

REPORT: TRAINING ON BUDGETARY OVERSIGHT

“Role of Parliamentary Staff and Parliamentary Committees during the Budget Process”

May 16-24, 2009, Accra, Ghana

1. BACKGROUND

The extent to which parliaments and parliamentarians are able to carry out their legislative, oversight and representative functions in ways that engender good governance values of accountability, transparency and participation is of paramount importance. The budget process – preparation, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – is a key component of parliaments and parliamentarians’ functions. This is because government budgets are about the allocation of scarce resources that affect the lives of the citizenry who parliamentarians in a democratic state represent. It is therefore important that parliamentarians are equipped with the necessary tools to perform their role in the budget process, particularly, understanding the significant issues in the budget process that are of direct relevance.

The May 16-24, 2009, budget training workshop which took place in Accra, Ghana, is part of an ongoing training programs organized by Parliamentary Centre in partnership with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) for Legislators and Parliamentary Committee Staff across Africa. The theme of the workshop was *The Role of Parliamentary Staff and Parliamentary Committees during the Budget Process*.

The five countries who participated in the Budget Oversight training workshop included Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Rwanda, and Tanzania. A total number 18 participant of whom 8 were female and 10 male took part in the workshop.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the training workshop were to:

- Strengthen capacity of parliamentary staff to provide professional support to parliamentarians in their performance of financial oversight functions;

- Equip parliamentary staff with tools with which to undertake critical analysis of government budgets and other policy papers which have significance to the work of parliamentarians in their legislative and oversight responsibilities; and
- Provide a platform for parliamentary staff to interact and share country experiences and best practices.

3. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The following were the expectations of participants:

- Understand gender budgeting within the framework of national budgets
- Have the opportunity to share country experiences and best practices
- Learn to realign national budgets to reflect the realities of the current global economic downturn
- Understand ways and means of ensuring executive accountability following parliamentary approval of the budget
- Get to know the various entry points in the budget process where parliament can have significant influence.
- Understand the role parliamentary staff play in the budget process

Below is a summary of the modules for the training program:

- Understanding National Budgets
- Legislative Stage of the Budget/The Role of Parliaments in the Budget process
- Analyzing Government Budget statements: Gender Equity Issues
- Parliament and the Revenue side of the budget
- Analyzing Government Budget statement, how pro-poor should a budget be?
- HIV/AIDS and National Budget
- MDGs and National Budget
- Role of Legislative Budget Offices
- Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Control
- Parliamentary Committees/Role of Parliamentary Staff in Ensuring Committee Effectiveness
- Transparency, Participation and Outreach
- Effective Tools for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Budget-Understanding the LFA
- Information Management and ICT
- Participatory Tools for Community Monitoring and Evaluation(Citizen Report Cards and Community Score Cards)

Opening Remarks

Ms Marilyn Aniwa, In-Country Coordinator, Parliamentary Centre, welcomed participants to the country and to the Centre. She went on to outline the Programs Parliamentary Centre (PC) is currently engaged in, pointing out that there are about 22 projects under the Africa program. She intimated that PC collaborates with partners who

do similar work in strengthening the capacity of parliaments. Foremost among these is the World Bank Institute which has developed tools for capacity building of the institution of parliament. Ms Marilyn Aniwa underlined the importance of the budget process and the critical role parliamentary staff play in providing professional support to MPs to effectively scrutinize the budget by ensuring that the budget reflects the aspirations of the people.

Day One

The first presentation explored the concept of the budget within the framework of macro economy-encapsulating revenue and expenditure within a fiscal year. It also looked at the budget from the point of view of political economy where the budget reflects the philosophy of the government, ensuring that its manifesto pledges are carried out. Principles of good budgeting as well as functions of a budget were among the other issues discussed. Principles of contestability, predictability, periodicity and transparency among others, were thoroughly debated. A participant from Zambia noted that the principle of contestability which postulates that no budget item has automatic claim to the budget is compromised with the insistence by donors, especially IMF that debt servicing be given a priority. Devoting funds in servicing debt at the expense of addressing the critical needs of the people undermines this principle.

On the question of budget predictability, it was observed that most national budgets in Africa fail this test because of their unhealthy and incessant dependence on donor budget support. The release of funds by donors to their commitments in budget support is often not in tandem with national budget timelines, thus resulting in unnecessary delay in the execution of development projects. With the rare exception of Nigeria and Kenya, most national budgets in Africa suffer this fate.

