RESEARCH-IN-USE

A report on Ghana, Guatemala and Namibia

Strengthening demand for, supply of, and use of evidence on the equity impacts of fiscal policy, budgeting processes and development planning

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Global Development Network

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January 2023

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this report is local evidence ecosystems around fiscal policy and budgeting processes, and in particular their equity impacts. The objective of this report is to provide a tool that can inform donor strategies to strengthen research uptake of evidence on the topic of equity impact of fiscal policy and budgeting processes. The tool is designed to be used in a situation in which the local research system is not the main focus of the project or study, and so the aim is not to be comprehensive, or overly scientific, but to get a strong understanding of context increase the impact of the technical research being done, with fairly low effort. We define research uptake as the use of research evidence by researchers, policymakers, implementers or practitioners to inform policy or practice. Multiple international agencies are involved in the production of high-quality evidence on the topic, and we believe a focus on uptake is essential to maximise the resonance of this work, locally, as well as its impact.

What are the current challenges with research uptake in developing countries?

Often the technical skills to engage in high-quality fiscal incidence research production are less developed or less known to funders in developing countries. The result is that expertise is brought in from elsewhere in order to conduct the research. The power-differentials between foreign and local researchers, however, can throw up certain challenges[1].

This is not only an issue from an equity standpoint - it can reduce the quality and uptake of the research. As GDN wrote in their 2017 Executive Summary of their Doing Research Assessment tool (GDN, 2017), localisation of research is vital as a wider strategy for socio-economic development and *"policy-relevant social science research is fundamentally a local endeavour which requires contextualised knowledge of the local environment."*

In order to think about how to strengthen the local research system, and avoid some of the known pitfalls, we need to understand how it works and who the local actors are. Similarly, effectively facilitating local research actors to play a role in local evidence-informed policy debates, requires a better understanding of the local system.

1 For example, the phenomenon of "helicopter research", in which researchers from high-income settings engage in "thoughtless field research in poorer countries that extracts data without respectful collaboration", has been well-documented. In order to reduce this risk funders often require external researchers to engage in local partnerships, however the imbalance in who controls the funding, and therefore who controls the decisions regarding project roles, authorship, and access to data, can result in issues like the inability to steer research towards local priorities, and the underfunding or even crowding-out of local skills and opportunities (O'Grady, 2022).

What do we mean by the research system?

When we think of research, we often focus on Research production. However, research production is only one cog in the research uptake process. The Global Development Network thinks of the research system in terms of three activities: production, dissemination, and use (GDN, 2017). Research uptake depends on all three of these activities functioning effectively as well as on good governance of this system.

Figure 1: The research system

How will this report support research uptake?

This report reflects on the findings and learnings from the development and piloting of a tool[2] to map the local evidence system to assess ways of strengthening demand for, supply of, and use of evidence, on the equity impacts of fiscal policy, budgeting processes and development planning. The mapping process includes gaining a preliminary understanding of the main institutions working in the sector, the role that they play in the evidence system, their strengths and the challenges they face, and the ways in which they collaborate with each other.

We intend for the findings in this report to be useful in a few ways. We hope that local researchers within the countries we include here (Ghana, Guatemala, and Namibia) are able to use it to generate discussion on the barriers they face. We also intend it as a way to guide donors that may wish to fund the strengthening of local fiscal incidence and budget research systems, and a way to generate discussion on global development reform and how it impacts the way in which fiscal incidence analysis is done in developing countries. We also hope that researchers based in high-income countries intending to work in less well resourced countries can use it as a basis for a more effective and thoughtful collaboration with local partners, and to understand how they might do a similar exercise in countries that they intend to work in.

Finally, this is a first iteration of the tool, and we hope to improve on the tool in the future by:

- Requesting focused feedback from the participants, members of the donor community, and peer practitioners
- Updating the concept note and interview script based on the findings in this report, and piloting the revised tool in a different set of countries
- Generating a guideline document (and possibly a short workshop format) to support practitioners that may wish to implement the tool themselves

2 Note that this report details one example tool which was developed to fill this gap and conduct a preliminary mapping of a country's fiscal policy research systems and budgeting processes. There are other tools that have been developed that look at the research system as a whole and which aspire to completeness (see, for example, Ordóñez, 2016). This tool, in contrast, attempts to get a good sense of the context with minimal effort, in a relatively short amount of time, and with a small number of interviews. We applied the methodology to Ghana, Guatemala, and Namibia, and we found that after roughly 3 interviews there was enough repetition of information, and the outstanding leads were few and fairly specific.

- Developing a focused online survey tool to complement the interviews, that can be filled out by participants that attend workshops on methodology and results, in order to gather a more comprehensive information set

Findings

From the mapping process we conclude that it is possible to generate a brief but useful overview of the local research system with a relatively low amount of effort. As few as three interviews can generate a lot of insight. We were able to gather enough information to put together a preliminary country strategy for each country, which was then presented in two out of the three countries for validation and feedback. It should be clear that through the use of such a 'rapid tool' we aimed to generate sensible suggestions for discussion with local stakeholders, and that these discussions are meant to be an entry point to strengthen the system. The overview the tool generated does not claim to be a final picture of the local research systems. Other tools such as GDN's Doing Research tool (GDN, 2017) offers a method for systematically and exhaustively mapping local research systems.

The strategy is unique in each country, showing that the information from the interviews influenced our decision-making process and project design. We suspect that taking the time to map the system generated insights that would have substantially improved our effectiveness and impact of future research work, in terms of:

a. building relationships with local partners
b. generating demand for the results of the research
c. gaining an understanding of relevant economic, political, and fiscal context that would inform the focus of future research work
d. identifying who could have a seat at the table for discussing and disseminating results
e. reducing the likelihood of crowding out local researchers by minimising duplication of roles within the system
f. choosing the appropriate timing and tone for communicating results

Note that while we had originally intended to develop a separate country report for each country in which we worked, upon reflection it seemed more interesting to combine and compare the work in the 3 countries in one report. This decision was taken both so as to ascertain whether the tool works effectively across different settings, and in order to compare the findings and discuss their respective implications for different strategies.

The report is organised as follows:

In Section 2 we briefly describe the objectives of the Research-in-Use tool we developed, the countries in which we used it, the tool's methodology and limitations, and the learnings that we came to over the pilot phase.

In Section 3 we map the institutions that came out of the interviews, and we cluster them into the categories of government, higher education institutions (HEIs), think-tanks, civil society organisations (CSOs), international organisations (IOs), and the media. We also describe how these organisations collaborate both within and between their institutional categories.

In Section 4 we describe the budget process, highlighting any differences that came out of the interviews between the countries in terms of process, timing, and public participation.

In Section 5 we discuss differences in the research context that came out of the interviews. The insights were mostly related to access to data, the structure and priorities of funding, and the freedom to criticise the government.

In Section 6 we highlight the advice and experience of the respondents regarding research uptake. We categorise these insights into information on how to effectively disseminate information, how to engage with government - particularly around unfavourable findings, and how the timing of the budget cycle enters into their planning and training.

In Section 7 we present the outlines of a country strategy for each country, and in Section 8 we conclude.

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2. THE TOOL

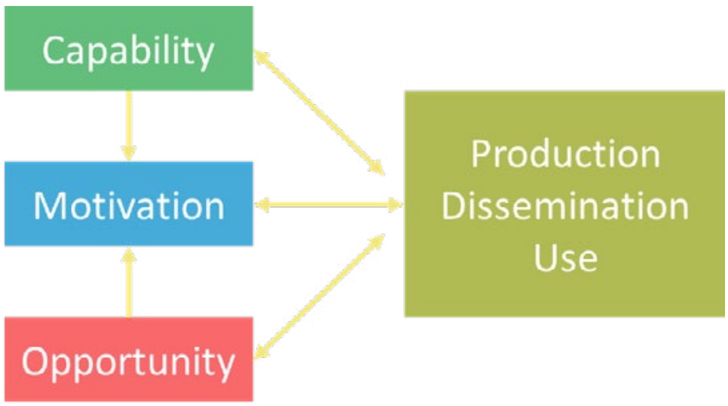
2.1 DESCRIPTION

The first version of the RIU organisational mapping tool was validated by the team on the May 18, 2022. The tool was piloted in Guatemala, Namibia and Ghana from July to October of 2022, and the results were then summarised into a set of powerpoints for internal discussion and feedback. The powerpoints were presented at workshops in both Namibia and Guatemala in November 2022, and the comments were then taken into account in finalising this report.

