



UGANDA DEBT NETWORK

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Challenges of Budgeting and Child Protection in Uganda

Child protection issues have not been given priority in both planning and budget allocations at district level. This we could attribute to minimal appreciation of child issues by most politicians and lack of flexibility of central government transfers to re allocate funds to deprived sectors such as child rights. This happens even with the relatively high overall district spending on child oriented sectors like health and education. This can also be attributed to the largely conditional allocations that are determined by the central government in line with national priorities dictated through the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs). In a way, the local government powers to allocate sufficient funds to peculiar needs, specific to that area are limited.

The legal, policy and institutional frameworks provide opportunities for children to participate in planning and budgeting, but the level of involvement of children in such processes still remains low, mainly because of the duty bearer do not find it important.

In addition, the development planning processes have increasingly become less participatory, thus Reducing on the spaces for the participation of child rights organizations. This is partly attributed to the fact that lower local government structures such as Parish Development Committees (PDCs) and the LCs are weak, disoriented and demotivated to carry out meaningful consultations with communities.

Child protection institutions such as probation officers, police, child protection committees (CPCs), among others are available at the local level but many times underfunded or compromised by corruption tendencies. Many at times, the poor facilitation has left many grave cases unattended to or not fully followed up. Many of these rely on funding from NGOs that address child protection issues.

Though child rights organizations have an opportunity to participate in the budget formulation process, they mainly engage at the level of budget conference discussions. However, their participation in the budget process is mostly by selective invitation, and not all are invited, which limits the level of their influence. Consequently, their influence on the budget allocations is minimal with regard to specific sector allocations on children's rights and priorities.

Uganda Debt Network recommendations that;

- Government increases the overall allocation to child-oriented sectors, prioritizing child rights protection interventions and increasing resources at Local Government level which deliver most of child-oriented services.
- District Executive Committee (DEC) should increase funding to child rights protection through allocating more funds from local revenue and also ensuring effective utilization of the funds allocated.
- A culture of children participating in the planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of government processes should be cultivated.