THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DISTRICT BUDGET HEARINGS

A CASE STUDY OF WA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AND KUMASI METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY

BY JAN-DAVID FRANKE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The empowerment of women has been a longstanding struggle in development and will continue to be just that. Word has got around that failing to integrate women into society on a social, economic and political level greatly inhibits the progress of a country. On that account, the GIZ and its Support for Decentralisation Reforms programme (SfDR) work towards the empowerment of women. Budget hearings are one of the most direct channels by which the electorate can influence tangible local politics, yet female involvement with budget hearings and local government in general leaves much to be desired. In the context of SfDR’s efforts in the field, this qualitative interview-based case-study set out to identify barriers and support structures that women encounter in terms of attending and actively participating in district budget hearings as well to provide a range of recommendations in light thereof. A total of 20 participants were interviewed, 11 affiliated with Wa Municipal Assembly and 9 affiliated with Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly to meet this research aim in exploring the intricacies of the female role in budget hearings. Five categories of barriers (1. Educational Background, 2. Economic Constraint, 3. Cultural Aspects, 4. Citizen’s Attitude, 5. Marketing) as well as two categories of support structures (1. State, 2. Civil Society) have been identified together with a wide range of sub-categories that feature specific barriers and support structures. The barriers elicited that keep women from having a strong voice in budget hearings were not appropriately matched by the support structures in place that may help women to be an active part of these hearings; in fact, according to the participants of this study both state and civil society do too little to eradicate the hurdles that women face. The recommendations of this study to change that, on behalf of SfDR and potentially other stakeholders, range from introducing new forms of public awareness creation (radio, speakerphones, traditional platforms, social workers) to a more gender-sensitive budget hearing set-up (facilitator training, bilingual hearings, day care, less technicality, separate hearings). Improving the rapport between local government and the constituency (social workers, women groups database, market research, gender desk funding) as well as policy, such as affirmative action and assembly- or budget hearings quotas are discussed.
GLOSSARY

BMZ German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CARD Community Aid for Rural Development
CEDEP Center for the Development of People
CIKOD Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development
DAE District Assembly Elections
F&A Finance & Administration Sub-Committee
GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
KMA Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly
MGCSP Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOWAC Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs
NADMO National Disaster Management Organisation
RCC Regional Coordinating Council
SfDR Support for Decentralisation Reforms Programme
SWEG Savanna Women Empowerment Group
T&T Travel & Transportation Reimbursement
UCE Unit Committee Elections
WMA Wa Municipal Assembly
INTRODUCTION

This qualitative interview-based case study examines the participation of women in the district budget hearings of Wa Municipal Assembly (WMA; capitol of Upper West Region) and Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA; capitol of Ashanti region). Particular attention is paid to gathering information on both barriers to and support structures for female participation, as well as providing a range of recommendations for further intervention. While this study had been initially conceived as a comparative case study, my field research has shown that there are many more similarities than differences. For that reason, the comparative component has been complemented by an overarching aggregative point of view, whose primary aim is to inform further approaches to female involvement with district budget hearings. While the issue of district budget hearings is more than a proxy for the overarching field of political participation of women, many of the aspects and recommendations identified in this paper can be translated into other related spheres as well, such as parliamentary representation.

After all, women’s empowerment in all domains of society, not just the political one, is a longstanding struggle: In the year 2000, 189 countries as well as a great number of international organizations, committed to a set of goals that they agreed would further the development of human civilization and help to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and misery. One of these goals was the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (United Nations, 2013). While the Millennium Development Goals put the issue on everyone’s agenda at the time, the empowerment of women had already played a great role in discourse pertaining to the field of international development, dating back to the “the First World Conference on Women” in Mexico in 1975 (Thompson, 2008). Ever since, the status of women in society, especially in the political sphere, has increasingly been subject to ongoing deliberation in the political debate in Ghana as well (Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010). The Ghanaian constitution of 1992 prescribes that “women shall be guaranteed equal rights to training and promotion without any impediments from any person” (The Republic of Ghana, 1992, Art. 27). The main responsibility in that regard has been entrusted with what was then the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (and is now the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection), which has headed the National Gender and Children’s Policy since its inception in 2004 until today (Simonen, n.d.). The policy’s framework latest offspring was the affirmative action bill draft of 2014 that aims to bring more women into political office when fully implemented. Currently, only about 11%
of seats in the Ghanaian national parliament are held by women. As for the sub-national level, Ghanaian district assemblies are made up of elected members (2/3, determined by District Assembly Elections) and government appointees (1/3, determined by Unit Committee Elections), a procedure that is supposed to strengthen the synergy between local and national level of government. While Ghana has no legislated quotas in place whatsoever, a 30% directive for female representation in district assembly appointments was put forward by the Ghanaian government in 1998 and even raised to 50% in 2002 (Simonen, n.d.). However, this goal has remained a mere directive, falling short of the practical bearing it was intended to convey. After all, the latest district elections of 2010 yielded an average female representation of 7%, both for Unit Committee and District Assembly Elections (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

Above and beyond the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, a wide arrange of other actors have been involved in the issue of gender equality and women’s empowerment, as it is a pivotal element of human rights as well of decentralisation and local governance. On this premise, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has targeted its attention to the topic via its Support for Decentralisation Reforms (SfDR) programme, which, like most other GIZ programmes, is predominantly commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). While this very programme commenced in 2007, similar preceding endeavours of the GIZ date back to 1988. It is no coincidence that this period marked the peak of Rawlings’ political transformation and the initial proclamation of political devolution. SfDR seeks to improve the conditions favouring effective local governance on the district level. For this purpose, 40 out of 216 Ghanaian districts have been identified for close cooperation based on their geographical and political nature and their ability to serve as multiplying agents. In one of SfDR’s six focal areas, it closely cooperates with its partners such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) or the Local Governance Network (LOGNet) on supporting the empowerment of Ghanaian women in the public sphere in general and in the political sphere in particular. As women often find themselves in an institutionally disadvantaged situation in various domains of society, be it political or economic clout, social status or administrative say, promoting female involvement in administrative decision making processes (such as budget preparation, investment and spatial planning) as well as encouraging women to exercise their passive franchise and become a vital part of the political arena are some of SfDR’s key activities in
this field. This study has been conducted on this programme’s behalf and will inform its further measures and approaches. It sets out to identify both barriers and support structures that women encounter when it comes to attending and actively participating in district budget hearings. Furthermore, participants were asked what could be done to overcome the barriers that they mentioned, which serves as the basis for recommendations that this study proposes. All of the recommendations do not necessarily reflect my opinion, but were proposed to me by the participants. I merely expanded on them if there was need. The ‘Barrier & Recommendation Matrix’ (Appendix, Figure 7) summarises that main part of the paper and puts it in practical GIZ-related terms.

**CASES**

**Wa Municipal Assembly**

With 110,000 inhabitants Wa is not only the capital, but also the most populous district in the Upper West region of Ghana. Apart from Wa East and Wa West, which cover the rural outskirts of the city, it is home to Wa Municipal district, which spans over astonishing 580 km² in the south of the region. Wa is thereby unusually sparsely populated (population density: 190 inhabitants/km²). Burkina Faso is only a short tro-tro ride away and so is Mole National Park, which is one of the main tourist attractions of the country. Wa lies in the southern Sahel zone and is thereby characterized by its desert-like landscape and extended dry season. Ethnically, the Mole-Dagbani constitute the biggest group (80% of the district’s population) with Dagare and Wala as its most prominent languages. Wa is an islam-dominated area with two-thirds of the people being muslims. Other denominations include various forms of christianity (29%), traditionalism (4%). Only 0.6% indicated no denomination. As of the latest district elections in 2010, 4 out of 44 assembly members are female (9%), with only 3% of elected members and 23% of government-appointed ones (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). As provided by the Ghanaian regional administration policy, two-thirds of the MMDAs (Metropolitan-Municipal-District Assemblies) are to be elected, while the remainder is appointed by the national executive branch (primarily the president himself). Appendix, Figure 1, displays the organisational landscape for budget
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hearings in the WMA in accordance with GIZ’s Capacity WORKS Manual (see GIZ, 2015, p. 183).

Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly
The capital of Ashanti region, the ‘garden city of West Africa’ Kumasi, is Ghana’s second biggest city with roughly 1.73 million inhabitants, which make up more than a third of the entire region’s population. With an area of roughly 214 km$^2$, it is smaller, but significantly more densely populated than Wa (population density: 8084 inhabitants/km$^2$). Its strategic location, about four driving hours north of Accra, has made it a distributional hub for West Africa. Ethnically, the Asante tribe constitutes the bulk of its inhabitants (80% of its population). Kumasi is a christianity-dominated area with 85% christians and only 11% muslims in the city. Only 3% indicated no denomination. Currently, 39 out of 151 assembly members are female (26%), with only 16% of elected members and 53% of government-appointed ones (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Appendix, Figure 2, displays the organisational landscape for budget hearings in the KMA in accordance with GIZ’s Capacity WORKS Manual (see GIZ, 2015, p. 183).