Participants were unanimous in their view on how little authority parliaments have in influencing budget allocation during the drafting and formulation stage of the budget process; lawmakers in Nigeria however can and do have powers to include their pet projects (earmarks) in the budget and thus vary budget expenditure estimates upwards. This, it was suggested, tends to distort budget estimates presented to the Nigerian National Assembly for scrutiny. It was noted that one of the challenges facing African countries is the recurrence of supplementary budgets. Participants expressed the view that the preponderance of supplementary budgets during budget implementation is a pointer to poor estimating and costing of budgetary projections. The inability of countries such as Nigeria to forecast the prices of oil and other primary commodities and factor in the budget fluctuations in the prices of these commodities underscores some of the challenges that need to be overcome in putting together a good budget. The example of Holland which generates substantial revenue from natural gas is very instructive. We were told by WBI representative Ms Cindy Kroon that when the budget is being put together in Holland, they take into consideration the fluctuation in the prices of gas by presenting three scenarios of gas prices: low, medium and high. The budget is then modeled on the basis of these scenarios; it prepares the government therefore to be in the position to deal with the fluctuations in the price of gas.

The participants noted that even though MPs are not formally involved in the formulation stage in the budget process, they can nevertheless employ informal means such as lobbying MDAs (MOF) at the national and district levels. They can also engage constituents and civil society actors at the grassroots level with a view to impacting the budget process.

The relationship between donor governments and their African counterparts, especially on issues to do with budget support and other bilateral agreements, tend to exclude parliament in their deliberations. The bilateral agreements they enter into are not transparent nor are they subject to parliamentary approval. In Rwanda, for example, the quantum of money donors put in the budget is shrouded in secrecy. Participants from other countries supported this view based on their own country experiences. The Committee on Environment in Nigeria is trying to break this cycle by being proactive by engaging in discussions with the World Bank and other Stakeholders revolving around the funds they commit to environmental issues.

As indicated above, parliament's role in the budget formulation stage is minimal in most of these countries. However, in Tanzania, parliamentary committees, namely the Committee of Finance and Economic Affairs, are involved in the drafting stage of the budget process. This committee works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (MOF). In the other countries, parliament assumes a prominent role during the legislative stage of the budget process. When the budget comes to parliament, in the case of Tanzania, portfolio or sector committees, (similar to the situation in Ghana) are tasked with looking at each sector budget and make recommendations to the house.

In Nigeria, the President presents the budget to parliament, and then it is referred to the appropriation committee which is made up of other committees of the various line ministries (subcommittees to the appropriation committee). Each subcommittee looks at its sector budget and reports to the appropriation committee. A conference of committees of both houses is then convened to harmonise the budget. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria gives lawmakers three (3) months to debate the budget. In the case of Zambia, an expanded committee of estimates is made up of chair persons of the portfolio committees who examine the budget and make recommendations to the house. The challenge though is the limited time lawmakers are given to carry out in-depth analysis of the budget. Clearly, one month is less than adequate. A Zambia participant emphasized the urgent need for MPs to understand the results chain concept. This concept basically talks about the causal relationship between activities-output-outcome results. She stressed that if the logic model of the result chain is properly understood, it will help to guide them to monitor various levels of results. For instance, in Zambia, budgetary allocation was given for the construction of 17 health posts. The monitoring team just focused on the output level results and was satisfied with the 17 health post. A clear understanding of the results chain would have required them to follow-up on the intermediate or outcome level results, which would indicate whether patients were being treated at the health posts or not.

Day 2

In response to participants' expectations highlighted above with specific reference to what governments need to do in the face of global economic downturn, the presentation on "*Parliament and the Revenue Side of the Budget*" explored the possibilities of generating revenue internally to obviate the excessive dependence on donor funding of national budgets in Africa.

The presentation looked at sources of government revenue - taxes, charges and borrowing. Critically, the bulk of government revenue emanates from direct and indirect taxes. Various aspects of taxes were discussed, these included export tax in the form of excise duty, import tax in the form of custom duty, value-added tax, income tax, withholding tax, wages, interest, dividends, profits and rent. It was noted that notwithstanding the various taxes at governments' disposal by way of revenue generation, it is crucially important for governments in Africa to broaden their tax base, recognizing the critical importance of revamping the agencies mandated to collect taxes. Efficiency of tax collection taking into account matters of equity and fairness as cornerstone for which a robust and efficient tax regime must hinge was exhaustively discussed.

