



An introduction to Budget Advocacy

UICC Module 4

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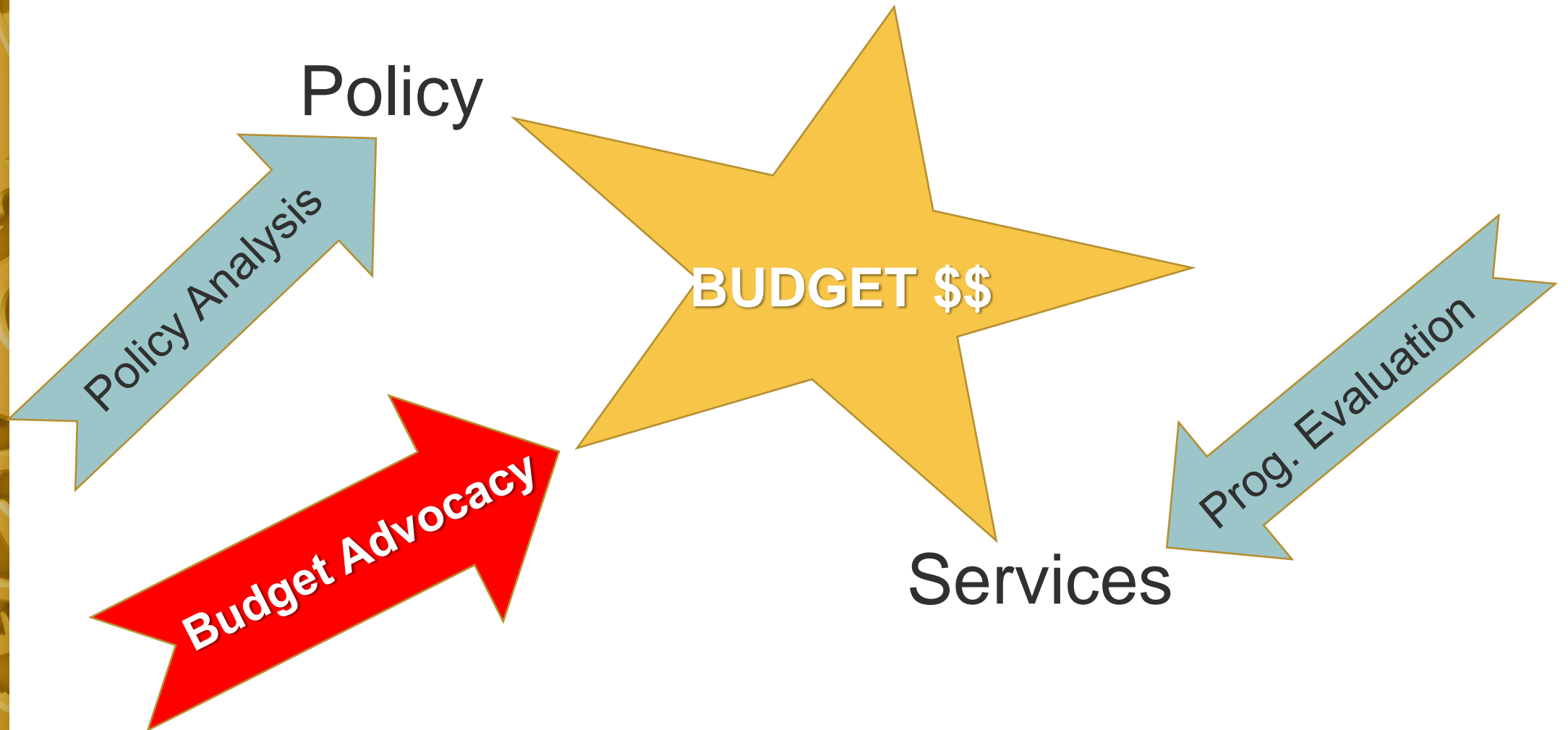
Session objectives

- 1) Setting the scene for budget advocacy: why is this an important topic?
- 2) Introducing budget advocacy as a tool to influence budget allocations and spending on health outcomes
- 3) Identify avenues for civil society organisations to engage or contribute in budget processes
- 4) Points to ponder for effective budget advocacy

Why is budget advocacy an important topic?