**Budget Hearings & Their Context in the Budget Process**
Every year, after a fee-fixing resolution with stakeholders has been agreed on and the budget has been drafted, the district budget office invites stakeholders, such as associations, NGOs and other local departments as well as the general public to attend a budget hearing, in which the draft can be critically discussed and suggestions from the audience be recorded and potentially incorporated. Usually, this hearing lasts between three to six hours and is facilitated by the budget officer who presents the draft and moderates the subsequent discussion. Although this process is a participatory element of budgeting, it should not be confused with participatory budgeting (Shah, 2007), the hobby-horse of participatory democracy. While citizens can make final decisions on a section of the budget (usually between 10% and 20%) in participatory budgeting, budget hearings, as examined in this study, only allow for feedback and suggestions. The final shots are called by the various committees that review the budget draft and the minutes of the budget
hearings as well as eventually by the district assembly that votes on the final draft. Nonetheless, the participation of the public in budget hearings is crucial, as it allows for the input of a grassroot-level assessment that the assembly might otherwise overlook. As budget hearings constitute one of the most practical opportunities for the public to affect everyday-politics that has (or should have) a tangible impact on their lives, the political empowerment of women cannot disregard the participation of women in district budget hearings (UNDP, 2005).

Local budgeting and planning are part of the same process. While the planning precedes the actual budgeting for it and is therefore setting the premise for the budget draft, I have tried to display the budgeting procedure in an isolated manner as to suit the scope of this paper. It should be kept in mind that the budget process is not as clinical in reality as depicted here and that it is, as I just explained, part of or interlinked with the planning process. Appendix, Figure 3, displays the budget hearings in context of the budget process.

**CONCEPT & METHODS**

While the representation of women in national or local parliament and their participation in local budget hearings are not synonymous, both represent the very same issue, the political empowerment of women, and are therefore used as indications of each other whenever necessary throughout this paper. Especially, since detailed information and comprehensive research on female involvement in district budget hearings proved virtually impossible to come by, at times I resorted to data on women in local parliament as a guideline for this study. This data, for example, informed my case selection. Given that currently women constitute 26% of the KMA and 9% of the WMA (with a 9% nationwide average for MMDAs), I deemed them to be adequate representations of average (WMA) and above-average (KMA) political representation of women in Ghana. Prior research on women in parliament also informed the scope of my research. My assumption in doing so was that support structures and barriers that had been identified in studies on other aspects of the political involvement of women (e.g. Ofei-Aboagye, 2000; Baah-Ennumh, Owusu & Kokor, 2005; Abantu, 2010), would apply in similar or at least comparable measure to the particular case at hand.
Throughout this study two dichotomies play an important role serving as a function of differentiated analysis, (1) quantitative & qualitative participation as well as (2) barriers & facilitators:

(1) It appears to be a given that conditions of quantitative participation (attendance) and qualitative participation (active participation) in budget hearings are interrelated, especially considering that attendance is the prerequisite for active participation and former experiences with participation crucially affect future attendance. However, it is vital to examine quantitative and qualitative aspects of female participation in a differentiated manner and to find similarities and differences in their practical nature. Whether women do or do not show up and whether they do or do not actively contribute in budget hearings are two aspects of the same phenomenon and have both been addressed in a holistic approach to the issue of female involvement with district budget hearings.

(2) This study is integrating a ‘negative’ and a ‘positive’ approach. Previous studies on the issue of female political empowerment have largely focused on the factors that hinder women from political engagement (barriers). However, it is important to not only point fingers at problems and insufficiencies, but to also identify already existing support structures that empower women on site and which should be further strengthened to that end as well as elicit potential recommendations for future intervention. The ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ aspects of this paper are operationalized as follows (a highlighted excerpt from the interview guide, Appendix, Figure 4):

i. Negative:

“What is preventing women from attending/actively participating in district budget hearings”

ii. Positive:

“What can be done to overcome these barriers?”

“What is helping women in attending/actively participating in district budget hearings”

“What can be done to strengthen these support structures”
## TABLE 1: Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Category*</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Category*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Regional Budget Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1;3</td>
<td>2.1 Regional Budget Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1;3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 WMA Budget Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1;3</td>
<td>2.2 KMA Assistant Planning Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1;3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 WMA National Service Personnel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1;3</td>
<td>2.3 KMA Assistant Budget Officer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 NADMO Staff</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4 KMA Budget Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Executive Director CIKOD</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2;3</td>
<td>2.5 Governance &amp; Gender Manager at CEDEP</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Director of Suntaa-Nuntaa Agro-Forestry Project, Chief, Beacon of Baptist Church</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2;3</td>
<td>2.6 KMA Assembly Woman</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 CARD Fundraising Officer, former Assembly member</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>(1);2;3</td>
<td>2.7 KMA Deputy Budget Officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1;3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 WMA Gender Desk Officer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
<td>2.8 KMA Assistant Director</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Assistant Program Officer in Regional Gender Department</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
<td>2.9 KMA Development Planning Officer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 WMA Planning Officer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 Head of Regional Gender Department</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1;4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Categories: Local Government Officials (1), CSO’s & NGO’s (2), Male Participants in Former Budget Hearing(3), Female Participants in Former Budget Hearing (4), multiple entries are possible;
**Sampling**

The participants of this study were selected based on a combination of convenience, snowball and criterion sampling approaches. For the sample (n=20; WMA: n=11, KMA: n=9; see Table 1), I needed to go through several levels of sampling, first from my unit of study to the sub-unit, that is from district budget hearings in general to the ones conducted by the Wa Municipal Assembly and the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly respectively. The second level was to identify adequate participants for the study based on their position, suitability and willingness to engage in a conversation (convenience sampling). This was done on site with the support of SfDR Development Advisors Anita Benassi (Wa) and Louis Addy (Kumasi), who as integrated experts in the respective RCCs were my focal persons during field research and proved very helpful with conducting it. Furthermore, local NGOs and CSOs, assembly members and other potential persons of interest were identified on the basis of my initial interviews with local government officials (snowball sampling). The aim was to achieve a somewhat heterogeneous sample in terms of gender, position and category (criterion sampling) in order to gather a multitude of perspectives, experiences and insights.

**Data Collection**

Overall, 20 participants were interviewed, 11 affiliated with the WMA and 9 affiliated with the KMA (see Table 1). In order to better capture the respondents’ background and reasoning, interviewing was used as the method of data collection in accordance with Berg (1995). Empirical facts did not constitute the primary research aim, as the interviewees are the experts of their own understanding. A semi-standardized interview allowed for a deeper examination of the interviewees’ mindset that would cover all pertinent information for both an individual analysis and an aggregative comparison. As a non-standardized interview encourages the participants to talk freely without a particular contentual direction, it would not have given me the chance to quantify and group responses and thereby draw meaningful conclusions. The interview guide (Appendix, Figure 4) is split into six main thematic subtopics, general assessment of and barriers and support structures for
attendance and active participation respectively, and three procedural segments (demographic questions, budget hearing experience baseline and the main part: budget hearing experience — women). Furthermore, dependent on the main category of a participant (1=Local Government Official, 2=Civil Society, 3=Male Participant, 4=Female Participant, see Table 1), the questionnaire was slightly adjusted. In fact, while it more or less stayed the same for the first three groups, it was complemented by a handful of questions about the interviewee’s personal experience with barriers and support structures. The questions were sequenced in a logical way and extra- and follow-up questions were added, aimed at drawing out additional information on the essential items. Yes/no questions were avoided as much as possible, instead I used ‘seeking reason’ questions, which would give me more background as to why interviewees have a specific opinion, and throughout the interview, clarifying extra-questions were used, in case I wanted the respondents to elucidate on their answer. I tried to avoid double-barreled and overly complex questions, as I was intent to exert as little bias as the premise of the study allows. Throw-away questions were very important for the beginning of the interview, in order to gain affinity from the interviewee and make the situation more comfortable for them. However, they are not reflected in the questionnaire itself, as they were highly context-dependent. The interviews took place primarily in the participant’s office, a quiet spot nearby or in the offices of the two development workers that assisted me in this study. There were always three people present at any interview: A development worker as the observer that might ask some extra-questions him-/herself, me as the interviewer and, of course, the interviewee. Before an interview, the participants were informed on the nature of my study and their role in it as well as on the formalities of the interview by means of a participant information sheet (Appendix, Figure 5).