It was noted that parliament tends to concentrate on the expenditure side of the budget, always keen to know whether their constituents' needs are being addressed while they pay scant attention to how the revenue required to meet those legitimate needs are met. Very often, this state of affairs results in unsustainable budget deficits culminating into macroeconomic instability. It is therefore vitally important for parliamentarians to address themselves to how revenue is generated and the trade offs that come with it.

Recognizing the challenges most of African parliaments face in the absence of research offices to support parliamentarians in their arduous tasks of managing their legislative, representative and oversight responsibilities, the presentation on the Role of Parliamentary Budget Offices sought to highlight the value addition such an outfit could make to increase the output of parliamentarians and ultimately strengthen the institution of parliament.

The presentation underscored the potential value of such an independent analytic budget unit. The unit can provide information to put the legislature on a more equal footing with the executive. Broadly speaking, it will simplify complex budget information; make it understandable to the legislature, as well as media and the public. A budget unit will enhance budget credibility, make accurate budget forecast and engender transparency. More crucially, as a unit that is part of the legislature, it can provide much more rapid responses to budget inquiries from the legislature than an executive budget unit.

Pre-requisite for the establishment of Legislative Budget Office (LBO)

- The legislatures must themselves recognize the need for LBO
- There must be a functioning committee on budget
- And above all, there must be the political will

Day 3

The presentations concentrated on issues parliamentarians ought to consider in the budget approval process. Acknowledging the fact that the lists of issues that have a legitimate claim to the budget are many, the focus of this training was limited to the following: Gender Budgeting, Pro-Poor Budgeting in the context of national development framework, National Budgets and the MDGs and HIV/AIDS.

The discussion on gender budgeting began with a statement “women are better parents”. Participants were invited to give their perspectives on this statement as a way to kick start the discussion on gender and gender budgeting. Stereotyping on gender issues was identified as a major obstacle in understanding and appreciating issues from a gender sensitive lens and therefore important to understand the fact that the position men and women occupy in society in respect of their roles are socially constructed and that the roles they play in society are interchangeable. It was noted however that one of the stumbling blocks in promoting gender equality and equity is the existing and prevailing cultural norms and practices in African societies.

The Ministry of Women and Children affairs in Ghana recognizing the significance of gender budgeting has undertaken to train its staff on gender budgeting. A gender budgeting manual has been developed in India and participants were urged to familiarize themselves with the contents of the manual.

Participants came out with these observations:

- Promote gender awareness so that critical stakeholders will buy in instead of legislating affirmative action;
- Construction of school buildings should be gender sensitive, taking into account the peculiar needs of both girls and boys;
- Take into account the prevailing cultural and religious norms in designing the messages of gender awareness; and
- Noted that the Ghana budget under review though gender sensitive, did not specify who the targeted beneficiaries are and also the data is not gender disaggregated.

The presentation on HIV/AIDS and the role of parliamentarians highlighted the devastating effect the pandemic was wreaking on Africans south of the Sahara. Parliamentarians as representatives of their constituents and role models have a critical role to play in tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In Nigeria for example, a bill has been placed before the National Assembly of the Federal Republic aimed at curbing discrimination against People Living with HIV/AIDS.

Key recommendations:

- Foster collaboration with CSOs working with HIV/AIDS

- Creation of HIV/AIDS committees in parliament to exercise oversight responsibilities relating to HIV/AIDS instead of leaving it with committee on Health. The Nigeria House of Representatives for example, has a committee on HIV/AIDS
- Institute robust sensitization programs on HIV/AIDS
- Promotion of girl-child education
- Promotion of entrepreneurship for both males and females
- Identify existing organizations dealing with HIV/AIDS so that resources could be effectively distributed among them
- Provision of Anti-Retroviral Drugs
- Monitor government agencies to ensure that allocations meant for HIV/AIDS programmes are effectively utilized and if applicable, establish reasons for under-spending funds for HIV/AIDS

The next presentation looked at ***Budget Implementation, Monitoring and Control***. The critical issues discussed included the key activities involved in budget implementation. Revenue mobilization and generation, the process of awarding contracts for project execution and the procurement rules were all critically examined. The key actors involved in this process such internal revenue agencies, customs and excise agencies, the Accountant General, civil society actors, including the media, are all involved in various stages of budget implementation monitoring and control.

The major tools at the disposal of parliamentarians for the exercise of effective budget oversight were deliberated upon. Participants held the view that *question time* practiced under the parliamentary system of government is a very potent tool in making ministers of state and parastatal institutions accountable to parliament. Public hearings of matters which have huge significance to the public and holding Public Account Committee hearing in public is equally an important means of exacting accountability from duty bearers. When field-based activities are well conducted, MPs can use them as a very effective tool to uncover fraud and misappropriation of public funds. They can also get direct feedback from citizens about government policies.