- Budgeting is concerned with taking decisions that will translate policy priorities into practice through resource allocations
- As an expression of policy preferences, budgeting is inherently a political exercise, not a technical one
- Budgeting is about the distribution or redistribution of public funds, which are usually scarce
 - Civil society should advocate for budget transparency, accountability and participation (BTAP) to ensure public resources are efficiently used on needs-based and result-driven interventions
- Thus, budget advocacy is needed to ensure community or local needs are considered in budget decisions

Budget advocacy ensures the link between policies and actual results



Budget advocacy seeks to:

- Build *financial evidence* to influence powerbrokers or decision-makers
- Address *equity* of access to services
- Monitor issues of *additionality*, i.e. additional resources needed to fulfil policy priorities, e.g. additional funding, human resources, training etc
- Also identify *absorption capacity* problems and bottlenecks

Budget issues and avenues to get around them

- **Internal constraints and complex relationships** within which budgets are negotiated and set
 - Budgets are **rigid**
 - Budgets have winners and losers
 - All budgets are based on balances and political **trade-offs**
 - Over-riding rule of the game is “**What I get is what you don’t get**” – thus budget advocacy is about protecting your issues so that they attract more investments whilst reducing chances of them losing resources to other competing issues
- Develop recommendations about what trade-offs could be made
 - monitor **spending trends** in other ministries beyond the ministry or programme of your interest
 - show genuine **needs** of the programme or strategy you are advocating for
 - where possible demonstrate **efficiency and effectiveness** of such programme spending to gain more weight in the budget debate
- Consider in advance **what political costs would result from the changes you want, and plan your advocacy strategically**

Points to ponder for effective budget advocacy

- In which stage do the problems lie in the budget process? (Problem identification and analysis)
- Where should it be solved? (Timing of your intervention)
- Who can solve the problems? (Stakeholder analysis)
- Assess your capacities, opportunities and challenges (SWOT analysis)

When you see something that's wrong, no matter how big the problem is, think; "Who else would like to change this? How can we work together".
Former UN Secretary General
Kofi Annan

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills and abilities• Funding for advocacy actions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant policies• Partners• Existing Activities	Weaknesses
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other organisations relevant to issue• Resources: financial, technical, human<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political and policy spaces	Threats

Always remember:

- 98% of budget advocacy is figuring out who you should be talking to!
 - Find out who the 1-2 right people are who can fix the budget problem, and get very close to them.
 - Find out who puts together the policy options, and who advocate for particular policy options.
 - Also remember that some problems could require various actors to solve beyond the sector of your interest.
- Budget advocacy should be timeous – intervene before budget decisions are made, not after!
- Do the required research at the right time—short and sweet (backed up by evidence from the budgetary analyses).
 - Give your allies (partners) the ammunition (budget evidence) they need when they go into battle.
- Protect your organisational or departmental reputation at ALL times.
 - Do credible research always. Decision makers judge the value of advocacy by the quality and usefulness of the research or evidence presented.
- You need to get the most return for your work, given limited staff, capacity and resources.
 - Don't be afraid to keep a narrow focus.
 - Choose your battles carefully.

Questions to ask for effective budget advocacy

1. How much is budgeted? (adequacy?)
2. How does the budget for the health purpose compare to resources spent in other sectors? (Priority question)
 - For example, heads of African states signed the Abuja Declaration in 2001 committing themselves to allocate at least 15% of their annual budget to improve health investments and outcomes.
3. Progress: Is the government's response to this issue improving? (Calculating budget growth rates).
4. Efficiency: Is the money being spent? (Allocation vs actual spending)
5. Effectiveness: Is the money being spent on the right things? (Monitoring outputs of expenditure, conducting client satisfaction surveys, etc)

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THANK YOU!

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