

FULL CIRCLE TAX WATCH MONITORING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PHASE KICKS OFF IN ACCRA-GHANA.

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), organizers of the International Conference on AIDS & STIs in Africa (ICASA), a member of the consortium with the Peer Review Forum, Accountability International, Kids & Teens Resource Centre and ARCAD SANTE Plus is jointly embarking on the Full Circle Tax Watch Monitoring for Marginalized Populations sponsored by VOICE (UK).

This project aims to empower marginalized populations in Ghana, Mali and Nigeria with the skills to improve accountability around budgeting and tax monitoring as a means to improve access to social services, health and education for marginalized communities.

Long term objective (5 years): Greater accountability to marginalized communities in tax and budget policy and practices in Ghana, Nigeria, and Mali.

Medium-term objective (2 years): The greater inclusion of marginalized communities in tax and budget policy and practices monitoring dialogues and initiatives in Ghana, Nigeria, and Mali.

Activities:

1. Conduct research (participatory action research) on two areas: a) current fiscal (both taxation and budget) policy and practice monitoring initiatives in Ghana, Nigeria, and Mali through the lens of the marginalized groups to highlight inclusive and exclusive policies and practices, and finally to make recommendations for the inclusion of marginalized populations in existing budget and taxation initiatives.
2. Conduct research to document and critique the current budget expenditure on marginalized populations by Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM), including examining whether the Global Fund policy that 15% of CCM budgets goes into community engagement. We then will make recommendations on how to improve inclusion and institute actions by marginalized populations to facilitate implementation of these recommendations.
3. Conduct training to improve knowledge of stakeholders working in existing budget monitoring initiatives, to improve their inclusion of marginalized populations.
4. Conduct training in engagement with tax and budget policy and practices at national, provincial and municipal levels for marginalized populations.
5. Conduct face to face advocacy meetings, using briefs, with in-country stakeholders on tax and budgeting.
6. Create knowledge sharing workshops to improve knowledge of stakeholders working in existing budget monitoring initiatives, to improve their inclusion of marginalized populations in their projects.

Methods:

1. Participatory Action Research to conduct the research components of the project.
2. Knowledge exchanges: Mutual sharing of knowledge between experts in particular fields (tax and budget people with marginalized people and human rights); and between the project partners in each country (Ghana-Mali-Nigeria): these exchanges prevent a teacher: learner dynamic and instead create a mutual growth dynamic.

In line with the above, the Society for AIDS in Africa in collaboration with in-country stakeholders, The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), CCM Ghana, Oxfam in Ghana, Plan International Ghana and ASDAG with partners Accountability International and Kids & Teens Resource Centre organized a 4-day training research workshop from 5th – 8th July 2021 at the Thea Villa Hotel, Ashaley Botwe, Accra Ghana, involving 10 subgroups of marginalized populations as listed below:

1. People living with Physical disabilities.
2. People with hearing loss.
3. People living with HIV.
4. Visually Impaired people.
5. People who inject drugs.
6. People living with Albinism.
7. Female sex workers.
8. MSM.
9. Transgender.
10. LGBTIQ.

A total of 28 participants took part in the research workshop. At the beginning of the workshop an initial assessment was carried out by the facilitator to test the level/scope of knowledge of the participants in line with the objectives and expected outcomes of the research workshop.