Data Analysis

With the approval of the participants, every interview was recorded and then later transcribed. In total, I committed more than eight hours of audio material ‘to paper’. I did not follow an all-literal approach, in that I excluded segments that were not related to the topic at hand from the transcription. Nonetheless, 73 pages of transcribed content speak for
the volume of gathered information and the scope of this research. In order to make sense of the information gathered, I chose content analysis as the most viable solution. Alternatives like coding were ruled out, as I do not wish to generate new data, but rather analyse the one that I obtained. Appendix, Figure 6, displays the content analysis scheme of this paper. Before conducting my field research I had conceived of three general categories based on Abantu (2010) that also found their way into my questionnaire: **education, financial background, culture**. These were the three major barriers identified by the Abantu study and I had prepared specific extra-questions regarding their impact on the research matter in case the interviewees would not speak to their significance by themselves. Based on the information gathered, I was able to complement these three categories by two more for my content analysis scheme, **citizen’s attitude and marketing**, add categories for support structures (**State and Civil Society**) as well as fill all categories with adequate sub-categories that reflect the specific barriers and support structures that to identify was one of the main objectives of this study. Surely, many of them are interlinked and often logically follow from another. Understanding and keeping their interrelatedness in mind does not only help comprehending the problems at hand, but also enables viable solutions for them. Abbreviations have been assigned to the categories and sub-categories with letters as the dominant variable to avoid confusion with the participant abbreviations. Also, barriers and support structures are ‘numbered’ from the beginning and the end of the alphabet respectively so as to emphasise their opposition. An explanation for the individual sub-categories can be found in the beginning of each results segment. It is important to keep in mind that these categories are by no means clear-cut divisions, nor are they perfectly objective.

**RESULTS, DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Data on the attendance of women in prior hearings was very hard to come by. As I was only able to retrieve the attendance sheets of the last budget hearings respectively (which both indicated 25% female attendance), I asked all participants for their subjective assessment of the level of female attendance and active participation (of the ones that attended), which is displayed in Table 2. This is by no means a representative indication of actual attendance or
participation. Rather, it is supposed to sketch the strength of the role that women occupy in people’s mind in terms of attending and participating in the budget hearings. In fact, in the case of the quality of participation, subjective assessment can be more insightful than an attendance sheet. Nevertheless, no conclusions should be drawn from this and it rather serves a merely informational purpose. From the answers that I received, attendance was both rather poor in Wa and Kumasi (although with slight advantages for KMA). While active participation of the women that attended was seen to be at least mediocre in Kumasi, it was still tilted towards ‘poor’ in the WMA.

**Table 2: Perceived Attendance & Active Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of...</th>
<th>WMA (n=11)</th>
<th>KMA (n=9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indications</td>
<td>Indications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>7 (64%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>5 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Indication</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Indication</td>
<td>4 (37%)</td>
<td>1 (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Attendance* = Women coming to the hearing, *Active Participation* = Level of participation among the women that attended the hearing; Poor: verbal assessment or else as estimation 0-20%, Medium: verbal assessment or else as estimation 20-40%, Good: verbal assessment or else as estimation >40%.
TABLE 3: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>WMA (n=11)</th>
<th>KMA (n=9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indications</td>
<td>Indications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) Educational Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1) General Education &amp; Literacy</td>
<td>1: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11</td>
<td>6: 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9 (1: 2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2) Budget Expertise</td>
<td>5: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.8, 1.11</td>
<td>3: 2.3, 2.7, 2.8 (1: 2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3) Language Barriers</td>
<td>4: 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.10</td>
<td>3: 2.3, 2.6, 2.8 (2: 2.5, 2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4) Education-related Self-Confidence/Status</td>
<td>5: 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 1.10</td>
<td>3: 2.4, 2.5, 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Economic Constraints</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1) Financial Indigence</td>
<td>4: 1.1, 1.5, 1.7, 1.11 (5: 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.9, 1.10)</td>
<td>1: 2.6 (5: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2) Work-Related Commitments</td>
<td>5: 1.3, 1.5, 1.8, 1.10, 1.11</td>
<td>3: 2.2, 2.4, 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3) Economic Status</td>
<td>3: 1.1, 1.4, 1.7 (1: 1.2)</td>
<td>1: 2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4) Date/Timing of Hearing</td>
<td>3: 1.5, 1.8, 1.11</td>
<td>4: 2.4, 2.5, 2.8, 2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Cultural Aspects</td>
<td></td>
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### The Participation of Women in District Budget Hearings

#### I Support for Decentralisation Reforms (SfDR)

**Jan David Franke**

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**Note:** This table lists the amount of interviewees, which made reference to the respective barriers and support structures; multiple entries are possible; positive Indications (statements that support the significance of these aspects) in *Green*, Negative Indications (statements that denied the significance of these aspects) in *Red* and italic.

**Example 1:** a green 1.2 for C1) Cultural Chauvinism & Traditional Role Concepts means that participant 1.2, the WMA Budget Officer, sees the cultural perception of women as a barrier to successful female attendance and active participation in WMA district budget hearings.

**Example 2:** a red 2.6 for Z) Civil Society means that participant 2.6, a KMA assembly woman, does not consider the CSO’s and NGO’s in town a viable support structure for attending and participating in the KMA district budget hearings.
Table 3 above summarises the overall indications made by the participants with regard to individual barriers or support structures. The bottom note explains how to read it by using Table 1. Henceforth, for purposes of oversight and crispness, I have elaborated on the results individually by their respective sub-category, but cross-references are made when pertinent. For the purpose of operationalising the findings of this paper in the context of the SfDR programme, pertinent recommendations developed by this study can be found at the end of the respective sub-categories. These recommendations are primarily embedded within the scope of SfDR programme, but can also be perceived and picked up in a wider sense by various stakeholders if viable. In the same way that the barriers that this study has revealed are not exclusively relevant for women, neither are the proposed recommendations. However, both barriers and recommendations deal with issues, to which women appear to be more vulnerable based on the interviews conducted. It is important to keep in mind that not every barrier is met with a recommendation and not every recommendation can be limited to dealing with just one barrier. A ‘Barrier & Recommendation Matrix’ that summarises the essence of this segment in accordance with the scope of SfDR can be found in the Appendix (Figure 7).

A) EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

A1) General Education & Literacy
This item primarily refers to formal education with literacy as the basis, ranging up to tertiary education. Education is crucial in the empowerment of women, that is almost a given, but why that is the case, is explained quite nicely by the Regional Budget Officer of the Upper West Region: “Education makes you appreciate the issues, it gives you an exposure, it opens up the mind to be able to see the issues well and contribute to them”. Almost all participants, both in Wa and Kumasi, were in agreement that education is key when it comes to women’s involvement in district budget hearings. Both the Regional Budget Officer of the Ashanti Region and the Assistant Programme Officer in the Upper West Regional Gender Department stated that women would be severely disadvantaged compared to men when it comes to education. The District Analytical Report 2010 (Ghana
Statistical Service, 2014, p.26)) supports that analysis, indicating that the female rate of ‘no education’ is twice as high in both Wa and Kumasi as compared to the male one, albeit at different levels (males aged 11 or older without education, 26.3% in Wa and 6.3% in Kumasi; females aged 11 or older without education, 44.2% in Wa and 14.6% in Kumasi). Especially, illiterates would be majorly excluded from the budget process, perceiving it as “something for the bookpeople”, as the WMA Budget Officer put it. But even if they made it to the hearing, illiterates or uneducated women would be unlikely to contribute in the discussions, intimidated by the apparent sophistication of the hearing.

A2) Budget Expertise

This apparent sophistication of the budget hearings and the presentations that it includes, can daunt especially the women that possess no knowledge of the purpose and procedure of budget hearings, their context in the budget process and the abstract language of budgeting. The budget hearings’ ‘technicality’, an often-used term especially in Wa, is particularly detrimental to women, who are less acquainted with the technical language used and the abstract presentation given. “The budget hearing can get very technical sometimes. And when you make it technical, you tend to play them out”, said the Regional Budget Officer of the Upper West Region, whose opinion was shared by interviewees in Wa and Kumasi alike (five indications in Wa, three in Kumasi).

Recommendation: Especially in Wa, participants adverted to the significance of the facilitator of the budget hearings, a position that is usually occupied by the local budget officer. A two-way approach aiming to reduce the technicality of the budget hearing and thereby attenuate the extent to which women feel intimidated by it, could earmark both a training for the facilitator itself and the introduction of a new PowerPoint template. The facilitator would be sensitized to the inability of the public to connect with abstract budgeting and accordingly schooled on a more accessible language and the use of a presentation template that places visualization and tangible impact over barren technocracy. In the words of the Upper West Budget Officer, a more graspable hearing procedure is important, cause women “need to know: in this particular area, there are bad
water conditions, which affect their health, so that they have been unprotected so far, that is why we are having this project. Then, they will begin to appreciate it”. In this sense, this measure could also help with D1), the lack of perceived everyday-life effect of budgeting.

A3) Language Barriers
It might be problematic for women to follow the hearings when they are held in English, which is nobody’s first language in Ghana and whose knowledge is usually only a product of formal education. The Executive Director of the Wa-based NGO CIKOD (Centre for Indigenous Knowledge & Organisational Development) summed up the issue as follows: “The language that is spoken in most of these hearings is English. The PowerPoint presentation is in English. So if I go and bring my grandmother from the village, I am wasting the woman’s time. She is just going to sit there. Even if there are translations, meaning is lost in translation”. My research found that, bar last year’s meeting when they experimented with summarising the main points in the local dialect, English has been the lingua franca for budget hearings at WMA. KMA takes a different approach, allowing every participant to speak the local dialect (or English if he/she so chooses) and then summarizing it in English (as is also required for their official documentation). Yet, this might cause problems of understanding for the participants that originate from somewhere else and therefore do not comprehend the local tongue. Nonetheless, language was more strongly and anonymously identified as a barrier by Wa participants than by their Kumasi pendants and their different approaches appear to be the reason for that. Language barriers can also exist in another way. As the Assistant Planning Officer at KMA points out, it is not only about if you speak the language, but also about how well you speak it. There are can be heavy social repercussions for being a clumsy English speaker, for instance, as the male-dominated crowd tends to openly ridicule women which are not able “to combine their grammar well”.