PROCESS	TIMING (2022)
Concept note and interview script	March – May
Interviews conducted	July – October
PowerPoints generated	July – October
Draft report and workshops	November

Table 1: Development process and timing

While the questions in the RIU tool are designed to be flexible and adapted to each interviewee's experience and interest, they are underpinned by an understanding that behaviour is a function of capacity, motivation and opportunity (Mitchie, van Stralen & West, 2011), as shown in Figure 2 below.



Adapted from Mitchie, van Stralen & West (2011)

Figure 2: Behaviour change model

We gathered the following sets of information:

i. A description of the key organisations working on research production, uptake and dissemination, and a sense of their size, influence and level of skill (capacity)
ii. Challenges to doing research in the local context (motivation)
iii. Opportunities to interact with and influence policymakers with findings on the budget (opportunity)
iv. An explanation of how these organisations collaborate and communicate (linkages)

2.2 PILOT COUNTRIES

The pilot was conducted in three countries: Namibia, Guatemala and Ghana. Namibia is an upper-middle income, sparsely populated, dry country in Southern Africa with 15.6% of the population living under $2.15 per person per day (PPP2017). Guatemala is the largest economy in central america, also upper-middle income and quite densely populated, with 9.5% of the population living under the poverty line. Ghana is the largest of the three countries, situated in West Africa, classified as lower-middle income, and with 25.6% of the population living under the poverty line. Despite Ghana's lower GDP per capita, all three countries score very similarly on the 2022 Human Development Index (HDI)[3], ranking from 133 (Ghana) to 139 (Namibia).

	NAMIBIA	GUATEMALA	GHANA
2022 HDI	139 / 0.615	135 / 0.627	133 / 0.632
GDP per capita (thousand USD)	4.7	5.0	2.4
Income status	UMIC	UMIC	LMIC
Population (million)	2.6	17.1	31.7
Size (thousand km2)	824.3	108.9	238.5
Density (pop/km2)	3.2	157	132.9
Gini coefficient	59.1	48.3	43.5
Poverty headcount ($2.15 per day)	15.6	9.5	25.6

Table 2: Pilot countries, key development indicators

Source: WDI; United Nations (2022).
Notes: poverty lines are measured using 2015 survey data for Namibia, 2014 for Guatemala and 2016 for Ghana.

3 The HDI is a combination of four indicators: mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, life expectancy at birth, and per capita gross national income.

2.3 METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The tool is designed to be used in a situation in which the local research system is not the main focus of the project or study. The aim is therefore not to be comprehensive, or overly scientific, but rather to get a strong understanding of context with a relatively small amount of effort, so as to increase the impact of the technical research being done. We stopped conducting interviews once we felt that we had started to develop some intuition about the system in which we were working. We also did not insist on comparability of information sets in each country, and instead allowed the individual interviewees to direct us according to what they considered to be important. The results can be used to develop loosely-held hypotheses about research uptake strategies, while retaining a strong awareness of how little is yet known. The hypotheses should then be revised frequently over time as more information is uncovered.

We used a "snowballing" technique to identify who to speak to, and we allowed ourselves to be largely guided by consultants or partners in-country in terms of setting up interviews. The two main exceptions were the interviews with Carlos Mendoza of Dialogos in Guatemala, and the Send Ghana employees, which we specifically requested. A full list of key informants are shown in Table 2 below. Our affiliation with the Commitment to Equity Institute meant that we expected to be able to rely on our fiscal incidence networks to uncover local practitioners doing work in each of these countries. While this did happen, these individuals were discovered too late in Namibia to include in the findings, and in Ghana the researchers were not responsive enough to secure an interview. With more time and funding we would have been able to include these individuals. In Namibia the informants comprised 3 women and 2 men, in Guatemala all men, and in Ghana 2 women and 2 men.

What emerges is influenced by the expertise and networks of the individual who was setting up the interviews for us. In Guatemala, we were led by a consultant who had done fiscal incidence himself, and had connections through think-tanks and universities to other researchers who also worked in the sector. We were directly led to the relevant individuals that tended to focus on fiscal incidence in particular. In Namibia, we spent more time interviewing the GIZ in-country staff, whose experience was in the public sector. The one individual that we spoke to from a civil society institution did not directly work on fiscal incidence and was not an economist, but did a fair amount of budget research. A few more interviews, particularly with academics or private-sector economists may have uncovered a more academic point of view. In Ghana we spoke to one GIZ staff member, and individuals from two civil society organisations, Send Ghana, and the Anti-corruption foundation. Despite using our networks to initiate contact with academics in Ghana working on fiscal incidence, they were not responsive to requests for an interview at the time.

We are not clear whether there is no real locus of academic work on fiscal policy in these countries or whether our networks failed to unearth them (given that we were working through development partners with stronger links to CSOs and policymakers). In future iterations we could aim to better grasp the level of research capacity within academia by running a keyword search linked to the research universities to identify specific individuals.

The Research-in-Use exercise drew on the interviews with respondents as key informants, leveraging their knowledge and perceptions to draw a rapid mapping of the local evidence ecosystem that could inform the rest of our in-country evidence work with GIZ.

COUNTRY	NAME	POSITION & INSTITUTIONS	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Namibia	Celia Stephanus	GIZ technical assistant, National Planning Commission	August 25, 2022
	Linea Elago	GIZ Consultant, Namibia Statistics Office	August 25, 2022
	Graham Hopwood	Director, Institute for Public Policy Research	September 30, 2022
	John Steytler	GIZ Project manager, SDG Initiative	October 6, 2022
	Inamuvulwa Munyama	GIZ technical assistant, National Planning Commission	October 6, 2022
Guatemala	Maynor Cabrera	Research associate, CEQ Institute	July 29, 2022
	Pedro Prado	ASIES	August 2, 2022
	Jorge Lavarreda	CIEN	August 8, 2022
	Erick Coyoy	VIRP, University of Rafael Landiva	August 11, 2022
	Carlos Mendoza	Dialogos	August 16, 2022
Ghana	Emmanuel Otoo	GIZ	May 30, 2022
	Emmanuel Ayifah	Deputy Director, Send Ghana	October 24, 2022
	Harriet N-Agyemang	Senior Programme Officer, Send Ghana	October 24, 2022
	Beauty Emefa Narteh	Executive secretary for Ghana Anti-corruption Foundation; co-chair for the Ghana SDGs	October 24, 2022

Table 3: List of respondents

2.4 LEARNINGS ABOUT PROCESS

As the interviews were conducted, we learned how to conduct the exercise more effectively. Our interview style improved, as did our strategy, and in hindsight we also have a better understanding of how we could have made the interview sets more representative. The box below shows what we learnt along the way.

Interview style: The way the questions were asked was important. Initially we read the questions from the script but we got more interesting responses when the questions were memorised and the way they were asked included some reference to country context. We also got better responses when making it clear that we were asking for the respondents' opinions, and experience, rather than facts, as this freed them up to speak more easily.

Interview strategy: Initially we tried to conduct each interview as a blank slate. However, summarising the list of institutions and the opinions that had come out of the previous interview and asking respondents to react to those opinions and fill in the gaps saved time, reduced repetitiveness and allowed for the respondent to bring layers of nuance.

Representativity: Now that we have a clearer understanding of how to conceptualise the categories of institutions present in the research ecosystem in each country, in future iterations of the tool we would make more of an effort to ensure we were covering different types of institutions and sectors in our interviews, as well as getting a balanced gender perspective. In Namibia and Ghana we achieved a gender balance without intentionally orchestrating it, and we found in Namibia that the men and women in the same interview session had the same facts but quite different perspectives on those facts. In Guatemala the respondents were all men and this may have influenced the narrative.

