

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN BUDGETING AND PUBLIC POLICY

Madhabi Sarkar*

*Ms. Madhabi Sarkar, Mindwise, India, mayuna18@gmail.com

Abstract

Child Rights are fundamental freedoms that all human beings below the age of 18 (though the limit is still a contestation) should be entitled to. Effective public policy and service delivery are essential to contribute to their rights. Across borders and countries and throughout history, children have been abused, exploited and subjected to labour in harmful circumstances. Poverty, hunger, lack of shelter and limited access to education only aggravates the situation. A child need not live this life and they have the right to survive, be protected and be educated to develop as individuals and that is where budget systems are essential to ensure that Governments manage public funds required for the rights and development of children, effectively and equitably.

This paper aims to discuss why open, inclusive and accountable budgets are important for the sustainable development for children's rights. It starts by discussing the relationship between governance, children's rights and open budgets as well as the relevance of budget transparency and participation for the realization of children's rights.

There is a growing global consensus that the best way to manage public funds is through socially equitable and gender-and-child sensitive budget systems that are transparent, open to public engagement and scrutiny. Over the past decade, civil society organizations around the world have begun to analyse government budgets and the impact of these budgets on social programs. Their efforts have often been hampered by limited access to budget information and few opportunities to participate in government budget decision making.

The paper concludes by outlining recommendations to governments on how budget transparency, participation and accountability can be improved and how civil society and other actors can contribute to this.

Keywords: Children's Rights, Budgeting, Public Policy, Transparency