**Recommendation:** Bilingual hearings that allow for both English and the local dialect to be spoken and that interpret discussion points from one language to the other, are key to overcoming language barriers. While this has been implemented in the KMA and only
occasionally experimented with in the WMA, a nation-wide fixed provision of bilingualism in budget hearings is the most viable solution. The interpreter must be provided by the assembly itself and can be a member of the budget office or of the national service personnel.

A4) Education-related Self-Confidence/Status
With a Bachelor’s degree in their pocket, women might have a completely different understanding of their own capabilities than with no formal education whatsoever. This is reflected in the way they act prior to and during a budget hearing and the self-confidence they have in regard to it. Status is often a function of formal education and is closely interlinked with levels of self-confidence. In other words a business woman with a Master’s degree in Business Administration is not only going to be esteemed more highly by society than a petty trader, she is also likely to translate that esteem into self-esteem and assert herself and her positions accordingly in budget hearings. Or, as a woman working for the National Disaster Management Organisation at WMA, put it “When you are educated (...) you have the confidence. And others can see it. They respect you more”. Four other interviewees from Wa and three from Kumasi agreed with her.

**Recommendation:** Concluding from the responses that I elicited from my interviewees, self-confidence appears to be a major issue in the active participation of women. Be it educationally or economically induced or due to the intimidating atmosphere created by a male-dominated audience that tends to be more critical towards women than it is towards their own gender. The KMA Budget Officer told me about an approach that he had used in the past in his position as a budget officer in rural districts of the Ashanti region and that had apparently proven to be quite effective: holding initial budget hearings separately for men and women and only after that has been done, bring them together and synchronise their input. Now, this will entail additional logistical effort and whether it is a viable long-term solution is questionable, as segregation is precisely what we are not trying to achieve. However, on a short-term basis, separate hearings might help women to be
involved in the budget hearings more successfully, improve their initial budget hearing experience and set precedence that female input is strong and asked-for, something that women could aspire and refer to.

B) ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS

B1) Financial Indigence
Attending a budget hearing can impose a significant financial stress on many people, because they might have to pay for transportation, food and water, or cannot afford the opportunity costs incurred by attending a hearing. However, contrary to the findings of Abantu (2010) this proved to be the most controversial item, eliciting four participants in agreement and five in opposition in Wa and only one supporting indication as compared to five opposing statements in Kumasi. The Upper West Budget Officer stated that “The very poor don’t even get near there. It is the affluent ones, who keep talking and they talk for themselves. The weak are marginalized, the poor are marginalized”. Others again agreed with local chief and director of the Suntaa-Nuntaa Agro-Forestry Project claiming that “If the woman is poor and she has a case, she is rich with the case. She can be talking”. However, he also made the very important distinction between attendance and active participation conceding that money plays a role for women’s attendance, but has no impact on their contribution once they sit in the hearing. While specific data on the distribution of income among men and women was not retrievable, the fact that women are particularly active in the informal sector while their ‘regular employment’ rate is just half of the male one (14.6% vs. 30.1% in Wa, 60.1% women self-employed as compared to 37.9% in Kumasi (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014)) is indicative of a financial disadvantage for women in both Wa and Kumasi. Their traditional roles do nothing but strengthen that assumption. To what extent this translates to a barrier in terms of attending district budget hearings cannot be unambiguously answered by this study and its participants.

Recommendation: T&T reimbursements have been mentioned several times as an important support structure in the face of the economic stress that attending a budget
hearing constitutes for women in particular. The policies of both WMA and KMA in that regard seem to be inconsistent and highly dependent on discretion. A comprehensive provision of T&T payments in combination with properly informing the public on it and particularly advertising it to women and women groups can help to alleviate the financial burden of attending a budget hearing. As the WMA Gender Desk Officer put it: “So, for any meeting they come to, they should be given a little something. Some small money. Otherwise they will be too busy to show up”.

B2) Work-Related Commitments

This item goes hand in hand with the opportunity costs mentioned before. Women are often engaged in petty trading, which makes them more vulnerable to a lot of economic stress factors and renders them less flexible in regards to meeting arrangements. Five participants in Wa and three in Kumasi mentioned this aspect as a barrier to female attendance in district budget hearings. Be it, because women simply cannot afford to lose half a day of business, because they cannot arrange for a substitute taking over their market stands or due to other reasons, work-related commitments keep women away from budget hearings. The WMA Gender Desk Officer sums it up as follows: “We women have our own activities, like the market-woman, getting up and leaving her table and what she would sell. When she is away, she won’t earn anything”. Precisely because women are overproportionally engaged in the informal sector, flexibility and readiness to come to a budget hearing is stunted. On that account, date and timing of the budget hearing are crucial, as I will explain later on.

B3) Economic Status

Three interviewees in Wa and one in Kumasi mentioned economic status as a barrier. In Ghanaian society, money is a major determinant of social status and influences to which extent women are seen and see themselves as justified members of the political process. While this is interlinked with education-related status, economic status is based on purely financial grounds. A female employee at NADMO in Wa, talking about her husband,
remarked that “we will be on the same level and have the same salary. And his perception might be that I should be equal.”

B4) Date/Timing of the Hearing

Women’s economic activities in combination with their social duties make it virtually impossible for them to attend budget hearings on certain days at certain times. As work-related commitments seemed to have even greater weight than social ones, the date and timing of the hearing is categorised as an economic aspect. While three WMA participants and four from Kumasi mentioned this as a barrier, opinions divaricated on the question which date would be a good date and which time of the day would show to be an appropriate one for women. Apparently, a good date would take place when it is not a busy market day or farming season and neither church nor muslim prayer take place. A proper timing would avoid market peak hours (early in the morning) as well as family duties (in the early evening). Nonetheless, since good date and timing always depend on the specific location and constituency of the respective assembly, there is need to conduct ‘market research’ on appropriate date and time with particular emphasis on female vulnerability, both the Executive Director of CIKOD and the WMA Gender Desk Officer maintained.

**Recommendation:** A good date and timing for a budget hearing highly depends on the region and constituency of an assembly. For that purpose, it is misguided to fix the hearing to a specific date or timing without having consulted the people that it is meant for. Conducting a simple survey to gather input on the citizen’s schedule can help the assembly to choose a more sensitive date and time, whilst particularly taking into account the schedule vulnerability of women. This survey would only have to be conducted once every 10 years, as schedule preferences cannot be expected to change very quickly.
C) CULTURAL ASPECTS

C1) Cultural Chauvinism & Traditional Role Concepts

It is a man’s world. And Ghana is a man’s country. The traditional perception of women as housekeepers and child bearers permeates many spheres of Ghanaian society and keeps women out of ‘traditionally male’ domains such as business or politics. According to the World Values Survey (2011), more than 80% of Ghanaians agree or agree strongly that “on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do” and more than 70% (strongly) agree that “men make better business executives than women do”. The majority of participants (10 out of 11 participants in Wa (one opposing indication) and six out of nine participants in Kumasi (three opposing indications)) of this study, men and women alike, profoundly undergirded these numbers by critically pointing out the following widespread cultural conception of women: Ghanaian women are not supposed to speak when men are around (according to a WMA National Service Personnel, a NADMO employee, the KMA Assistant Budget Officer, the KMA Assistant Director), as their role is in the household and nowhere else (NADMO Staff, Assistant Program Officer as well as Head of Upper West Gender Department, KMA Assistant Planning Officer, KMA Assistant Budget Officer, Governance & Gender Manager at CEDEP).

**Recommendation:** *Trainings for the district budget hearing facilitators that sensitize them on the cultural disadvantage of women and equip them with a set of skills on how to actively incorporate and cater to women during the discussion is deemed to be a viable measure to improve the budget hearing experience of women and strengthen their voice. This training could go hand in hand with the training suggested in A2). The Gender Responsive Budgeting Trainer Manual issued by the UNDP (2005) could serve as the basis for that workshop.*

C2) Religious Misogyny

While the CARD Fundraising Officer stated that “none of the religions preaches against women taking part in budget hearings”, it was claimed by many participants that the traditional cultural role concepts systemically inhibiting women in their political
empowerment are often perpetuated by religion. Both Christianity and Islam do not have the best reputation for women’s rights, placing great emphasis on tradition and patriarchy. Ghana is a deeply religious country with more than 90% stating that religion is very important in their lives (World Values Survey, 2011). The WMA Planning Officer, for instance, told me that “religiously, the man is always the head of any activity that comes up, so a lady is normally supposed to be behind a man” and the Ashanti Budget Officer went along with that, saying “it is even based on religious aspects that man is regarded as the family head and that the woman should necessarily come after the man”. Overall, five Wa participants and four Kumasi participants saw religion as a force against women’s involvement in district budget hearings (with two opposing indications in Wa). Particularly noteworthy is the distinction made between Islam and Christianity, with both participants in Wa and Kumasi maintaining that Islam would be especially misogynic and constitute a much bigger hurdle than Christianity, putting emphasis on the seating order in mosques (men and women separate) as compared to churches (men and women mixed). Interestingly, these sentiments were all expressed by participants of Christian denomination and also suggested queries regarding the absence of female Catholic priests were awkwardly discarded.

