

## **AFRICA'S SCORECARD: Who is budgeting for children?**

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Budgeting commitment is one of the main components of governments' efforts to fully realise the rights and wellbeing of their children. Budgets reveal whether governments are translating their political commitments into concrete budgetary allocations for the benefits of children.

In 2008 the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) developed the Child Friendliness Index to provide a composite measure of African governments' commitment to children and performance in realising child wellbeing. The Index identified budgets as a critical component concluding that the allocation of sufficient budget for children is intrinsically linked to the realisation of their rights.

In order to take a more detailed look at Africa's budgetary commitment, ACPF has developed a **Performance Index for Budgeting for Children** that uses indicators to compare and categorise countries performance in terms of their commitment to utilise the maximum amount of available financial resources in sectors that benefit children.

In an ideal scenario, assessing the level of investment in children would mean identifying exact amounts of money spent in all areas targeting children. In the African context such disaggregated budget information is either non-existent or publically unavailable. Therefore ACPF used budget expenditure for four key categories; early childhood development, health, education and social protection.

### **Five indicators used to measure if a government is budgeting for children;**

- Expenditure on health as a percentage of total government expenditure
- Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP
- Percentage of the budget for routine Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) vaccines financed by government
- Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP
- Percentage change in governments' expenditure on health, 2004-2008

### **The scorecard**

ACPF reviewed the budget performance of 52 African governments for the period 2006-2008 categorising them into three groups;

1. The best performers, who allocated the maximum of their available resources to children
2. The low performers, who allocated the minimum of their available resources to children
3. The middle, broader category consisting of average performers who have allocated a fair amount of available resources for children.

The findings show a Continent of contrasts in their commitment to children;

- The governments of Tanzania, Mozambique and Niger are the three most committed to budgeting for children
- Tanzania scored highest because it spent a significant proportion of its resources on health (nearly doubling its health budget) and increased its contribution to the immunisation programme substantially. It also further reduced its already low military expenditure
- Others who ranked well were Gabon, Senegal, Tunisia, Seychelles, Algeria, Cape Verde and South Africa for many of the same reasons as the top three countries
- The least committed category consists of Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Sudan
- Sudan and Angola, for example, allocated relatively low proportions of their GDP (0.3% and 2.6% respectively) to education, and about 50% of pupils in primary schools do not reach the last grades. They made little or no contribution in financing their national immunisation programmes despite the fact that more than 20% of children in these countries have not been vaccinated against measles. In contrast, Sudan is also one of the highest spenders on military and security.

## Comparing progress in budgeting for children since 2008

ACPF compared progress made in budgeting for children with the performance scores for their previous report in 2008 which covered the period 2004-2005. There have been drastic changes, both positively and negatively, in country performance including;

- Remarkable improvements by countries such as Benin, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and Tanzania. These changes were due to substantial increases in investment in the health and education of children, and commitment to financing national immunisation programmes
- Considerable declines in performance were observed in countries such as Burkina Faso, Djibouti and Malawi. Malawi and Burkina Faso were previously the best performers in budgetary terms for the period 2004-2005 with high health expenditures, having increased progressively from the relatively low levels prevailing around 2000. However, health expenditure subsequently fell by 60% in Malawi and 11% in Burkina Faso between 2004-2008, whilst military expenditure increased considerably in both countries over the same period
- The Government of Djibouti allocated a relatively high share of its financial resources to education and health, but reduced its contribution for national immunisation programmes from about 85% to nil in 2008, in addition to maintaining high military expenditure.

**[For more details on the spending trends and countries' performance in investing in the key areas affecting child wellbeing - health, education, early childhood development and social protection - see other factsheets.]**

### **Budgetary commitment to children vis-à-vis levels of economic development**

The ACPF scorecard also analyses the extent to which a country's budgetary commitment relates to the volume of resources at a government's disposal. The Performance Index for Budgeting for Children compared countries' budget commitments for children with their national income (GDP per capita).

Despite lower economic status than some of their neighbours, countries such as Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda and Tanzania scored highly in the Performance Index for Budgeting for Children. Conversely, a number of Africa governments with relatively high incomes – including Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritania and the Sudan scored low.

This confirms that the sheer wealth of a country does not determine the level of commitment to budgeting for children. Rather it is a case of political will being translated into action and prioritizing children in national budgets.

### **Translating budget commitment into improved child wellbeing**

After budgets have been promised, it is equally important that governments ensure they are properly implemented. Only through efficiency and effectiveness can budgets for children be translated into better child wellbeing outcomes.

To assess budget efficiency and effectiveness requires an in-depth look at a range of factors, from capacity to corruption. But this demands extensive data and information on administration and processes which simply does not exist in most parts of Africa, so it remains difficult to analyse budgets along these parameters. There must be on-going pressure to demand more detailed information in the public domain about Africa's budget performance and, crucially, their outcomes and results.

## Africa's Performance Index for Budgeting for Children

### Categorisation of countries by level of performance in budgeting for children 2006-2008

COUNTRY (Alphabetical per category)	PERFORMANCE CATEGORY
Algeria	<b>Allocated the maximum of available resources for children</b>
Gabon	
Mozambique	
Niger	
Senegal	
Seychelles	
Tanzania	
Tunisia	
Benin	<b>Allocated a fair amount of available resources for children</b>
Botswana	
Burkina Faso	
Cameroon	
Cape Verde	
Central African Republic	
Chad	
Congo (Brazzaville)	
Cote d'Ivoire	
Djibouti	
Egypt	
Equatorial Guinea	
Ethiopia	
Gambia	
Ghana	
Guinea	
Kenya	
Lesotho	
Liberia	
Libya	
Madagascar	
Malawi	
Mali	
Mauritania	
Mauritius	
Morocco	
Namibia	
Nigeria	
Rwanda	
Sao Tome and Principe	
South Africa	
Swaziland	
Togo	
Uganda	
Zambia	
Zimbabwe	
Angola	<b>Allocated the minimum of available resources for children</b>
Burundi	
Comoros	
Democratic Republic of Congo	
Eritrea	
Guinea-Bissau	
Sierra Leone	
Sudan	

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