Examples of countries with effective monitoring systems, such as India, were highlighted. For example, the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee at state level in India could supervise the use, exercise vigilance and monitor the implementation of all programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. The committee would monitor the flow of funds at various channels, including allocations, release utilisation and unspent balance. The committee would ensure that schemes are implemented as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Day 4

No planned activities

Day 5

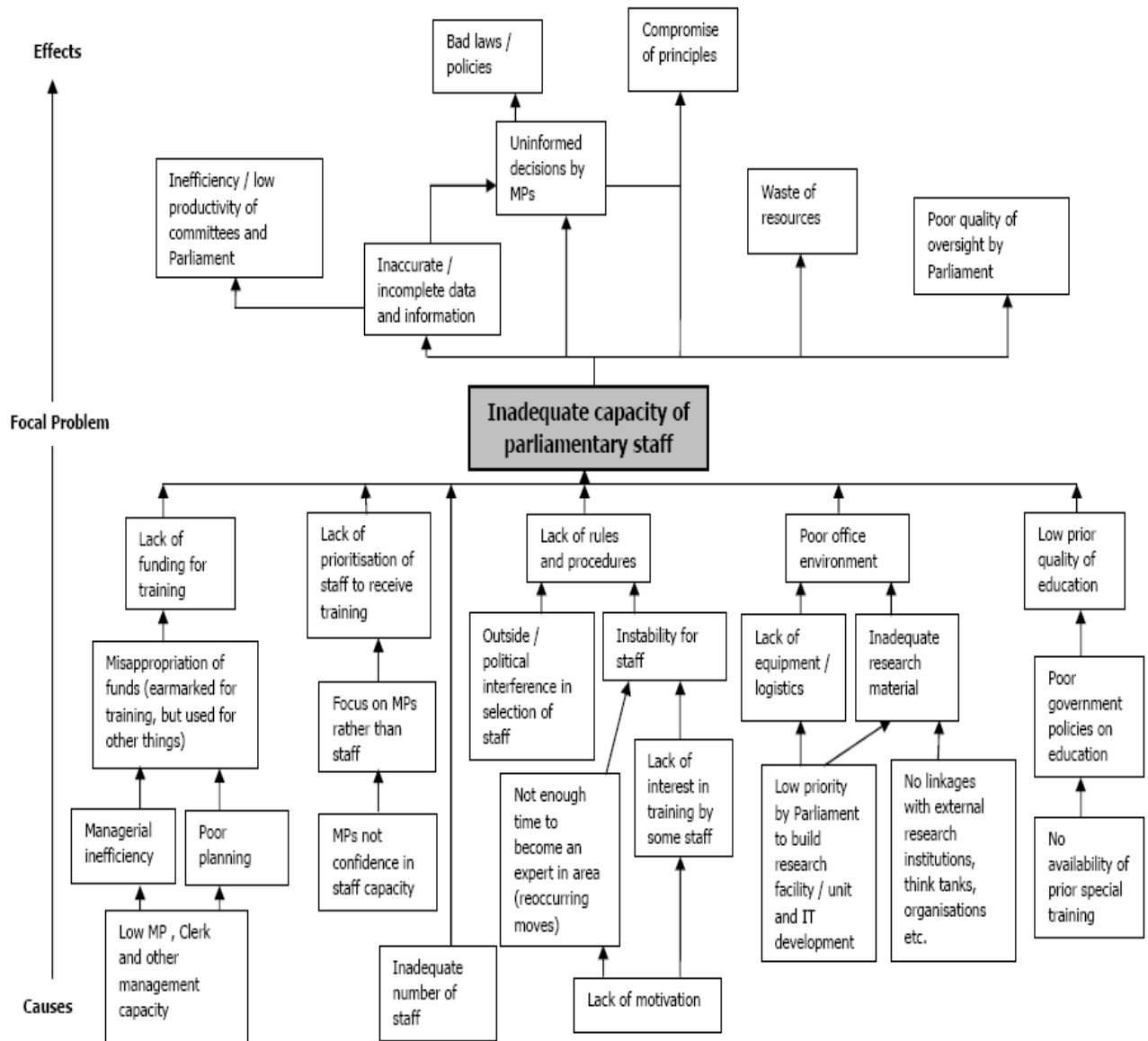
The role of parliamentary committees in ensuring effectiveness and efficiency was another topic that attracted deep interest from the participants. It was argued that the effectiveness of any parliamentary committee is hinged on competent and dedicated staff. In this regard, they intimated, capacity building of parliamentary staff as not only desirable but vitally important. Key functions performed by parliamentary staff including committee clerks were discussed. Committee clerks need certain skill sets to effectively support members of parliament in their day-to day parliamentary work. Preparing policy briefs, analysing policy documents and coming out positions papers, advising MPs on committee procedure and helping to steer the affairs of the committee are but a few of a myriad of functions performed by parliamentary staff.