C3) Professional Hierarchies
Cultural determinants majorly impact the professional sphere as well. Leadership, as shown before, is seen to be a male attribute, which in combination with men’s educational advantage, skews the professional hierarchy largely in favour of men. This is particularly relevant for budget hearings, as often times, the heads of departments, groups and associations are specifically invited as representatives. Thereby, budget hearings are biased towards higher professional positions, which are primarily occupied by men. Three participants in Wa and five in Kumasi identified that as a barrier to female attendance and participation.

Recommendation: A bit like in a snowball system, women in official local government positions might attract more women to be involved with it. That is particularly true of the budget officer, who as the head of the entire process and as a facilitator of the budget hearing, is the most crucial agent in the issue that this study examines. The Executive
Director CIKOD alerted me to the assumption that “If you have a woman as a facilitator it gives weight to the issues of women. Secondly, a woman playing that role would pay critical attention to the role of other women and she knew how to ask the questions in reality”. In the same vein, a greater representation of women in the MMDAs is going to champion the issue of female empowerment, because when you “have more women participating in decision making at the assembly level it is going to give some type of preference to women participation”, the CARD Fundraising Officer remarked. There are two ways of going about this: affirmative action or a fixed quota. Both measures only found rather limited support among the participants of this study (not more than two positive indications each). Affirmative action (see Tsikata, 2009), as drafted by the Ghanaian government last year, could help get more women into local political office, while a district assembly quota would strengthen the voice of women in local parliament. A quota for budget hearings in particularly is also conceivable, either as a soft quota (in reference to invitations) or a hard quota (in terms of attendance). The practice of affirmative action or even fixed quotas is commonplace in Africa, yet, with diverging success rates. Rwanda has 64% women in parliament, Senegal 43% and Angola 37%. Other African countries exceeding the 30% threshold are Seychelles (44%), South Africa (45%), Mozambique (39%), Tanzania (36%) and Uganda (35%), making Sub-Saharan Africa the global leader in terms of female representation in parliament (Tripp, 2012). Interestingly enough, for all these countries quota legislation did the trick (The Economist, 2013; Quotaproject, 2014). On the other hand, Liberia also recommended a 30% quota in 2005, Nigeria has committed to a 35% quota and in Kenya 30% of public service jobs are reserved for women (Roth, 2014). However, in these cases theory and practice do not match: female representation in the Liberian parliament actually dropped from 13% in the 2006 elections to just short of 11% in 2011, Nigeria currently features just 7% of women in parliament while Kenya recently jumped from 10 to 19%, which, at least, is a promising improvement (World Bank, 2014). What most of the aforementioned countries have in common is that they did not only legislate quotas on the national, but also on the sub-national level and that the volume of local representation of women is a benchmark of its national pendant (Quotaproject, 2014).
C4) Social Commitments

It is a product of the culturally-prescribed role of a woman that she is largely responsible for family, that is children and parents as well as other relatives, household, food preparation and so on. These commitments take away not only from her readiness to participate, but also from her availability for doing so in the first place. The Fundraising Officer at CARD observed that “they largely have to keep a home. The time is spent in taking care of kids, preparing food. Almost all the household chores are done by women, so they need time”. It is because of a woman’s social and work-related commitments that she is particularly vulnerable to inconvenient scheduling, as explained before. Three participants in Wa and five in Kumasi identified a woman’s social commitments as a barrier to participating in district budget hearings. The Assistant Program Officer in the Upper West Gender Department painted a particularly detailed and very interesting picture of the cultural disadvantage that women endure early on in terms of their social responsibilities that I would like quote in its entirety: “Even in our homes, in a Northern home, you hardly find a man doing anything like sweeping or cleaning, all of that is left with the female child. You might have two kids, boy and girl, who are in school. They both wake up in the morning, the girl has to sweep, she has to fetch water and cook while the guy is doing nothing, the hardest thing he has got to do in a rural part of the region, might me to feed the animals and he walks to school. Considering the workload of boy and girl, when they get to school, she is going to be very tired already. At school they study the same subjects and when they come home, thanks to the regional setting, if your mom is a trader, she will clean the house, fetch water, cook and help the mother in her market activities. The boy will have the advantage of having more time to study”.

**Recommendation:** The biggest social commitment that women generally have in Ghana is the care of their children. If one could do away with that responsibility, if only for the duration of the hearing itself, the incentive for women to attend the budget hearings would be greatly strengthened. Therefore, the assemblies should offer day care services for any participant during the hearing, alleviating the burden that women in particular have to bear with regard to budget hearings.
D) Citizen’s Attitude

D1) Interest in/Tangibility of Budget in Everyday Life

Many people, women in particular, cannot grasp the budget in their everyday lives and fail to see (or are insufficiently informed on) the impact budgeting has on their community. Their interest in being involved in budgeting processes such as the budget hearing is accordingly low. The KMA Budget Officer commented that “most of them [the women] think that it doesn’t belong to them”. Especially participants affiliated with Wa Municipal Assembly voiced that concern (six indications, two indications at the KMA). Along with that lack of perceived impact goes an attitude towards political participation in general: “a lot of people see their right to development as a privilege and not as a right. (…) But from the rights-based perspective, that people know that it is the responsibility of the assembly to provide these facilities, then the approach is going to be different and the way you are going to ask for it is very different. This is very important in getting people to know what they should ask, what their rights are in relation to human development and how they can request the respect for those rights and demand their needs to be met”, so the Executive Director of CIKOD.

**Recommendation:** The local chief and Director of the Suntaa-Nuntaa Agro-Forestry Project told me that “they need to have groups and associations, they must know they are important and that even men cannot do everything, they have to accept that even though they are just individuals they can still do something. If they stand together, they will succeed”. The stake of women in the budget hearings, according to him, is linked to the extent to which they form groups and associations to represent their interests more comprehensively. Supporting these groups and associations, both in terms of capacity-building as well as financially, can be very constructive with regard to their involvement in budget hearings: for instance, offering one-day workshops for selected local women’s associations, in which they are sensitized to the issue of budget hearings, its importance for women’s interest and the impact it has on their everyday lives can make a crucial difference. A women groups’ database, such as suggested in E2) is useful in the selection of targets.

Another way to build a better link between the community and the assembly is the installation of a social worker, whose job description would cover a wide range of tasks in
the context of political and social bridge-building. Before a budget hearing this worker would be deployed to various communities and use the trust relationship that he/she has established to educate folks on the significance of budgeting in their everyday lives in community presentations or one-on-one dialogue, paying particular attention to the incorporation of women in his/her efforts. In light thereof, a female social worker might be preferable.

D2) Conception of ‘Women’s Issues’
Some interviewees (two in each community) raised the point that women “simply did not get an issue to speak on”, suggesting that female input was only relevant for issues that appear predominantly ‘female’ while men could be left to deal with all other matters by themselves with a clear conscience, a sentiment that was shared by men and women alike and that appeared to be not an unusual approach for women towards their role in budget hearings. A mindset that limits the scope of women to hygiene and child care is a reflection of their cultural constraint and can be hardly beneficial to raising the participation of women in district budget hearings.

E) MARKETING

E1) Public Awareness
The way public awareness is being created for the budget hearings is crucial. Not only does it directly affect how many people, and which kind of people, even know about them taking place, but the way the information is put out and the invitation is extended to the public also influences the motivation to attend. Now, especially in Wa, public awareness for budget hearing does not seem as pronounced as one might want it to be. In the same way that budgeting lacks tangible impacts for many community members, people “are still unaware of the significance of budget hearings” (CARD Fundraising Officer). More generally speaking, public awareness for the actions of the district assembly is low (Head of Upper West Gender Department) and education measures on the budget process are “not always
done very well” (Upper West Regional Budget Officer). It is up to local government to fix that. Although just one participant from Kumasi made specific reference to public awareness issues, her contributions are particularly unsettling, pointing out that public notice is often given only a few days in advance of a hearing and that communication between the Metropolitan Assembly and the public is “very limited”.

**Recommendation:** Four ways of enhancing public awareness creation have been suggested by the interviewees:

1. **Talk shows on community radio, as it has been the case with the national budget in the past.** It is important to ensure that the talk shows are bilingual, both in English and the local dialect, that calling in is free and that the programmes are broadcast before and after the hearing, so as to prepare citizens on it as well as present the results to them.

2. **Public announcements using a van with speakerphones.** The WMA information service department, for instance, possesses some of them for informational purposes, but they haven’t properly been used in the context of budget hearings.

