8 aspirants in fishing constituencies in the western region; 4 aspirants in the Volta region; and 10 aspirants in the Upper East region. There were 3 dialogues in the Upper East and Western regions that included 10 parliamentary aspirants and 491 farmers.

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This case study was written by Rehema Namukose, Lisa Hilt, and Mohammed-Anwar Sadat Adam. It draws heavily from the case study, “Agricultural Budget Monitoring and Advocacy: The case of Ghana”, written by Pol de Greve and Maxwell Agbenorhevi of Context, International Cooperation as part of the 2017 Global LEAP Mid-Term Review, as well as additional interviews with Oxfam staff. Special thanks to our colleagues Richard Hato-Kuevor and Abdulkarim Mohammed for their contributions.

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