The concept of transparency, participation and outreach were discussed within the broader context of accountability and effective representation of constituents' interests. It was held that there can not be proper accountability if the essential ingredients of transparency and the involvement of critical stakeholders in the decision making process is markedly absent. Parliamentary transparency was understood to mean providing access to constituents on parliamentary processes, providing for public participation in decision making, making available accurate and timely information on results of policy for public scrutiny. These issues were further deliberated in detail during group work exercises.

Day 6

The issues discussed in the previous presentation revolving around challenges committee staff face in respect of carrying out their responsibilities were used as a basis in introducing the presentation on the Logical Framework Approach. In order to ensure a better understanding of the LFA concept, a very practical approach was adopted where participants went through an exercise by identifying a problem within the context of parliamentary committee work. Based on their own experience, they identified "***Inadequate Capacity for Parliamentary Staff***". They identified the root causes of the problem, followed by the identification of the impacts or effects of the problem. The participants played the role of the stakeholders and Petra and Issifu represented Parliamentary Centre (PC), as an organization that could potentially create a project addressing the problem. This was designed to make the exercise as practicable as possible.

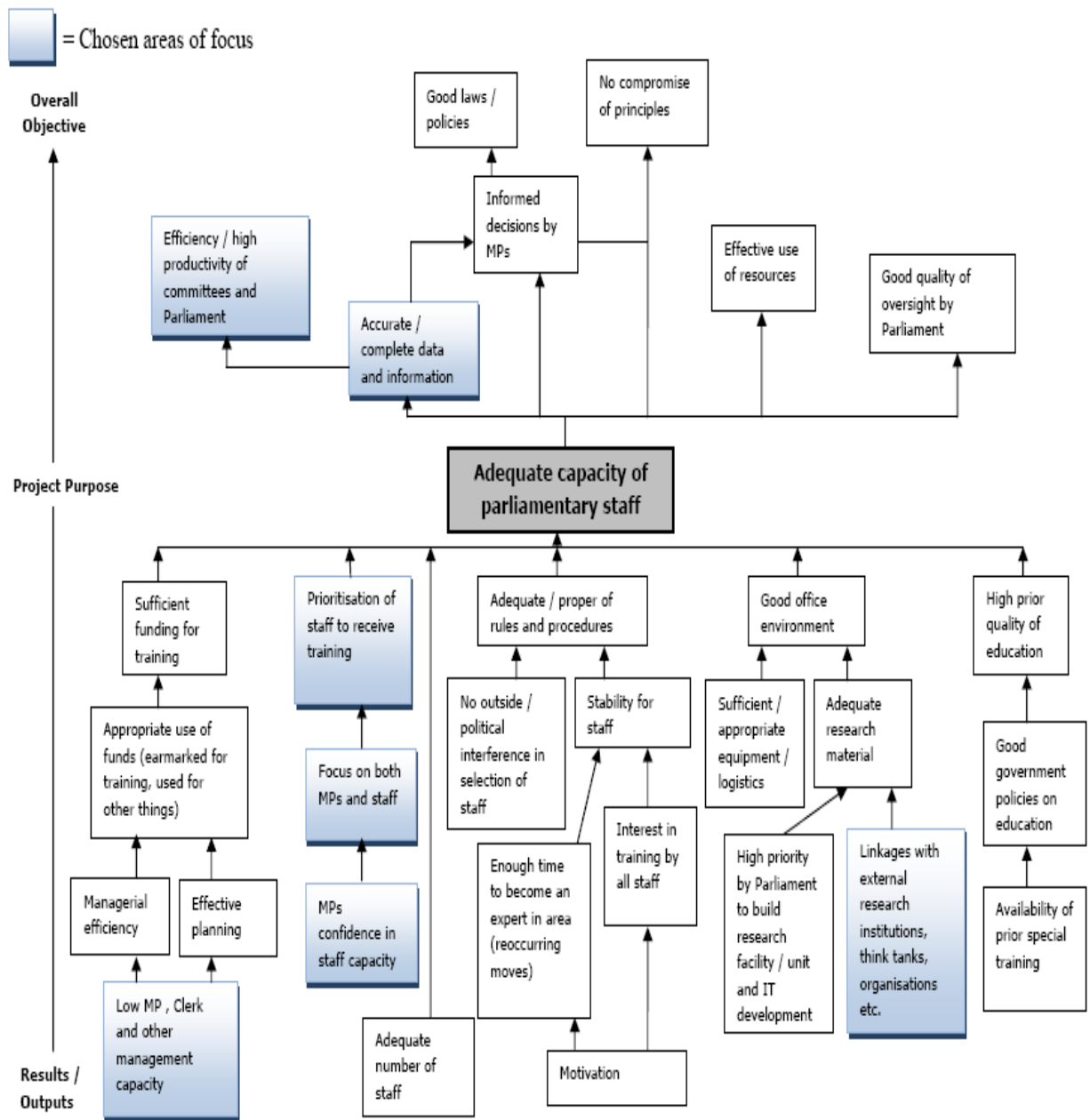
PROBLEM TREE



Problem analysis led to the creation of the problem tree where the problems, root causes of the problems and potential effects of the problems were elaborated. After the problems were identified, a solution has to be found to overcome the problem. This is the second phase of the LFA process where the problem tree is turned into an objective tree. Having identified the objectives, the next phase of the LFA is the planning stage where the goal of the project is clearly stated as well as the purpose and output results. This is where Parliamentary Centre can provide support in terms of capacity building. The discussion resulted in the identification of light grey shaded areas as potential focus area for Parliamentary Centre in a project focusing on capacity building for parliamentary staff,

whereas other areas would have to be addressed by other actors, mainly the Parliaments themselves.

Following this practical exercise, the presentation continued on the Planning Phase of the LFA, where the various components of the Logical Framework Matrix were explained. This was then followed by another practical exercise, using the select sections of the objective tree already developed. This turned out to be a bit more complicated for the participants. The participants managed to formulate assumptions and identify potential risks, but struggled to identify indicators at the various objective levels.