3. **Using traditional platforms for awareness creation, such as cultural festivals.** The Executive Director of CIKOD suggested this as a measure that is particularly useful to reach the local and rural population.

4. **Increasing funding for the local gender desk officers, which serve as the link between women in the community and the assembly.** The head of the Upper West Department of Gender complained about the insufficient funding her department received and the ensuing problems for her local gender desks.

### E2) Audience Targeting (Invitations)

It is customary for the budget office to target various stakeholders, such as departments, trading groups, associations, NGO’s and CSO’s directly by sending them invitation letters for the budget hearing, asking them to send representatives. The local government officials I talked to all assured me that women’s groups, such as trade-organisations or NGO’s would be specifically targeted in an attempt to gather female input. The Upper West Budget
Officer claimed that “when we are agreeing on the fee-fixing resolutions, the various interest groups are invited. The same people when you present the budget should be invited to the forum, whether religious or trade-based. It is left to the district to identify the interest groups. And if they are invited, it doesn’t matter the distance, they will be there”. But with regard to women, something about that procedure cannot be going the way it is made believe, or else women attendance in budget hearings would not drag itself about south of 25%. Different explanatory attempts were made by the participants of this study. The Executive Director of CIKOD in Wa supposed that while all kinds of organisations were indeed invited to the hearing, the prerogative of professional hierarchies would prevail over attempts to attract female representatives. The Governance & Gender Manager at CEDEP in Kumasi stressed the aforementioned timely inadequacy of invitations. No matter the true reason, a women groups’ database (as suggested by the Executive Director of CIKOD) or even a civil society one, for that matter, that links local government to civil society and that the budget office can make use of when sending out their invitations, would certainly help to smoothen the audience targeting in favour of women participation.

**Recommendation:** Apart from an invitation-quota, which has been discussed earlier on, a database, in which all women groups in the area are registered with a short description of their field of work/expertise and with the necessary contact information provided will facilitate the invitation of women groups significantly and standardise the invitation process. It is the assembly’s responsibility to ensure the maintenance and practicality of the database, which should be created in cooperation with the local NGOs and made openly available to public access and feedback.

**Y1) Local Government Measures**

This segment pertains to programmes, workshops or any other kind of projects or events put in place by the MMDA in order to facilitate women’s access to the budget process. However, only one participant from each city named this as a viable support structure and
could name an according programme. According to the WMA Gender Desk Officer a programme called “speak-up” was put into practice by her assembly in 2014, “where all marginalized groups were called to the assembly and then they used the local language to sensitize them on how to contribute on the radio. (...) It was live radio in local tongue, informing people on what was going on, general issues in the communities, sanitation, hygiene or security. It happened twice”. The Governance & Gender Manager at CEDEP maintained that “the only thing that is helping them [the women] is that we have this social accountability project running that helps in public communication.” Two positive indications out of 21 participants for local government measures as agents supporting female involvement in politics in general and in budget hearings in particular can hardly be called a satisfying result. Clearly, the assemblies of Wa and Kumasi need to step up their game when it comes to actively incorporating women in the political process.

**Y2) Gender Desk**

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social protection was (re-)established in 2001, has implemented so-called Gender Desk Officers, over the last ten years to serve as their local extended arm for purposes of gender mainstreaming. These officers are supposed to serve as a focal person for all kinds of issues concerning gender. However, not all of MMDAs in the country have hired such gender desk officers so far (African Development Fund, 2008); Wa has (three positive indications) done so, Kumasi has not (no indication whatsoever). The Head of the Upper West Gender Department is optimistic on its success: “Yeah, we used to organize trainings sessions for women leaders and we tell them to be a part of whatever is happening. And we go further to educate other sectors and departments, that the few women in office should be involved in the processes. We are able to educate them to have that understanding. If the few women in office are involved, definitely it will trickle down.” Nonetheless, she complained about a lack of funding for her regional department, which is running the local gender desks. Whether or not gender desks have actual impact or were implemented proforma to build a certain image and to stonewall potential criticism is left for further research to examine.
Y3) T&T Reimbursement

Sometimes, participants of workshops, hearings or meetings get reimbursed for their efforts and opportunity costs by means of a lump sum that covers ‘Travel’ and ‘Transportation’-induced costs. Since women are economically particularly vulnerable, T&T reimbursements can be a major factor in their decision whether to attend the hearings or not. According to the KMA Assistant Budget Officer, “sometimes they travel from a far distance to come and participate. So when they come there is refreshments, some come because they know that they get TnT. So they don’t have to worry”. However, there were mixed responses among the participants of my study as to whether T&T is provided at every budget hearing and to every attendee and as to the nature of the reimbursement in general. The KMA Budget Officer stated that it depends T&T reimbursements depend on the budget hearing, that sometimes snacks and drinks would be provided only and that, in any way, one would have to be invited in order to be entitled to T&T reimbursement. The latter point would severely enhance the importance of audience targeting, because once you have fallen through the grid, chances are low that you would attend a hearing for which you will not be reimbursed, precisely because of having been left out in the first place. Yet others stated that T&T would be paid indiscriminately. Hence, this point cannot be answered definitively.

Z) Civil Society: CSO’s & NGO’s

In general, Civil Society Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations are among the strongest voices for the interests of civil society. By going into the communities and informing and preparing women on their role in the budget hearings, they can play a decisive role in strengthening female input. While they indeed seem to do that in Wa (five positive indications), civil society appears to constitute a rather poor support structure in Kumasi (one positive, one negative indication). In Wa “there are some NGOs which help women to be part of the decision making process. And they organize sensitization workshops, they educate them”. And while the KMA Budget Officer saw local NGOs as a viable force for social accountability and public review, a KMA Assembly Woman maintained in a consternated manner that “You write, write, write, write, they will not help you (...) They will tell you, there is no money”.
CONCLUSION

In face of the barriers that keep women from significantly influencing local budgeting, one begins to understand why Ghana still has only 11% of women in national, and only 9% in local parliament. The long way ahead of the full empowerment of women, however, is no reason to despair. Most people that I interviewed for my study showed great concern on the matter and had obviously critically considered it before. The wide array of interventions that they brought forward is an indication of that. The exclusion of women in the political process in general and in district budget hearings in particular, was considered to be very problematic by all participants and (with the exception of financial indigence) there was striking agreement on the major impeding factors that sustain this exclusion, ranging from educational disadvantage to a lack of public awareness. Since this study is not representative (and was not meant to be, given its qualitative nature), neither of the assemblies examined nor of the entire country of Ghana, one should critically engage with its findings and recommendations. What I intended was to contribute to a longstanding discussion by addressing the issue in a way in which had not been addressed before and to unveil potential barriers that had not been unveiled before as well as to enable the SfDR programme and other potential stakeholders to get a better grasp on the matter, informing its future perspective and intervention-policy. That, I have achieved. By keeping this paper results- and intervention-oriented and taking an integrative angle that combines both negative (barriers) and positive elements (support structures, recommendations), I have aimed to create a balance between academic standard and practical utility, inherently laying the foundation for its subsequent operationalisation within the context of SfDR. Eventually, I want to stress once again the significance of the issue of female political empowerment, of which I was able to provide but a snapshot, by letting the local traditional chief that I interviewed in Wa have the last word. In our conversation he told me that “women have a crown and they have to wear it, not put it around their neck. If women don’t talk, if good people do not get involved with government, bad things will happen”.
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APPENDIX
FIGURE 1: Organisational Landscape Wa
FIGURE 2: Organisational Landscape Kumasi
**FIGURE 3**: The Budget Hearing in the Context of the Budget Process
FIGURE 4: The Participation of Women in District Budget Hearings
Interview Guide

(1) Basic Demographic Information

1. Name
2. Gender (fill in automatically)
3. Job Description
   a. How long have you been in that position
   b. How long have you been in that field?

(2) Budget Hearing Experience Baseline

1. What have your contact points with Metropolitan/Municipal/District (MMD) budget hearings been up to this point?
   a. In what position were you involved
      i. As participant
      ii. As an organizer/on behalf of the administration
      iii. As observing/interested party (e.g. CSO)
   b. How long/how often were you involved

(3) Budget Hearing Experience – Women

1. FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

   I. As an organizer, how do you see the role of women in MMD budget hearings?
      i. What about the volume of female attendance?

   II. If women do attend, what is the nature of their participation?
      i. Do they actively participate in the discussions?

   III. In your opinion, what is preventing women from attending the MMD budget hearings?
      1. How could these barriers you mentioned be overcome?
         a. What can you, on behalf of the local government, do to reduce these barriers?

   IV. What, on the other side, is helping women in attending these hearings?
      1. How could these support structures be improved?
a. What can you, on behalf of the local government, do to strengthen these support structures?

V. In your opinion, what is preventing women from actively participating in the hearings?
   1. How could these barriers you mentioned be overcome?
      a. What can you, on behalf of the local government, do to reduce these barriers?

VI. What is helping women in actively participating in these hearings?
   1. How could these support structures be strengthened?
      a. What can you, on behalf of the local government, do to strengthen these support structures?