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3. MAPPING INSTITUTIONS

The tool maps research institutions in order to get a sense of who is already working on fiscal incidence, budgets, inequality, health, education, or related policy issues. The key components of the local research ecosystem identified by the informants in each country were classified into public sector institutions, higher education institutions (HEIs), local think-tanks, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), International organisations (IOs), and the media, and summarised in Table 3 below. As discussed in Section 2, this list is not designed to be exhaustive, and includes only those organisations that our key informants considered important enough to mention or remember. We categorise these into research producers, research users, and research disseminators, to get a sense of who plays which role(s), how much capacity there is for each of these functions in the country we are working, and which of these functions could be strengthened.

3.1 GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

In Namibia the informants stressed the importance of government institutions, presumably because the informants were mostly technical advisors working in the public sector, and because non-government research production capacity was fairly limited in general with few think-tanks and policy-oriented academic research being produced. In Guatemala the public sector was only mentioned in their role as research users. In Ghana the public sector was mostly mentioned for its role in data production, and in holding annual forums such as the health summit and the agricultural review.

Namibia is the only country in which the informants mentioned a national coordinating research body. The institution is called the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (the NCRST), and was established under Act 23 of 2004, with the mandate to coordinate research in Namibia. Their mission is to raise awareness, recognise excellence, identify gaps and promote relationships between Namibia and international institutions. Their broad definition of research, as well as their legal power to fine or imprison individuals for not registering their research with the Commission was worrying for some respondents, despite that this had not yet occurred in practise.

3.2 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In Namibia higher education institutions worked with the one leading Namibian think-tank (the IPPR) to teach based on some of their materials, but the IPPR respondent felt that they could play a more prominent role in promoting dialogue about issues.

In Guatemala one of the think-tanks listed (VIRP) was based out of the University Rafael Landivar. One respondent mentioned that most universities in Guatemala do not finance scientific research, and instead focus on teaching, although at the workshop respondents mentioned that they were working on changing this. In Ghana there were two think-tanks linked to the University of Ghana - the Centre for Social Policy Studies (CSPS) and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER). ISSER in particular appears to be respected for its production of high-quality, policy-relevant research.

3.3 THINK TANKS

In Guatemala we mostly interviewed members of the think-tanks. Many of these had worked on the production of fiscal incidence assessments. It was mentioned several times that the recommendations of the think-tanks were seen as fairly ideological, rather than data-driven (for example ICEFI is seen as left-wing, and ASIES is seen as centre-right), adding political complexity to the notion that they are 'independent' organisations. For their analytical findings to be properly trusted by the public it would be important for the same perspective to be held across multiple organisations with different ideological positions.

One respondent mentioned that think-tanks have downsized due to lack of funding (see Section 5.2), and become more focused on advocacy than research such as the production of short policy briefs. Many of the respondents also mentioned the deteriorating democratic conditions in Guatemala, and noted their concern over the introduction of legislation to regulate think-tanks, including a clause which allows the government to remove a think-tank's right to operate if they are deemed a "risk to national security". This had influenced the think-tanks, resulting in a reduced willingness to take risks including making bold recommendations or outrightly criticising the government. One respondent mentioned having an international funder pull out of a project under pressure from the government which had taken issue with the findings in their report.

In Namibia there were almost no independent think-tanks, with the exception of the IPPR which was positioned as both a CSO doing advocacy work and a think-tank conducting research.

3.4 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

In Namibia CSOs did not appear to produce much research, aside from a few key players, while in Ghana they seemed to do a fair amount of research of a less technical nature than academic think tanks.

In Guatemala respondents discussed the emergence of a "new generation" of fiscal policy researchers that were NGOs and operated more like institutions focused on advocacy, social accountability and transparency than think-tanks. They had formed in Guatemala around 2015, emerging from a series of protests against corruption. They include organisations like Dialogos, Data Laboratory, and Citizen's Network, and aim to present pragmatic findings based on data rather than ideological positions. They are united by their innovative use of technology to hold the government accountable.

3.5 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

International Organisations in all countries were mostly mentioned for their role in funding and commissioning research work. The fact that Dialogos' funding was all provided by international funders appeared to be a strength but also a potential risk in the case that the government started to crack down on organisations receiving foreign funding. In future iterations we might want to make it clearer that we consider IOs part of the local research system, in order to gather more information on this.

3.6 MEDIA

There were challenges to freedom of the press in Guatemala, and some of the new digital newspapers had been hacked, while others had been deprived of advertising and forced to downsize for publishing information about corruption. There were two main print newspapers that were considered important enough to mention by name - Prensa Libre and El Periodico - and the respondents made it clear that they were struggling to survive.

In contrast to this, in Namibia the press were operating strongly and freely and appeared to be always looking for new content. A key newspaper which was mentioned was The Namibian.

In Ghana, while the respondents mentioned using the media to disseminate their work, they did not mention any specific media organisations by name, and they also did not mention issues with freedom of the press. We assume, therefore, that the media environment is fairly free. This seems supported by the Press Freedom scores. In 2022 Namibia ranked 18 with regard to press freedom with a score of 81.84, Ghana ranked 60 with a score of 67,43, and Guatemala ranked 124 out of 180 countries (RSF, 2022).

3.7 COLLABORATION

In general collaboration within institutional types in Ghana appeared high, however both sets of respondents coming from CSOs independently noted that greater collaboration between different institutional types was harder to achieve, and would be valuable. The following possibilities were mentioned for supporting greater collaboration:

- a platform which brought all the different types of institutions[4]
- grassroots CSOs in deprived areas engaging more with academics to improve the quality of their reporting
- CSOs working more with the private sector to fund not only CS activities, but also beneficial research

4 The respondent noted that the research shared would have to be high-quality enough to engage the academics, and at the same time both policy-focused and not overly technical to keep the CSOs interested.

The think tank ISSER at the University of Ghana was mentioned numerous times by various respondents as a significant exception in that they bridged academic and civil society circles. As an institution they were able to meet the requirements of academic rigour and yet also produce policy-relevant research. They are also good at facilitating engagement across different institutional types, with an ability to convene both academics and CSOs.

In Guatemala, there appeared to be little collaboration amongst the old generation of think-tanks seemingly because of their polarisation, and engagement had been further reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ASIES respondent suggested that finding a unifying position would be crucial in order to achieve more communication and that the best way to do this would be through ASIES. Where engagement did happen in the past it was often facilitated by them given their centrist position and would gather actors from the non-profit sector, private sector and policymakers. Much of this was put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. They lead Foro Guatemala, an organisation that integrates entrepreneurs, CSOs, politicians, and other influential people.

In terms of the new generation Dialogos had spent a lot of time building coalitions both with other CSOs doing research and advocacy work, and also with journalists. They attributed their success to the fact that they were willing to work in more flexible and direct ways, and that they put data ahead of ideology. They have recently set up an innovative collaboration with Prensa Libre which allowed Dialogos to achieve greater reach, and supported Prensa Libre with data, analysis and visualisation. They also run training programmes for journalists where they look at a different theme each year (such as anti-corruption, or electoral violence) and show them how to interpret the data and the sources.

In Namibia there seemed to be a fair amount of collaboration through stakeholder workshops, dialogue platforms, media, Memorandums of Understanding, and public engagement meetings. It was noted by a number of respondents that the new Minister of Finance, Iipumbu Shiimi, has a very open approach with CSOs being invited to make submissions on the budget prior to formulation. CSOs were also invited to make inputs into the SDG reporting last year, however they felt that they were invited too late to the process.

The National Institute for Democracy was mentioned as a key trusted convenor of the MoF and CSOs, in contrast to the National Planning commission's Civil Society desk which is viewed with mistrust by the CSOs. CSOs and think-tanks as well as the private sector institutions seemed fairly well coordinated under umbrella groups such as the Action Coalition on Human Rights, the Economic Association of Namibia and Civic +264. While there is some information sharing between CSOs and academics (with the IRPP respondent mentioning that the universities sometimes taught from the materials produced by their think-tank) other respondents noted that collaboration between research institutions and stakeholders could be improved.