Day 7

Closely linked to the LFA presentation is the presentation on *Monitoring and Evaluation*, with particular focus on *Community Score Card*- a participatory tool for engaging community members in the assessment of the performance of service delivery at Community level. The discussion on this presentation centred on the purpose of monitoring and evaluation, the types of evaluation and the generation of indicators. A great deal of attention was devoted on discussing the Community Score Card (CSC); the community score card process was elaborated, with special focus on performance score card where a performance scorecard matrix was illustrated to demonstrate how scoring is done.

The last session on the seventh day focused on *Information Management and ICT*. After a brief presentation on the various concepts and terminology such as *internet, e-mail, web-based-mail, World Wide Web, Skype*, the focus shifted to a more hands-on approach where participants were paired (two each) to seven desktops computers and one laptop computer available at the Training and Resource Unit. The facilitator guided the participants and they carried out quite a number of exercises including the use of Tables in MSWord, the use of Mail-Merge in MSWord, use of Functions and Formulae in Excel, creating Charts in Excel as well as exercise in Power Point presentation. The exercise was interactive and participants found it exceedingly useful.

Day 8

Field visit

The group work exercise on a step-wise approach in developing performance score card helped prepare the participants for the field visit. The group exercise helped them have a handle on the generation of performance indicators with community members. The profile of the community where the field visit was to take place was provided as well as policy documents on quality education.

The objective of the field visit to Asempanaye community in the Akwapin North District of the Eastern region of Ghana was aimed at interrogating the extent to which the delivery of services at the basic educational level meets the needs of the citizens in the catchment area. Parliamentary committee clerks from five Africa countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania and Rwanda with staff from Parliamentary Centre arrived in the community at about 10am in the morning of the 23rd May, 2009. A courtesy call was made to the chief and elders of the village, where they were officially informed about the objective of the visit.

After meeting with the chief and his elders, all the key stakeholders in the community- women, men, school children, teachers, district assembly officials and officials from the district education office from Akropong (the district capital) and parliamentary staff from the aforementioned countries and resource persons all gathered in the village church for the community engagement. At the community gathering, the object of the visit to the community by parliamentary staff was explained having observed the necessary protocol.