VII. Please explain what role the following aspects play for women both in terms of attending and participating in MMD budget hearings:
   i. Their educational background
   ii. Their financial situation
   iii. The societal conception of women (stereotypes & roles)
      1. What role does religion play in your opinion?

2. FOR CSO’S AND NGO’S

I. How do you see the role of women in MMD budget hearings?
   i. What about the volume of female attendance?

II. If women do attend, what is the nature of their participation?
   i. Do they actively participate in the discussions?

III. In your opinion, what is preventing women from attending the MMD budget hearings?
   1. How could these barriers you mentioned be overcome?
      a. What can you, as a CSO/NGO do to reduce these barriers?

IV. What, on the other side, is helping women in attending these hearings?
   1. How could these support structures be strengthened?
      a. What can you, as a CSO/NGO do to reduce these barriers?

V. In your opinion, what is preventing women from actively participating in the hearings?
   1. How could these barriers you mentioned be overcome?
VI. What is helping women in actively participating in these hearings?
   1. How could these support structures be strengthened?
      a. What can you, as a CSO/NGO do to reduce these barriers?

VII. Please explain what role the following aspects play for women both in terms of attending and participating in MMD budget hearings:
   i. Your educational background
   ii. Your financial situation
   iii. The societal conception of women (stereotypes & roles)
      1. What role does religion play in your opinion?

3. PARTICIPANTS OF FORMER BUDGET HEARING – MALE

I. How do you see the role of women in MMD budget hearings?
   i. What about the volume of female attendance?

II. If women do attend, what is the nature of their participation?
   i. Do they actively participate in the discussions?

III. In your opinion, what is preventing women from attending the MMD budget hearings?
   1. How could these barriers you mentioned be overcome?
      a. What can you as a male participant of the workshops do to reduce these barriers?

IV. What, on the other side, is helping women in attending these hearings?
   1. How could these support structures be strengthened?
      a. What can you as a male participant of the workshops do to strengthen these support structures?

V. In your opinion, what is preventing women from actively participating in the hearings?
   1. How could these barriers you mentioned be overcome?
      a. What can you as a male participant of the workshops do to reduce these barriers?

VI. What, on the other side, is helping women in actively participating in these hearings?
   1. How could these support structures be strengthened?
a. What can you as a male participant of the workshops do to strengthen these support structures?

VII. Please explain what role the following aspects play for women both in terms of attending and participating in MMD budget hearings:
   i. Your educational background
   ii. Your financial situation
   iii. The societal conception of women (stereotypes & roles)
      1. What role does religion play in your opinion?

4. PARTICIPANTS OF FORMER BUDGET HEARING - FEMALE

I. As a woman, what have your personal experiences with the MMD budget hearings been?
   i. Have you personally encountered any barriers to attending the hearings?
      1. How exactly did these barriers inhibit your attendance?
      2. Who (which actor(s), agency, institution) imposes these barriers?
      3. How could these barriers be overcome?

   ii. Have you personally encountered any barriers to actively participating during the hearings?
      1. How exactly did these barriers inhibit your active participation?
      2. Who (which actor(s), agency, institution) imposes these barriers?
      3. How could these barriers be overcome?

II. How do you see the role of women in MMD budget hearings?
   i. What about the volume of female attendance?

III. If women do attend, what is the nature of their participation?
   i. Do they actively participate in the discussions?

IV. What is preventing women from attending the MMD budget hearings?
   1. What could you personally do to overcome these barriers?
      a. How could the local administration, involved CSO’s or other agents help you in doing so?

V. What, on the other side, is helping women in attending these hearings?
   1. What could you personally do to make the best use of these support structures?
   2. What could you personally do to strengthen these support structures?
   3. How could the local administration, involved CSO’s or other agents help you in doing so?
VI. In your opinion, what is preventing women from actively participating in the hearings?
   1. What could you personally do to overcome these barriers?
   2. How could the local administration, involved CSO’s or other agents help you in doing so?

VII. What, on the other side, is helping women in actively participating in these hearings?
   1. What could you personally do to make the best use of these support structures?
   2. What could you personally do to strengthen these support structures?
   3. How could the local administration, involved CSO’s or other agents help you in doing so?

VIII. Please explain what role the following aspects play for women both in terms of attending and participating in MMD budget hearings:
   i. Your educational background
      1. You personally
      2. Women in general
   ii. Your financial situation
      1. You personally
      2. Women in general
   iii. The societal conception of women (stereotypes & roles)
      1. You personally
      2. Women in general
      3. What role does religion play in your opinion?
FIGURE 5: Participant Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Jan-David Franke and I am an intern with the “Support for Decentralisation Reforms Programme (SfDR)” of the GIZ (“Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit”). The GIZ is a German state-owned organization in the field of development cooperation, mostly on behalf of the German government itself (80% of its work is commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) and it is a major player in the German-Ghanaian cooperation. An important part of the SfDR programme is the “Empowerment of Women”. This research study is a contribution to that focal area.

SfDR Focal Area: Empowerment of Women

An important aspect of the SfDR programme’s work in Ghana is the strengthening of civil society, particularly in respect of women and marginalized minorities, who often find themselves in an institutionally disadvantaged situation in various domains of society, be it political or economic clout, social status or administrative say. On this account, we closely cooperate with our partners such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) or the Local Governance Network (LOGNet) on supporting the empowerment of Ghanaian women in the public sphere. Promoting female involvement in administrative decision making processes (such as budget preparation, investment and spatial planning) as well as encouraging women to exercise their passive franchise and become a vital part of the political arena are some of our key activities.

What do I have to do?

You will participate in an individual interview and be asked simple questions about your personal experience with prior budget hearings in your district with regard to the role that women (get to) play in it. The interview will be recorded on tape for subsequent transcription and analysis. The interview will last between 15-30 minutes. Please answer the questions as honest and straightforward as possible.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that affect the attendance and participation of women in district budget hearings, both positively (support structures) and negatively (barriers). It thereby contributes to an important aspect of female political empowerment, strengthening the role of women in local planning and budgeting processes. This study is closely linked to one of the commissioned targets of SfDR and its findings will serve as a basis for further deliberations and approaches.

What are possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

There are no risks or disadvantages of taking part, as this study strives to maintain your confidentiality, unless you explicitly give us the confirmation to use your name in the paper. It is of utmost importance that no sensitive information will be distributed to anyone else and that your
statement will only be included in the paper, if you explicitly allow it. The interview questions are going to be non-sensitive, harmless and strictly issue-related.

**What are the benefits of taking part?**

In fact, there are only advantages to participating in this study, as it seeks to contribute to the empowerment of women, which is not only in the interest of women themselves, but of all of society, one might think. By participating you will be able to reflect on your own experiences with the budget hearings in your district and you will be part of improving them. If you wish, I will inquire whether the final paper can be circulated to you to give you an insight into the findings and implications of it.

**Do I have to take part in this study?**

You are not obliged in any way to participate in this study. You can withdraw at any time and there will be no adverse consequences of doing so.

**Will my information be treated confidential?**

To some extent. All information you provide will be anonymized. However, since your context is of crucial importance for the understanding of your contributions, the information you provide in study will be referred to by means of your professional position. The recording of your participation is going to be treated confidentially, no one apart from me and my colleagues will have access to them and they are saved securely on my password-protected computer.

**Contact Details**

If questions should arise, you will be able to contact me anytime:

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E jan-david.franke@giz.de  
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*Please sign here, if you have read the explanations above and agree to participate in this study:*

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
FIGURE 6: The Content Analysis Scheme
### FIGURE 7: The Participation of Women in District Budget Hearings

#### Barrier & Recommendation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier Category</th>
<th>Specific Barrier</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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</table>
| A) Educational Background | **A1) General Education & Literacy**  
Formal education with literacy as the basis, ranging up to tertiary education, is crucial in the empowerment of women, as it “makes you appreciate the issues, it opens you up the mind to be able to see the issues well and contribute to them, almost all participants agreed. According to the District Analytical Report 2010, female rates of “no education” are twice as high as their male counterparts’. Especially, illiterates would be majorly excluded from the budget process, perceiving it as “something for the bookpeople”, as the WMA Budget Officer put it. But even if they made it to the hearing, illiterates or uneducated women would be unlikely to contribute in the discussions, intimidated by the apparent sophistication of the hearing.  

**A2) Budget Expertise**  
The apparent sophistication of the budget hearings can daunt especially the women that possess no knowledge of the purpose and procedure of budget hearings, their context in the budget process and the abstract language of budgeting. The budget hearings’ ‘technicality’, an often-used term especially in Wa, are particularly detrimental to the women, who are less acquainted with the technical language used and the abstract presentation given. “The budget hearing can get very technical sometimes. And when you make it technical, you tend to play them out”, says the Regional Budget Officer of the Upper West Region, whose opinion was shared by interviewees in Wa and Kumasi alike.  