What are the implications of these variations in type and in research function? In general the same three categories of actors were mentioned in each country.[5] Nonetheless there was variation in the respective size of different actors in different countries (e.g. the number of think-tanks in

5 This wasn't completely uniform. In Ghana, for example, the media wasn't mentioned.

Namibia was very small relative to Guatemala), and in the functions that these actors play (e.g. the universities in Namibia were more teaching than research-focused, compared to Ghana).

This seems to suggest that we cannot take for granted the role institutions play in the system, and highlights why an exercise of this sort might be useful. Why does this matter? Because it is our hypothesis that different configurations of actors will influence how evidence is produced, discussed and taken up. This in turn influences the type of role that international donors might most usefully play.

The difficulty of not having explicitly asked about these categories in each country leaves us wondering, however, as to whether the omission is meaningful or the result of a participant's oversight, or sectoral experience. Working more explicitly with these categories in future variations of the tool (asking why respondents have chosen not to mention certain categories, for example) could be a way to generate a more systematic or rigorous mapping.
that we are accessing all Comparing the categories across the three countries facilitates provides a powerful allows us to identify variation in the way the research system is set up in each country, and in each country's strengths and challenges.

GHANA

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NAME	PROD	DISS	USE
Public sector institutions	Fiscal Decentralisation Unit (FDU)			1
	Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA)			1
	Ghana Statistical Service (GSS)	1		
	Ministry of Health (MoH)		1	1
	Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)		1	1
	Ministry of Finance (MoF)			1
	National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)			1
HEIs	University of Ghana (UG)	1		
	University of Ghana Business School (UGBS)	1		

Think Tanks	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER, UG)	1		
	IMANI Center for Policy and Education	1		
	Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)	1		
	Institute for Democratic Governance	1		
	Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP)	1		
	Centre for Social Policy Studies (CSPS, University of Ghana)	1		
	Institute of Economic Affairs Ghana (IEA Ghana)	1		
CSOs	Send Ghana	1	1	1
	Alliance for Social Equity and Public Accountability (ASEPA)			1
	Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII)			1
	Ghana Anti-corruption Coalition (GACC)	1		
IOs	Oxfam International	1		
	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF Ghana)			
	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC Ghana)			
	International Budget Partnership (IBP)			
Coalitions / forums	Citizen's budget			
	Afrobarometer			
TOTAL		**13**	**3**	**9**

GUATEMALA

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NAME	PROD	DISS	USE
Public sector institutions	Ministry of Public Finance			1
HEIs	Rafael Landívar University	1		1
	University San Carlos	1		1
Think Tanks	CIEN	1		
	ASIES	1		
	ICEFI	1		
	VIRP	1		
	Fundesa	1		
	Fundación Libertad y Desarrollo	1		
CSOs	Dialogos	1	1	
	Laboratorio de Datos	1		
	Red Ciudadana	1		1
IOs	World Bank (WB)	1		
Coalitions / forums	Open Budget Workshops			
	Foro Guatemala - ASIES			
Media	Prensa Libre		1	
	El Periodico		1	
TOTAL		**12**	**3**	**4**

NAMIBIA

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NAME	PROD	DISS	USE	OTH
Public sector institutions	Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA)				1
	NCRST				1
	Bank of Namibia	1			
	National Planning Commission	1			
	Ministry of Finance			1	
	Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board				1
	Parliamentary Committees			1	
HEIs	University of Namibia (UNAM)	1		1	
	NUST	1		1	
	IUM	1		1	
Think Tanks	IRPP	1	1		
	The Economic Association of Namibia	1	1		
CSOs	Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI)	1			
	Namibia Institute for Democracy		1		
	Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)			1	
	Sister Namibia	1			
	Economic and Social Justice Trust	1			
	Namibia Development Trust (NDT)	1			

IOs	Hans Seidel Foundation (HSS)				1
	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)				1
	International Budget Partnership	1			
Media	The Namibian		1		
	Namibia Media Trust (NMT)		1		
TOTAL		**9**	**8**	**6**	**5**

4. THE BUDGET

The tool includes questions on the budget cycle and how different organisations adapted to it. The aim was to find out the strategic points in the year at which:

i. the Ministry of Finance would be most amenable to engagement around budget considerations, and providing access to data
ii. other CSOs and think-tanks might want to receive information for them to package for dissemination
iii. the public was likely to turn their attention to information on the budget

4.1 THE BUDGET CYCLE

According to the literature a typical annual budget cycle consists of four phases (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2019):

i. drafting, planning and formulation,
ii. the process of legislative discussion and approval,
iii. release of funds and implementation of planned activities, and
iv. auditing, assessment and reporting on execution.

The timing of the budget is largely determined by the fiscal year, as the budget needs to be approved in parliament and the funds released by the minister of finance before the start of the fiscal year. In Namibia the fiscal year runs from July of the current year to July of the next calendar year, in Guatemala from April and in Ghana from May (Table 4).

In Ghana the formulation part of the budget cycle runs over roughly 7 months, in Guatemala 6 months, and in Namibia 8 months minus a period of about 1.5 months over the Christmas break of no activity. The decentralised nature of government in Ghana and the large number of institutions which must be budgeted for and verified by the MFEP extends the process.

In Ghana the budget formulation process begins with the issuing of a pre-budget statement which sets out the budget strategy, introducing the government's plans for the forthcoming fiscal year. The strategy is based on the Medium Term Development Plans[6], which are generated based on the National Plan for the country on the theme of jobs. In April and May the 43 line ministries and 261 district assemblies must submit their annual action plan (which includes costing for each

6 The current MTDP is the Co-ordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-2024, and the theme of the plan is the Agenda for Jobs : Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All.

activity), and these should theoretically be validated by June. They often run late, which puts pressure on the formulation of the budget ceilings.

The deadline for MFEP to formulate the budget ceilings and release them in the Composite Budget Guidelines is July 31, but can run into August, thereby passing the pressure onto the budget development phase. The budgets are presented to the MFEP in what is referred to as the Public Budget Hearings, a verification process with a fairly narrow objective - to ensure that the budgets are within the established ceiling. The MFEP should submit the budget to parliament by November 30, at the latest, and monitoring and evaluation of execution starts in December. The Fiscal Decentralisation Unit in the MFEP monitors and audits the progress and capacity of each of the line ministries and districts. This information is then taken into account in the formulation of the budget ceilings the following year.

In Namibia mid-year budget, a type of pre-budget statement, is issued by the end of October, and the budget is tabled in February or March. Most of December and January is a long Christmas break.

PHASE OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET CYCLE	NAMIBIA	GUATEMALA	GHANA
Inputs into budget	June – July	February – April	April – May
i. Formulation	July – February	April – August	May – November
ii. Discussion and approval	February – March	September – November	November – December
iii. Implementation	April – March	January – December	January – December
iv. Auditing and assessment	April – July	January – April	January – May

Table 4: Timing of the annual budget cycle

Source: Key informant interviews; Gyabaah, R. (2022); Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2019)

4.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Respondents in Ghana mentioned two main established mechanisms for improving accountability in the budget process and disseminating information about the budget. The first is their participation in the Open Budget Survey, a tool run by the International Budget Partnership to measure budget accountability, released in the first week of June.[7] The second is the Citizen's Budget, a simplified version of the budget which explains what the generated revenues will be used for.[8]

Namibia and Guatemala also participate in the Open Budget Survey, and Guatemala has an Open Budget Initiative to increase engagement of policymakers and other stakeholders. This process appeared to be initially successful but is losing momentum. One respondent attributed this to lack of engagement from other institutions due to perceptions of government corruption, and 2 other respondents suggested that the government had made no changes as a result of the discussions, and therefore created the perception that policymakers were not genuinely open to discussion or policy changes.

While Ghana and Guatemala both scored about 20 for public participation in the Open Budget Survey in 2021 (see Table 5), Namibia scored 0.