A meeting was then organized with the service providers; the first group of service providers who met with parliamentary staff comprised of the head of Education Inspectorate of the district as well officials from the District Assembly including the Presiding Member (PM) The officials provided information requested by the parliamentary staff. This information will inform them about entitlements the community is supposed to benefit from regarding service provision at the basic education level. They also met with teachers of the primary school in the community where the teachers told them of the challenges they face in this rural community.

Having had an engagement with service providers, a meeting of the whole community was organized where community members were told of their entitlements with regard to capitation grants, teaching and learning materials and other support services. The responsibilities of the District Assembly regarding the provision of basic services to the school aimed at enhancing quality education were also clearly articulated. After a brief but informative session at the community gathering, three focus groups were then formed to discuss the issues come out with their performance score of the services in question. The focus groups comprised of the following: *men’s group, women’s group and school children’s group*. The parliamentary staff divided themselves into three groups as well. Each of the three groups was assigned to one of the focus groups to facilitate the performance score card process.

All the three focus groups were tasked to assess the extent to which quality education is being delivered in respect of the primary school in Asempanaye community. The indicators each group generated reflected the issues they considered critical to contributing to the improvement of education in the community. Below are the performance score cards of the three focus groups:

Theme: Quality of service delivery in the basic education sector

Men’s Focus Group in Asempanaye Village|

Number of respondents: 25

Indicators (votes)	1	2	3	4	5	Total	AVR
1. Infrastructure (classrooms)	15	18	3	-	-	36	36/26=1
2. Accommodation	25	-	-	-	-	25	25/25=1
3. Health and Sanitation	25	-	-	-	-	25	25/25=1
4. Utilities (potable water and electricity)	2	4	24	44	-	25	74/23=3
5. Parents’ involvement in decision making process	16	16	-	-	-	32	32/24=1
6. School feeding program	24	-	-	-	-	24	24/24=1

Index

1=very poor

2=poor

3=fair

4=good

5=very good

Analysis/Comments

Based on the assessment of the six indicators developed by the men's focus group, the delivery of services aimed at improving quality education is woeful. The school has very poor infrastructure and the teachers live far away from the village because they have no accommodation to house them. More worryingly, there are no sanitation facilities and therefore the pupils are disposed to unhygienic practices. The men were also of the view that since their community is deprived, the school feeding programme should have been instituted in their community. In fact, some parents have withdrawn their pupils from the school and enrolled them in the school where there is school feeding programme.

Absence of basic utility services such as electricity and water makes life of the pupils and parents very difficult. The pupils have to join long queues in the morning to fetch water before they come to school. Lack of economic opportunities for adults tends to exacerbate the conditions of the parents and undermine their ability to support their children in a meaningful way.

The following recommendations were made by the men's focus group:

- School feeding programme should be introduced in the community
- The construction of the school block should be speeded up.
- Ghana Education Service in collaboration with the District Assembly should provide accommodation for teachers
- The number of boreholes in the village should be increased to facilitate the provision of water
- Institute skills/vocational training programs for people in the community

Women's focus group

Number of respondents: 30

Indicators (votes)	1	2	3	4	5	Total	AVRG
1. Sanitation and Health	29	0	0	0	0	29	29/29=1
2. Infrastructure (Accommodation, classrooms, roads, water and electricity)	3	0	21	0	0	66	66/24=3
3. Teaching and learning	1	3	21	0	0	73	73/25=3

materials							
4. School feeding	28	0	0	0	0	28	28/28=1
5. Gainful economic ventures	7	1	22	0	0	75	75/30=3
6. Adult education	30	0	0	0	0	30	30/30=1

Index

1=very poor

2=poor

3=fair

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5=very good

Analysis/Comments

The women focus group came up with indicators not dissimilar to the indicators developed by the men's focus group. The average score for the six indicators is two (2) meaning service provision as per quality education is poor. They however rated three (3) indicators fair and these include the *provision of infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and gainful economic ventures*. In their view, infrastructure situation as per water availability, the number and quality of classroom and electricity is not too desperate even though there is room for improvement. An interesting indicator the women focus group came up with is the promotion of adult education in the community. They held the view that their inability to help their children with their home work is as a result of the fact that they are largely illiterates. Therefore, if the relevant authorities were to make it possible for the parents and guardians of the children to benefit from adult education lessons, it will go a long way to improve the quality of education for their wards.