**A3) Language Barriers**  
It might be problematic for women to follow the hearings when they are held in English, which is nobody’s first language in Ghana and whose knowledge is usually only a product of formal education. English has indeed been the lingua franca for budget hearings at WMA. KMA takes a different approach, allowing every participant to speak the local dialect (of English if he/she so chooses) and then summarizing it in English (as is also required for their official documentation). Yet, this might cause problems of understanding for the participants that do not comprehend the local tongue. Language barriers can also exist in another way: it is not only about if you speak the language, but also about how well you speak it and there are can be heavy social repercussions for being a clumsy English speaker, for instance, as the male-dominated crowd tends to openly ridicule women which are not able “to combine their grammar well”.  

**A4) Education-related Self-Confidence/Status**  
With, say, a Bachelor’s degree in their pocket, women might have a completely different understanding of their own capabilities than with no formal education whatsoever. In other words a business woman with a Master’s degree in Business Administration is not only going to be esteemed more highly by society than a petty trader, she is also likely to translate that esteem into self-esteem and assert herself and her positions accordingly in budget hearings. | 1. Workshops for budget hearing facilitators that reduces technicality, simplifies and visualizes the budget contents and sensitizes them to the inability of the public to connect with abstract budgeting,  
2. A new PowerPoint presentation template that emphasizes visuals over technicality.  

Implementation of strictly bilingual budget hearings on a national scale, that allow for both English and the local dialect to be spoken and that provides for the discussion points to be translated both ways by an interpreter.  

Initially hold separate budget hearings for men and women, then synchronise inputs. A potential short-term solution to establish a strong female voice in budgeting.
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<tr>
<th>Barrier Category</th>
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<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1) Financial Indigence</td>
<td>Attending a budget hearing can impose a significant financial stress on women, because they might have to pay for transportation, food and water, or cannot afford the opportunity costs incurred by attending a hearing. Women in Ghana are economically disadvantaged and their significantly lower rates of regular employment are indicative of that. However, contrary to the findings of Abantu (2014) this proved to be the most controversial item, with responses on both sides of the argument in Wa and widespread dismissal in Kumasi. However, an important distinction between attendance and active participation could be made, in that money might indeed play a role for women’s attendance, but would have no impact on their contribution once they sit in the hearing. Nonetheless, the extent to which this aspect is a barrier in terms of attending district budget hearings cannot be unambiguously answered by this study and its participants.</td>
<td>Fixed T&amp;T reimbursements that are particularly advertised to women and women groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2) Work-related Commitments</td>
<td>This item goes hand in hand with the opportunity costs mentioned before. Women are often engaged in petty trading, which makes them more vulnerable to a lot of economic stress factors. Be it, because women simply cannot afford to lose half a day of business, because they cannot arrange for a substitute taking over their market stands or due to other reasons, work-related commitments keep women away from budget hearings. Precisely because women are overproportionally engaged in the informal sector, it stints their flexibility and readiness to come to a budget hearing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3) Economic Status</td>
<td>In Ghanaian society, money is a major determinant of social status and influences to which extent women are seen and see themselves as justified members of the political process. While this is interlinked with education-related status, economic status is based on purely financial grounds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4) Date/Timing of Hearing</td>
<td>The women’s economic activities in combination with their social duties make it virtually impossible for them to attend budget hearings on certain days at certain times. Opinions diverged on a good date and timing. Apparently, a good date would take place when it is not a busy market day nor farming season and neither church nor Muslim prayer take place. A proper timing would avoid market peak hours (early in the morning) as well as family duties (in the early evening). Nonetheless, since good date and timing always depend on the specific location and constituency, there is need to conduct ‘market research’ on appropriate date and time with particular emphasis on female vulnerability.</td>
<td>Conduct market research for a good date/timing, taking into account the schedule vulnerability of women in face of their commitments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1) Cultural Chauvinism &amp; Traditional Role Concepts</td>
<td>It is a man’s world. And Ghana is a man’s country. The traditional perception of women as housekeepers and child bearers permeates many spheres of Ghanaian society and keeps women out of ‘traditionally male’ domains such as business or politics. According to the World Values Survey (2011), more than 80% of Ghanaians (strongly) agree that “on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do” and more than 70% (strongly) agree that “men make better business executives than women do”. The majority of participants of this study profoundly undergirded</td>
<td>Trainings for the hearing facilitators that sensitise them on the cultural disadvantage of women and equip them with a set of skills on how to actively incorporate and cater to women during</td>
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<td>Barrier Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>C) Cultural Aspects</td>
<td>these numbers by critically pointing out the following widespread cultural conception of women: Ghanaian women are not supposed to speak when men are around, as their role is in the household and nowhere else.</td>
<td>the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2) Religious Misogyny</td>
<td>While the CARD Fundraising Officer stated that “None of the religions preaches against women taking part in budget hearings”, it was claimed by many participants that the traditional cultural role concepts inhibiting women in their political empowerment are often perpetuated by religion. Both christianity and islam do not have the best reputation for women’s rights, placing great emphasis on tradition and patriarchy. Ghana is a deeply religious country with more than 90% stating that religion is very important in their lives (World Values Survey, 2011). Overall, five Wa participants and four Kumasi participants saw religion as a force against women’s involvement in district budget hearings.</td>
<td>Getting more women into public office with a) affirmative action, as drafted in 2014 or b) a quota for assembly women or c) a direct gender quota for budget hearings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3) Professional Hierarchies</td>
<td>The cultural determinants majorly impact the professional sphere as well. Leadership, as shown before, is seen to be a male attribute, which in combination with men’s educational advantage, skews the professional hierarchy largely in favour of men. This is particularly relevant for budget hearings, as often times, the heads of departments, groups and associations are specifically invited as representatives. Thereby, budget hearings are biased towards higher professional positions, which are primarily occupied by men.</td>
<td>Getting more women into public office with a) affirmative action, as drafted in 2014 or b) a quota for assembly women or c) a direct gender quota for budget hearings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4) Social Commitments</td>
<td>It is a product of the culturally-prescribed role of a woman that she is largely responsible for family and household. These commitments take away not only from her readiness to participate, but also from her availability for doing so in the first place.</td>
<td>Implementation of day care services for the duration of the hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1) Interest in/Tangibility of Budget in Everyday Life</td>
<td>Many women cannot grasp the budget in their everyday lives and fail to see (or are insufficiently informed on) the impact budgeting has on their community. Their interest in being involved in budgeting processes, such as the budget hearing, is accordingly low. Especially participants affiliated with Wa Municipal Assembly voiced that concern. Along with that lack of perceived impact goes an attitude that perceives political involvement as a privilege rather than a civil right.</td>
<td>1. Workshops for women groups sensitizing them on the issue of budget hearings and its importance for women’s interest, 2. A social worker in communities that builds a link between public and assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2) Conception of ‘Women’s Issues’</td>
<td>Some interviewees raised the point that women “simply did not get an issue to speak on”, suggesting that women’s input was only relevant for issues that appear predominantly ‘female’ while men could be left to deal with all other matters by themselves with a clear conscience, a sentiment that was shared by men and women alike and that appeared to be not an unusual approach for women towards their role in budget hearings. A mindset that limits the scope of women to hygiene and child care is a reflection of their cultural constraint and can be hardly beneficial to raising the participation of women in district budget hearings.</td>
<td>1. Workshops for women groups sensitizing them on the issue of budget hearings and its importance for women’s interest, 2. A social worker in communities that builds a link between public and assembly.</td>
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<td>Barrier Category</td>
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| **E) Marketing** | **E1) Public Awareness**  
The way public awareness is created for budget hearings is crucial. Not only does it directly affect how many people, and which kind of people, even know about them taking place, but the way the information is put out and the invitation is extended to the public also influences the motivation to attend. Now, especially in Wa, public awareness for budget hearing does not seem as pronounced as one might want it to be. In the same way that budget lacks tangible impacts for many community members, people “are still unaware of the significance of budget hearings” (CARD Fundraising Officer). More generally speaking, public awareness for the actions of the district assembly is low (Head of Upper West Gender Department) and education measures on the budget process are “not always done very well” (Upper West Regional Budget Officer). It is up to local government to fix that. Although just one participant from Kumasi made specific reference to public awareness barriers, her contributions are particularly unsettling, pointing out that public notice is often given only a few days in advance of a hearing and that communication between the Metropolitan Assembly and the public is “very limited”. | 1. Bilingual community radio talk shows before and after the budget hearing, 2. Public announcements via speakerphone vans, 3. Utilising traditional platforms, such as cultural festivals, 4. Increase of funding for gender desks. |
|                  | **E2) Audience Targeting (Invitations)**  
It is customary for the budget office to target various stakeholders, such as departments, trading groups, associations, NGO’s and CSO’s directly by sending them invitation letters for the budget hearing, asking them to send representatives. The local government officials I talked to all assured me that women groups, such as trade-organisations or NGO’s would be specifically targeted in an attempt to gather female input. Yet, female attendance at district budget hearings is low. Different explanatory attempts were made by the participants of this study, ranging from emphasising that the prerogative of professional hierarchies would prevail over attempts to attract female representatives or referring to the aforementioned timely inadequacy of invitations. | Introduction of a database, in which all women groups in the area are registered with a short description of their field of work/expertise and with the necessary contact information. |