	NAMIBIA	GUATEMALA	GHANA
Transparency	42	56	64
Public participation	0	20	19
Oversight	48	39	46
Independent fiscal institution	No	No	No

Table 5: Open Budget Partnership 2021 Scores

Source: IBP (2021).

7 See, for example, the Open Budget Survey Ghana 2021.

8 See, for example, the 2022 Citizen's Budget.

5. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The tool also asked about challenges to the evidence system. The aim of this was two-fold: both to understand what aspects in the system we should be aware of lest they undermine our own research work, but also if there were concrete ways in which the existing socio-economic system could be strengthened. The results in each of the countries could be grouped in access to data, access to funding, and the freedom to be openly critical of the government.

5.1 ACCESS TO DATA

Survey data is reportedly freely available in Namibia and the Namibia Statistics Authority subscribes to Open Data. Respondents mentioned that the challenge was not in accessing the data, but rather in the production of meaningful research making use of the data, and in particular the use of administrative data.

In contrast the Ghanaian respondents reported significant difficulties with accessing data, and mentioned that researchers were expected to pay to access the data, even in the case where they make use of the Right to Information act. They also mentioned that the time it takes to access it, and the quality of it, can significantly jeopardise the project, and may force CSOs to conduct their own primary data collection - which is both expensive and time-consuming. They felt that data was made more readily available to international consultants than to local ones. In certain sectors there were costs to getting ethical clearance which provided a barrier to entry. In particular, information on the budget was hard to get. Even budget allocation information is difficult, and getting details on budget execution is even harder.

In Guatemala, one respondent noted that researchers are easily able to access fiscal information, with the government's accounting system reports accessible online. Another mentioned that there have been occasional instances of access to data being withheld or paywalls being introduced. They perceived this to be more likely when the data implied a lack of progress. The respondent described successfully countering these instances by appealing to the freedom of access act, together with a strong coalition of civil society organisations and think tanks.

5.2 FUNDING

In all countries the short-term nature of research funding was mentioned as a core challenge when it came to conducting research on fiscal policy-related issues. In particular the fact that funding was often project based, and there was no money available for more permanent, long-term work on fiscal policy analysis, nor for institutional development of institutions active in this area, meant that it was difficult to commit to working on a particular issue and seeing it through.[9] This prevented institutions from spending energy on building strategic relationships and collaborations. One respondent from CIEN noted that momentum would be built in one area and then the project would end, and in a few years work would start again in that area all over again. Another respondent, however, attributed part of the reason for the lack of funding in Guatemala to the donors' realisation that the government is not listening to the recommendations of researchers.

In order to work better with this type of project-based funding flow, CIEN suggested spending more time up front questioning policymakers what research they were interested in, and then looking to secure funding for that topic.

One respondent in Ghana mentioned that the limited funding they receive forces them to reduce the size of their sample and that they lose information as a result. She suggested that the result is that data collection tends to focus on Accra because it is cheaper and quicker to work in the capital, and the voices of minorities are ignored.

The Ghanaian respondent also recommended that funding should be more carefully directed. She felt that donors should take greater care to ensure that they are not duplicating existing work, and that their research goals are of local relevance and not simply of interest to the donor. Indeed, the respondent from CIEN in Guatemala suggested that a full CEQ Assessment might be exactly the type of research that is not of great interest to policymakers and not relevant. He suggested that the results of the CEQ Assessment are easy to predict given that the analysis has been done in Guatemala many times by this point and is not predisposed towards practical policy recommendations that policymakers can follow. He also felt that such an assessment might not be the most relevant type of analysis when a country is suffering from extensive corruption, noting that a study which tracked where expenditures were going, for example, could generate more concrete recommendations.

Funding in Namibia seemed to be generally project-based also, and very limited due to Namibia's middle-income status. The respondents suggested that donors don't like to fund research because they expect it to be funded by the government, and yet the government is reluctant to fund it in case the findings are critical. What tends to be produced, therefore, is descriptive reports rather than analytical work which runs the risk of turning into critique.

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9 The exception to the project-based funding was Dialogos who had found international funders that strongly believed in their pragmatic approach to working with data and had thus provided them with flexible, core grants.

5.3 FREEDOM TO CRITICISE

Respondents in Namibia reported that the opposition party was becoming stronger, and there was more critical debate happening in parliament. While there were no hard measures used to keep researchers from speaking out, there was occasionally a soft pressure. Researchers could be publicly called out, or not be appointed for consultancies with the government. One researcher mentioned that his proposals for certain projects had not been signed off on, and that funding had been withheld by University of Namibia management for projects which were likely to be critical of the government. He explained that the President in Namibia was automatically the Chancellor of the University of Namibia, unless they chose to abdicate, which meant that the University had very little independence. There was also some mistrust amongst civil society about how the The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology would be used in the future if it was allowed to insist that all research should be registered with them.

In Guatemala all of the respondents except for the Dialogos representative seemed very unsure that there was room to influence the government, given the context, and the Dialogos respondent, despite his recent successes in achieving policy change, still felt that "the window of opportunity was closing daily" as democratic spaces were perceived to be deteriorating.

In Ghana, there was the sense that the space to be critical of the government was widening (See section 6.1.).

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6. RESEARCH UPTAKE AND DISSEMINATION

The tool asks how organisations most effectively influence research users (in this case mostly, but not only, the state) and disseminate their findings (usually, but not only, to the public). This is useful to order to:

i. identify potential partners to collaborate with who are able to play a knowledge broker role in the local context thereby increasing the impact of our work, and strengthening local institutions by building capacity in fiscal policy research and sharing funding opportunities, and
ii. gain a general sense of what is best practise in terms of a communication strategy, and
iii. better understand institutional culture and engage more respectfully by following official or informal processes (and therefore be more likely to get engagement when we reach out directly).

6.1 POLICYMAKERS AND EVIDENCE

One of the Ghanaian respondents working on corruption noted the importance of engaging with policymakers around research findings, and stressed that this is even more crucial when the results are not favourable. She noted that it is not enough to just engage the executive, that engagement needs to take place with all the relevant institutions. She mentioned their recent success with securing the commitment of Ghana's Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) to make institutional changes to reduce the substantial levels of corruption in the institution, at a time when the new CEO, Mr. Kwasi Agyeman Busia, had just taken over.

Other respondents felt that there had been an improvement in the government's willingness to accept CSOs' research findings since the early 2000s. They now recognise the evidence that CSOs gather as important, going so far as to invite comment on budget proposals on various sectors in which they have expertise.

Respondents in Guatemalan think-tanks felt that working with the government in Guatemala was particularly challenging. They noted that turnover made research uptake more complicated, and that in Guatemala there was turnover not only due to elections but also between electoral cycles, with ministers and also middle management lasting sometimes only a year in their position. Their learnings from this challenge had been to invest more time up front understanding what is truly needed by policymakers, to develop coalitions around particular policy goals which included multiple members of the executive - and possibly of the legislative if the objective is to change legislation - and to draw up Memorandums of Understanding which formalised the relationships and objectives between the two parties and which would help the work to continue in the event of turnover. He also noted that the perceived ideological positions of the different think-tanks made it more challenging to be appointed or be seen as objective and that more collaboration and coalition-building might reduce this.

The Guatemalan respondents also noted that it was very problematic to be perceived as critical of the government in Guatemala and one respondent highlighted the importance of simple, practical policy recommendations. While he was not convinced that a CEQ Assessment was the most relevant study given the context, he felt that if one was nonetheless going to conduct a CEQ Assessment, then he suggested not trying to analyse or communicate results for the whole system at once to policymakers. While for theoretical reasons a CEQ Assessment insists on measuring the entire tax and transfer system, he felt that focusing in detail on one particular area was more likely to generate practical policy recommendations and to be understood by policymakers.

He also mentioned that different actors were competing for government engagement around fiscal issues. If donors don't work together on similar topics they risk losing policymakers' attention to a larger technical assistance offer. His recommendation to ensure that this did not happen was to find out up-front which other donors were working on fiscal policy issues and to build partnerships in which each donor could offer their niche expertise presented as a whole package.