Recommendations made by the women's focus group:

- Expedite action on the completion of classrooms as well teachers' accommodation within the community
- Government should facilitate in the provision of microfinance to the citizens
- Adult education programme should be introduced in the community as soon as practicable
- Include Asempanaye school in the National School Feeding Programme

Pupils' Focus group

Number of respondents 29

Indicators votes	1	2	3	4	5	Total	AVR
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1.School Feeding Programme (Food)	2	-	27	-	72	101	101/29=3
2. School Building-infrastructure	-	-	-			116	116/29=4
3. Sanitation			18		92	110	110/29=4
4. Teaching method	2	-	18	84	104	104	104/29=4
5. Attendance	2		3		104	113	113/29=4

INDEX

1. Not important
2. Less important
3. Important
4. Very important

The children's focus group also came up with indicators which chimed with those developed by the men and women's focus groups. Issues such as sanitation and health as well as school feeding programme were identified as critical concerns that needed to be addressed to improve quality education in the community. Two indicators, however, were unique to this focus group, they include *teaching methods and teacher attendance*. Both of these indicators were rated 4, meaning the performance of their teachers in respect of the above is good. With the exception of the school feeding programme which they rated 3, all the other indicators were rated good. This means that the children by and large, are satisfied with services they receive in respect of the indicators they developed. Having made this observation, it is important to note that the index used by the facilitators might have confused the children about the rating system. It is probable they were just acknowledging how important (that is what the index suggest) the issues are, not actually rating them against their reality. It was also said that most of the children who took part in the focus group discussion were too young to appreciate the performance score card process and that could have also accounted for the very positive performance rating.

Pupils' recommendations

- Introduce school feeding programme in Asempanaye
- As a matter of urgency, the relevant authorities should address the perennial problem of poor infrastructure-sanitation, improve teaching methods and provide recreational facilities for the school children.

Debriefing from field visit-Key observations

1. The index used for the children's focus group seemed confusing and may have distorted the ratings of the indicators
2. The teachers who had raised critical issues during their engagement with the parliamentary staff –irregular payment of their salaries, lack of teaching and learning materials etc did not participate in the interface meeting.
3. Need for service providers to forge closer relations with the community. It is believed that this will ensure better service delivery to the community

4. Asempanaye community should be given a copy of this report so that the community can follow-up on the recommendations made
5. Promises made by the Presiding Member of the district assembly to the effect that adult education programme will commence in the community as soon as practicable should be monitored to track progress
6. Ghanaian Parliamentary staff develop a follow-up programme to visit the community with the relevant parliamentary committee
7. Participants expressed satisfaction in the community card methodology and will recommend it to their parliaments for citizen parliament engagement

Day 9

Presentation of Certificates and Evaluation

Presentation of certificates for participation in the nine-day training programme preceded the evaluation. The Director of Africa Programs, Parliamentary Centre, Dr. Rasheed Draman, presented certificates to all the participants who were very appreciative and grateful for the gesture.

The nine-day oversight training workshop was wrapped up with an evaluation of all the activities captured under the training programme. On the key question of usefulness and relevance of the training programme to the work or function of the participants, they scored it very highly. For example, out of the total number of participants, twelve participants rated 5 (excellent), five participant rated 4 (very relevant) only one participant rated an average mark of 3. As to whether the content of the training matched the announced objectives or expectations, participants' rating was most positive. Nine of them scored 5 (optimum rate) and the remaining nine scored 4 which is equally positive.

Detail evaluation results can be seen (in Appendix A)

Conclusion

There is no doubt the nine-day training programme, the first of its kind in terms of how long the workshop was has been very successful. The training was interactive and allowed for quick feedback. Drawing lessons from previous budget oversight training, this time around, the field preparation was elaborate and participant had a thorough practice on the performance score card process. The programme also allowed participants enough time to "rest" so that fatigue did not set in with attendant lost of concentration.

The field visit exceeded all expectations. The community people took the exercise seriously and participated fully in the process. the service providers also cooperated by providing relevant information, and in the case of the Presiding Officer of the District Assembly, he made concrete commitments regarding putting in place mechanism for adult education. The pupils also made a commitment to weed the school football park . A football kit was donated to the pupils by parliamentary committee staff from the

aforementioned countries. Doubtless, the children were thrilled. Ghanaian parliamentary committee staffs were challenged by their colleagues to do a follow-up and report on the issues the performance score card helped raised.

Key action points

- Provide community members of Asempanaye a copy of the report on the field visit
- Liaise with parliament, especially with committee clerks who participated in the training workshop and encourage them to motivate the relevant parliamentary committee to undertake a follow-up visit to Asempanaye community.