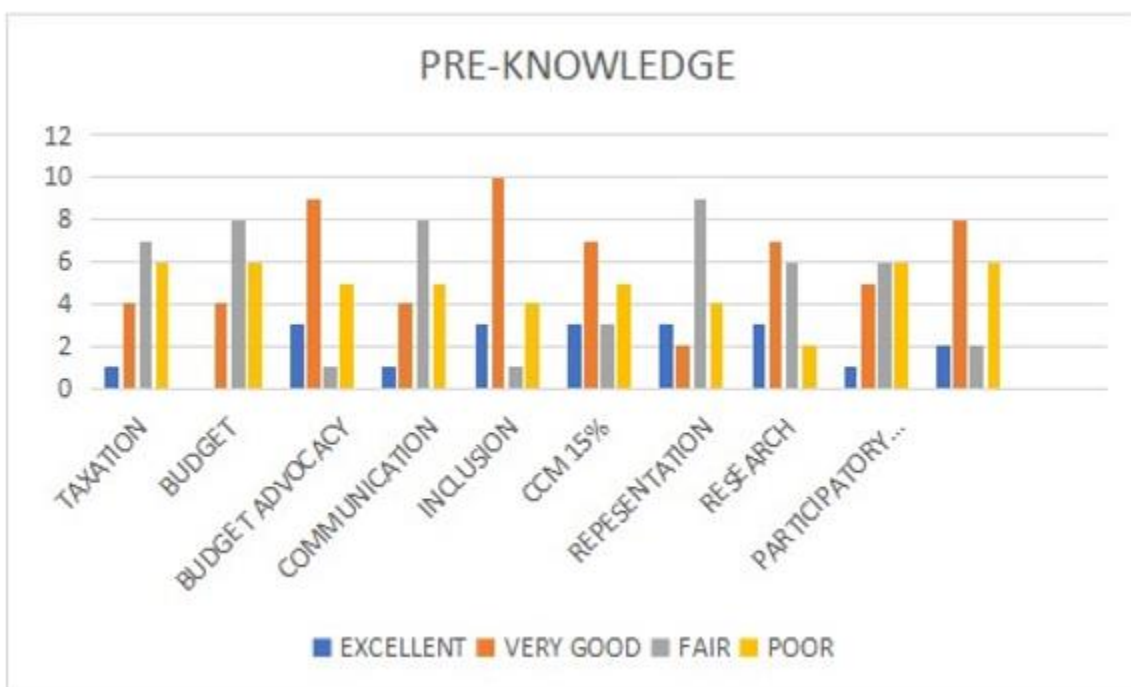


Figure 1: Ghana Pre Knowledge assessment of budget and tax monitoring Workshop

At the end of the workshop, an assessment was carried out by the facilitators to determine the level/scope of knowledge gained by the participants in line with the objectives and expected outcomes of the research workshop.

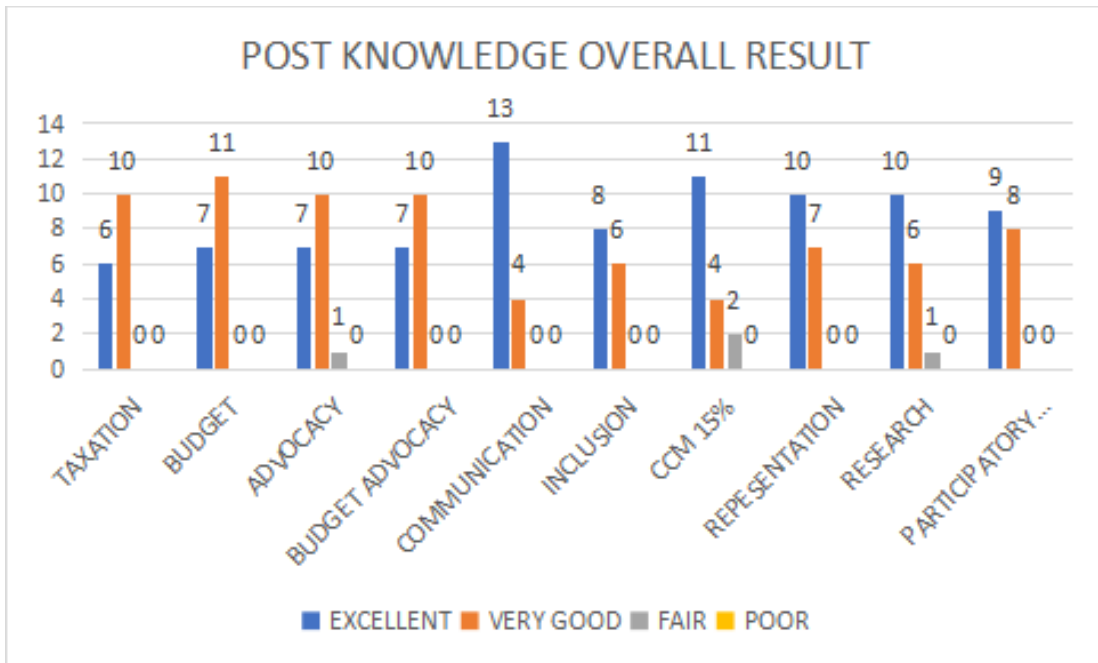


Figure 2: Ghana Post Knowledge Assessment of Budgeting & Tax Monitoring Workshop



Cross section of facilitators: Dr. Henry Nagai, ASDAG, Mr. Matthew Kubachua, a participant, Mr. Martin-Mary Falana, Kids & Teens Resource Centre & Mr. Luc Armand Bodea, ICASA Director/SAA Coordinator



Cross section of participants interacting with the facilitator, Phillipa Tucker of Accountability International during the Mapping Stakeholder phase of the Research workshop.



Group Photograph of Participants & Facilitators at the Full Circle Tax Watch Monitoring Project for Marginalized Populations Research Workshop