In Namibia one respondent stated that there was little demand for research from policymakers, that it was not valued and low-paid. They also felt that government had not responded to the demands being made over the last 30 years, and concluded that it was hard for research to influence them, but that on the other hand research was also often not of very high-quality, simply cutting and pasting from other countries rather than responding rigorously to the Namibian context.

The respondents also made it clear that the fiscal and economic context had some influence on whether research findings or demands would be taken into account. For example, in Namibia influencing expenditure decisions (for example campaigning for a Basic Income Grant) at the time of the interview was hard given that Namibia has been in an economic recession since 2016. This was expected to change as revenues from green hydrogen flowed into the country. In Guatemala influencing policy to mobilise more domestic revenue was considered more difficult given public perceptions of corruption.

Another Namibia respondent mentioned that influencing government is easiest when there is a personal connection that can be made use of, or in cases where the minister knows you or your institution and is sympathetic to its objectives. They had also had some success with working with Parliament to hold the executive to account.

6.2 DISSEMINATION

One respondent in Guatemala attributed their dissemination success to having a good communication policy for communicating their findings, good teamwork, and using plain language. The respondent noted that the success of a policy like their Open Budget Initiative is very vulnerable to the ups and downs of politicians, because it requires sustained interaction with

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government officials for it to have impact. One respondent noted that the Open Budget Initiative could be a good forum for presenting the results of a fiscal incidence study.

The respondent from Dialogos also noted that they were starting a public policy innovation lab, as they felt that it was important to collaborate more with policymakers to assist with finding solutions, and not just provide the data and corresponding analysis.

Send Ghana appears to have a high level of success in achieving impact with their reports and findings. They have one arm of the organisation focussed solely on dissemination. After finishing a research report, they generate policy briefs to summarise the findings and share it with the relevant institution or agency, including the private sector, if they are affected.

They engage with other institutions and disseminate information through a multitude of different mechanisms, depending on the institution type and the sector.

Government: They send policy briefs directly to the government accompanied with official written letters requesting face-to-face engagement on particular topics. Nowadays they may also accompany the official letter with an email. They sometimes invite other CSOs to join those government engagements. They believe that their work is being used by policymakers as line ministries will sometimes request reports from them, so that they can follow up when going on monitoring visits. The Send Ghana respondents corroborated the other respondents' experience that the government will sometimes respond less willingly if the evidence is not in their favour. They accept, however, that different institutions will see things from different angles, and try to focus on ensuring that they are working with the same set of facts as the government.

CSOs: Send Ghana appear to be committed to strong collaboration with other CSOs in the sectors that they work. They often share information with other CSOs via email, and they have a Whatsapp group for CSOs that work on the budget. When beginning a new project they will often share the concept or proposal with others and give them the opportunity to work with them in developing the tools, and to validate their findings before beginning the dissemination and dialoguing process.

Public: For more general dissemination to the public they use the media, Twitter, facebook and their website.

In Namibia the respondents noted the importance of translating research into vernacular languages for the purposes of dissemination. They suggested that the research needed to be able to explain the work and to show how it is relevant to the public, and that in each region it needs to be situated within the regional context. They also recommended that it was important for international researchers to have the right person on board who speaks the right language, and has the experience and skills to connect with the public.

6.3 THE BUDGET CYCLE

In all countries the informants suggested that the timing of the budget cycle was important for uptake of research findings by policymakers. It seemed that policymakers would be most open to engaging around the budget outside of the budget cycle, when they were less busy, and preferably just prior to the budget formulation phase. It was mentioned that the public would be most likely to engage with research findings during the weeks when the budget was tabled or approved.

This was particularly strictly adhered to in Ghana, where the MFEP issues a moratorium on projects during the budget formulation stage, and announces through a notice published in the government newspaper when it is open for public submissions, usually around April. In Namibia, the Minister of Finance has started holding a group zoom call with 20-25 think tanks and civil society organisations, and has verbally informed them that they would like submissions to be made in June and early July, if they are to be considered. In Guatemala no mention was made of a public submissions window, however, it was mentioned that if the public are to take notice of the research findings it is best to release them at a time which coincides with either the week in which the budget is tabled in parliament, or the week that the budget is approved.

Send Ghana has an annual calendar that they follow for their budget advocacy work. In June and July the government holds the "media budget", during which outside institutions are allowed to sit in on the budget deliberations. In preparation for that, Send Ghana will begin gathering inputs from citizens in April, May and June. They will submit recommendations to each line ministry, as well as a combined submission to the MFEP. Around October, the government also engages in stakeholder consultation with the outside institutions around the budget prior to the submission to parliament. Once the budget has been submitted, they then focus on analysing the gaps and coming up with recommendations in time for Parliament to use it to inform their discussions.

The respondent from CIEN noted that government engagement would be narrower if undertaken around the time that the annual budget was being presented for discussion (September, November). He felt at this point that policymakers are not open to engagement around deep fiscal reforms, as they are focussed on specific questions of where to increase or decrease the amounts of expenditure. The respondent from ASIES felt that after reporting on budget execution would be the best time to present analysis of the budget.

The IPPR in Namibia mentioned that they plan to start their budget advocacy work and engagements with policymakers with the government in June or July, with follow-up meetings until November, before the Christmas break, and only picking things up again in January.

6.4 TRAINING

In Guatemala many respondents mentioned the need for training. The respondent from VIRP mentioned that there are few personnel in research centres that know how to conduct impact analysis and fiscal incidence assessments - partly because they don't have the resources to train, but that building the technical capabilities and sharing experiences on how such an analysis can be done would be useful in the long-term for influencing research uptake. He suggested that the URL would be a good, neutral space for such an activity. The CIEN respondent agreed that the university would be a good place to build skills which would remain in the long-term, suggesting that training of policymakers should be limited to the capacity to understand research but not to implement it, given the high turnover and corresponding loss of knowledge. The ASIES respondent also noted the need for training.

7. RESEARCH-IN-USE COUNTRY STRATEGIES

The information discussed so far has some useful implications for how we might choose to work in each of the countries we have discussed here.

7.1 GHANA

In Ghana the skills exist to conduct fiscal incidence analysis within the universities, and multiple assessments have already been conducted. Future work in this area then could focus on:

- Engaging with policymakers and CSOs up front to generate demand and determine the policy relevant questions the model could answer
- Supporting local researchers to access data more easily
- Training local CSOs to interpret findings
- Funding CSOs to disseminate the findings to the public in plain language
- Funding CSOs to engage with government line ministries and the Ministry of Finance prior to, and during, the budget formulation to advocate for the relevant equity issues

7.2 GUATEMALA

In Guatemala, it appears that the skills exist within the various think-tanks to conduct fiscal incidence, but the funding is lacking as well as a united front to give a sense of objectivity and credibility to the policy recommendations. During the workshop participants also mentioned the lack of an objective research culture in Guatemala, and a lack of humility within the government. Some useful gaps that a donor might fill here would be to fund the work as part of a multi-year project, and to include as part of the project proposal:

- Engaging with government prior to the project's initiation to build demand and establish a trusting and open working relationship
- Establishing a project scope to ensure that the modeling responds to current policy design needs
- Establishing an inter-institutional oversight group composed of all relevant and interested think-tanks (possibly brought together by the donor if they have greater convening power) to guide and validate the methodology and results, and the conclusions that come out of the analysis, with the objective of finding a common set of policy recommendations based on the findings
- Allocating one or two technical people to shadow the project from the Ministry of Finance to build credibility and trust in the quality of the model and the assumptions used in the analysis

- Training of journalists on how to report on the findings
- Developing a clear social media strategy that uses simple non-economic language

7.3 NAMIBIA

In Namibia our mapping did not uncover much fiscal incidence work being done by local researchers. The most sustainable intervention that a donor might do then, is:

- Convening a group of all the actors in the fiscal policy sector to identify the most appropriate place for these skills to sit, where they are likely to remain in the long-term,
- Conducting a rigorous application process where researchers working on fiscal policy, inequality or poverty have to apply and a few individuals are chosen to become research fellows in this area,
- Delivering a training programme to the fellows to build a theoretical understanding of the methodology and findings of the previous Namibian CEQ,
- Mentoring the fellows to update the existing CEQ model with new data, and to run a set of policy-relevant simulations for government,
- Training policymakers, journalists, and CSOs on interpreting the results of the CEQ analysis, and which simultaneously builds demand for the results,
- Convening the fiscal policy evidence ecosystem to discuss the assessment results and come up with a set of policy recommendations,
- Funding CSOs and journalists to advocate for the recommendations

Photo: GDN

8. CONCLUSIONS

The tool introduced in this report is designed to support researchers to assess ways of strengthening demand for, supply of, and use of evidence, on the equity impacts of fiscal policy, budgeting processes and development planning. We piloted the tool in three countries, namely Ghana, Guatemala and Namibia, and we report the findings here. Our interviewing style and strategy improved as the research progressed.

