

International Workshop

Social and Human Rights Budgeting

Budget monitoring, participatory budgeting and human rights

Permanent Representation of Bremen, Hiroshimastrasse 24, 10785 Berlin

9 December 2008

Political declarations or action plans hardly prove whether governments and parliaments really respect, protect and fulfil human rights. What has to be examined is their substantive actions. Fiscal policy plays an important role in this regard because public finance is not at all human-rights neutral.

Raising taxes, dues or fees may promote or violate human rights. Tuition fees at public schools or state universities can violate the right to education. A tax system that neglects gender issues could possibly violate women's rights.

Governments and parliaments can also promote human rights through budget allocation. State-subsidized school lunches can foster the realization of the right to food. Public housing benefits promote the right to adequate housing. Official Development Assistance (ODA) for public health systems strengthens the right to health. In contrast, agricultural export subsidies can destroy the economic basis of peasants in developing countries and endanger food security and the right to food.

In recent years, civil society organisations, particularly in the South, have launched initiatives to examine national budgets with regard to human rights and gender issues. Under the keywords "Human Rights Budgeting" or "Gender Responsive Budgeting", they are analyzing whether fiscal policies promote or violate economic, social and cultural rights as well as women's and children's rights.

With our international workshop, we would like to gain an overview of the broad range of budget monitoring and human rights budgeting initiatives. We want to share experiences with partner organizations from Asia, Africa and Latin America in analyzing and influencing national budgets. What are success stories and what are obstacles and difficulties in their monitoring and advocacy work? We will do this in cooperation with the international network Social Watch. In its 2008 Report national Social Watch coalitions highlight how their governments promote or violate human rights through their economic and fiscal policies. The report will be presented at the workshop.

Finally, we would like to discuss what we in Europe can learn from the various civil society initiatives in the South and whether the time has come to launch an initiative in Germany to monitor public budgets from a human rights perspective. Can fiscal policy thus become an effective human rights policy? We invite you to participate in this joint exchange of experiences and ideas on the day before the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Thomas Manz, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum
Klaus Schilder, terre des hommes

Social and Human Rights Budgeting

Budget monitoring, participatory budgeting and human rights

Programme

9:30	Welcome and Opening Thomas Manz, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, Germany
9:45	Budget Monitoring and Human Rights Budgeting – Concepts and Experiences Cornelia Keizer, Equalinrights, Netherlands Monitoring Economic and Fiscal Policies from a Human Rights Perspective – The Social Watch Report 2008 Roberto Bissio, Social Watch, Uruguay Moderator: Peter Lanzet, eed, Germany
10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15	Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy Initiatives – Experiences from the Regions India: Pooja Parvati, Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability Philippines: Maria Luz Anigan, Member of Education Cluster, Social Watch Moderator: Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum Europe, Germany
13:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:00	South Africa: Mario Claasen, Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) Argentina: Nuria Becú, Civil Association for Equity and Justice (ACIJ) Moderator: Klaus Schilder, terre des hommes, Germany
15:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:15	Learning from the South: Do we need a Human Rights Budgeting Initiative in Germany? Michael Windfuhr, Bread for the World, Germany Marion Böker, Gender Budgeting Initiative Berlin, Germany Herta Däubler-Gmelin, Member of the German Parliament Moderator: Klaus Heide, Werkstatt Ökonomie/Social Watch Germany
18:00	<i>End of the Workshop</i>

Conference Language is English

Planning and Organization:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Division for International Cooperation
 Department for Development Policy
 Hiroshimastr. 17
 10785 Berlin
 Germany
 Internet: www.fes.de

Dr. Thomas Manz / Roswitha Kiewitt
 Phone: ++49 (0)30 - 26 935 7407
 Fax-No. ++49 (0)30 26935 9246
Thomas.Manz@fes.de
Roswitha.Kiewitt@fes.de
 Mobile: 0173/ 527 06 34