The objectives of the tool are to achieve a:

i. preliminary "mapping" of local institutions and their role in research production, research use and research dissemination
ii. a mapping of the budget cycle and its impact on research activities and collaboration
iii. a discussion of the challenges that researchers faced in terms of access to data, funding and their perceived freedom to openly criticise the government
iv. a summary of the ways that institutions effectively collaborate, disseminate, and influence research through stakeholder engagement

All the countries had organisations that could be broadly classified into government institutions, higher education institutions, think-tanks, CSOs, IOs and media. Our samples were not designed to be representative, nor comparable across countries, and this should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Rather we aimed to get enough information to be able to generate a research-in-use strategy for each country. Nonetheless in the future we would try to ensure a variety of different institutional types and greater gender balance in all countries (we had a good balance in two out of the three countries).

The broad strokes of a country strategy was then generated which attempted to take into account the findings from the previous sections, pay attention to the existing capacity in the evidence system and the unique strengths and challenges of each country's context; avoid crowding-out local researchers and provide them with opportunities within the existing system to build capacity and achieve greater impact; and allow policymakers to shape the project scope and focus to ensure relevance.

Findings

We found that there were similarities and also strong differences in the evidence eco-system in each country, for example:

Collaboration

Engagement within institutional types (i.e. between different CSOs) in Ghana and Namibia seemed to happen fairly regularly. This was the case in Guatemala where engagement between think-tanks was fairly minimal, and seemed particularly strong in Ghana. However in Ghana there was perceived to be a gap in the amount of collaboration between different institutional types (e.g. academics and civil society organisations).

The type of collaboration varied substantially from place to place. In Ghana collaboration amongst CSOs could go so far as brainstorming project methodologies together, and in Namibia the collaboration included sharing materials for other institutions to train with, and engagement with stakeholders around findings. In Guatemala, the collaboration looked like coalition building between research and advocacy organisations and the media, while the traditional think-tanks collaborated very little, due to their strong polarisation.

The need for coalition building came through strongly in the case of Guatemala in particular. The respondents noted the need for donors to build coalitions so as not to compete for scarce attention from policymakers, as well as the need for a coalition of diverse institutions on fiscal reform (academics, IOs, policymakers) to build awareness and demand for deep fiscal reforms across different political ideologies.

Data: All countries had a right to information act in place, and in Namibia access to survey data was not seen as a challenge. In Ghana, data was frequently charged for, and difficult for local organisations to access, while in Guatemala data was mostly readily available, with some notable exceptions.

Funding: The short-term nature of funding was considered an issue in all countries, preventing more sustained advocacy efforts in important areas, and only one respondent seemed to have found a way to access long-term funders that were willing to fund the growth of the organisation itself.

Freedom to criticise: The government's unwillingness to be criticised was an issue in all countries, although to differing degrees. In Guatemala there could be consequences for criticising the government, including losing funding and operating licenses, whereas in Namibia these consequences were more social – public criticism, lack of funding, or fewer opportunities for career advancement. In Ghana respondents noted an improvement in the government's willingness to engage around areas of poor performance.

Importance of dissemination: The respondents' explanation of their research uptake successes clearly demonstrates how much work proper dissemination efforts take, particularly if institutions undertake to reach marginalised regions and groups, and how valuable local institutions' networks and experience with stakeholder engagement practices are for achieving impact.

Strategic focus: The findings suggest that in Ghana an important strategic focus is access to data for local researchers, and on building the linkages between academics, CSOs and policymakers. In Guatemala the strategic focus was on generating a common position amongst the different think-tanks in the space, generating demand for research within the government, building a research culture within universities, and reducing the ideological nature of research conclusions. In Namibia, generating long-term capacity for research production is needed, as well as generating the space for researchers to operate independently from government, and building demand for research within government.

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APPENDIX 1:
Preliminary mapping of the local research ecosystem in Namibia, Guatemala and Ghana

Refer to page numbers 19-23

APPENDIX 2:
FIA Organisational Mapping Tool, Version May 18, 2022

A2.1 CONTEXT

GDN's Fiscal Policy and Development Programme (FPD) has partnered with the German Technical Development Cooperation (GIZ) to deliver fiscal policy equity analysis via the "Enhanced Equity Budgeting Tool" (EBT+[10]) in Ghana, Guatemala and Namibia.

The Research-in-use (RIU) component of the FPD focuses on strengthening demand for, supply of, and use of evidence on the equity impacts of fiscal policy, budgeting processes and development planning.[11] RIU will support the GIZ-GDN EBT+ project by gathering primary evidence on, and formulating a conceptual, organisational map or guide to, the existing (and possibly still nascent) eco-system involved in Fiscal Incidence Analysis (FIA). We will be taking into account organisations working on research production, use, and dissemination, although not all types of organisations will be present or visible in every country setting.

The first stage of the mapping exercise should identify who those actors are, in which institutions they are located, which part of the ecosystem they belong to, and their working connections and relationships with other individuals and institutions in other parts of the ecosystem. It will also aim to very broadly understand their capacity and motivation and the opportunities and challenges that they face from the country context. This mapping will proceed flexibly in order that individuals and organizations who are only adjacent or indirectly-connected to this ecosystem can be identified and explicitly included.

The second stage of this mapping - which may not be achievable in every country context – will query individuals and organizations to more precisely understand their capacity to perform a set of pre-determined activities required for FIA research production, use or dissemination. From this more specific and precise exercise we will understand the potential for embedding the work within local institutions, and what capacities would need to be built to do so successfully.

The RIU component can also learn from the EBT+ project in two ways:
1. By making use of the convening power of the EBT+ project to issue open calls which may uncover organisations previously unidentified, and
2. By observing the research use outcomes of the project, if any, and learning from them.

10 The EBT+ project component is the technical arm of the Fiscal Policy and Development programme, and focuses on improving public policies (in the above-mentioned countries) in support of equity goals by formulating holistic recommendations and delivering current policy-relevant analysis and advice.

11 Note that evidence comes in a variety of forms including evaluations, research, traditional/indigenous knowledge, research synthesis, citizen evidence (such as surveys of public opinion) and administrative data (Pabari & Goldman, 2020).

This information will be analysed and used to generate a document which

i. describes the existing ecosystem,
ii. synthesises any learnings on barriers to research-use, and
iii. notes any opportunities for aligning with, expanding, or coordinating the existing ecosystem which may benefit future work programmes aiming to support decision-makers through the production of research evidence.[12]

The FIA Organisational Mapping Tool (FIA-OMT) described here is the data collection instrument the FPDP will use to undertake this mapping.

A2.2 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

To structure the way we conceptualise the tool we work with two frameworks. The first is the framework used in the Doing Research Assessments (DRA), which aims to understand, map and assess research systems. The second is a framework for understanding behaviour (the COM-B system).

A2.2.1 The Doing Research Assessment framework

In this FIA Organisation Mapping Tool, we are drawing from one of the steps of The Doing Research Assessments programme, which is a Mapping of Research Actors which aims to "identify and characterize the importance of the different groups of actors and the nature of the relations between them, and identify the main players within each group."

The questions asked in the DRA framework have been taken into account in designing this FIA Organisation Mapping Tool, namely:

- "Who is responsible for research leadership and how does this contribute to the autonomy of research organizations and to their capacity to produce and diffuse research?
- What are the different types of actors producing social science research (in all its different forms) and how do they work with each other? What is the place of public universities in the research system?
- Are there any research networks for sharing information, discussing findings, facilitating exchanges between researchers and peer review?
- What are the incentives for researchers to publish and how do they affect promotion and career advancement?" (GDN, 2017)

Note that the DRA mapping is directed at a macro-level while our mapping, given its focus on one particular research niche, may be able to gather more of the micro details.

A2.2.2 The Capability, Opportunity and Motivation-Behaviour system

The COM-B system, developed by Mitchie et al. (2011) has three components: capability, motivation and opportunity (Mitchie et al. 2011). In applying this to the FIA country context, we will be documenting:

12 The Research-in-Use concept note lays out the importance of this work component, and a conceptual framework which we draw on in order to structure our work in this area.

i. The various roles that an organisation plays (or could potentially play) within the FIA context,
ii. Their motivation for working on FIA
iii. Existing or potential opportunities (e.g. regular forums, ad-hoc trainings) for interacting amongst each other

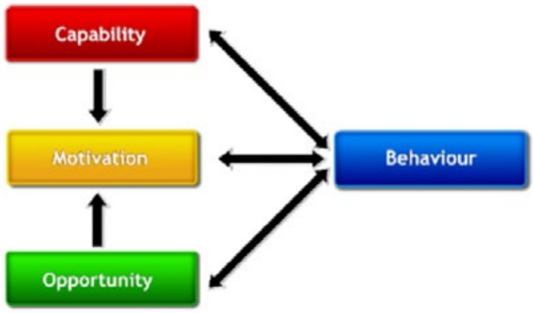

Figure 1: The COM-B system

A2.3 PROCESS

The data-collection process in country may draw from the following data collection options, namely:

i. Key informant interviews with 2-3 individuals with a strong understanding of the country-political context
ii. Responses from organisations that respond to an open-call to attend workshops or seminars (the latter may have objectives such as introducing the EBT+ work, training organisations on how to implement the work, or communicating results)

Other effective mapping options may emerge in the course of the EBT+ work.

A2.4 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

A2.4.1 Identification of all institutions

- Which institutions are currently working on production, use and dissemination of FIA research and are very visible and trusted in the space by organisations with decision-making power (e.g. government and donors)?
- Which institutions may have a role to play but are less trusted by donors or government, or less known?
- Which institutions have capacity to be undertaking elements of the production, use and dissemination of FIA, but are not currently?

Post-interview analysis: Classify each institution by type (is this institution a public or private higher education institution, a government and funding agency, industry (including for-profit think-tanks or consultancies) or civil society organisation (including NGOs, opinion leaders, non-profit think-tanks, media)? Provide a different colour for each type of organisation on the map.

A2.4.2 Capacity

- For each institution currently working in the FIA context: what roles are they currently playing? (List all, e.g. production of research, diffusion of research, use of research?)
- For each institution not currently working in the FIA context: what roles could they be playing? (List all, e.g. production of research, diffusion of research, use of research?)
- Which of these institutions are responsible for leadership of any kind in the FIA context? (Some prompts for the definition of leadership might be organises events, determines access to journals, controls use of funding)?

Post-interview analysis: Sum up each of the roles and each of the leadership roles mentioned for each organisation to determine their capacity score.

A2.4.3 Motivation

- For each institution currently working in the FIA context: what incentivises them to be in the FIA space (e.g. donor funding, influencing decision-makers, career prospects, others)?
- For each institution not currently working in the FIA context: what barriers to entry might be preventing them from entering into the space? (e.g. small organisational size, limited skillset, confidence, power relationships, funding, perceptions, others)

Post-interview analysis: Sum up each of the incentives mentioned as a positive score, and each of the barriers as a negative score.

A2.4.4 Opportunities

- Are there any research networks, events, or forums for sharing information, discussing findings, facilitating exchanges between organisations? Please name and describe each of these briefly. (List all, and write down a description of each of the forums).
- Of the institutions identified, which of these participate in each of the above-mentioned interaction spaces?

Post-interview analysis: Sum up the number of exchanges for each institution as an opportunity score.

A2.5 VALIDATION OF RESULTS

In order to validate the data and analysis, we propose to share the results of the post-interview analysis in a small focus group of not more than 6, including the members of the key informant interviews and 2-3 additional participants. We will then use their reactions and comments to expand, nuance or adjust the analysis.

A2.6 DOCUMENTATION

From the information gathered during the key informant interviews we will produce a country RIU document which will include the following elements:

- A qualitative description of the current individual and organisational elements of the CoP (should it exist at all) and their capacities, opportunities for interaction (i.e. forums, events and trainings) and motivation[13]
- A map which places organisations on a three-dimensional scale with capacity along the y-axis, opportunity along the x-axis, and the size of the bubble determined by level of motivation
- Any opportunities for expanding and strengthening the CoP
- Whether there is any interest or need for being part of a more formalised CoP (i.e. willingness to be kept abreast of new developments or develop closer linkages) and if so, on what platform

13 We can go as far as checking if people are interested in having regular updates through specific options: newsletters/google groups/networking events. If in a country we find there is a clear motivation and opportunity, and convergence on one platform, we might test it. Else, we will share with the donor what we learned.

A2.7 CAPACITY STOCKTAKE TOOL

One means of increasing research uptake would be the handing over of the implementation or updating of the EBT+ tool to HEIs, think tanks, or Government ministries to use according to their timelines and specific needs. We may therefore wish to go a step deeper in understanding which institutions (if any) have the organisational potential to do this work. We may also want to assess whether these organisations may have the skills to use the research and disseminate the information appropriately. A simple pre-training questionnaire, sent to all those that attend EBT+ introduction workshops or seminars, could allow us to assess capacity for future EBT+ research evidence production, by asking about expertise in certain required areas.

The table below summarises the types of skills and competencies required by research activity, where research activities are divided into Research production (P), Research Uptake (U) and Research Dissemination (D). A score of 1 indicates that the skill is essential, a score of 2 indicates that it is useful, and a score of 3 individuals that it provides context. A hyphen indicates that the skill is not at all beneficial to the success of a particular activity.

SKILL OR COMPETENCY DESCRIPTION	RESEARCH ACTIVITY		
	PROD	USE	DISS
a. Measurements/indicators of poverty and inequality	1	1	1
b. Distributional analysis	1	1	1
c. Budgetary and fiscal policy including Government Finance Statistics	1	2	2
d. Key indicators of national economic activity (e.g. GDP, GNI, CPI)	1	2	2
e. Working with administrative programme data (e.g. Education / Health Information Management Systems)	1	2	3
f. Analysing administrative programme data in Excel	1	3	3
g. Working with survey data using Stata	1	3	-
h. Understand policy needs and promote demand for evidence	2	1	1
i. Strong relationships	2	1	1
j. Facilitate effective multi-stakeholder processes	-	1	2
k. Synthesise and communicate information appropriately	3	-	1

Table 1: Skill or competency priority by research activity

Notes: Research activities are divided into Research production (P), Research Uptake (U) and Research Dissemination (D). 1 = Required, 2 = Useful, 3 = Provides context, - = Not useful.

From this capacity assessment, we could suggest whether specific training and education interventions would be enough to generate the organisational capacity to achieve this, and what kind.

A2 REFERENCES

GDN. 2017. Doing Research Assessments: Understanding Research Systems in Developing Countries. Global Development Network Programme Document.

Mitchie, S., van Stralen, M., West, R. The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. Implementation Science 2011, 6:42.

Pabari, M, and Goldman, I. 2020. Using Evidence in Practice: Lessons from Africa. CLEAR-AA Policy Brief.

APPENDIX 3:
Interview script

Full name:

Position:

Organization:

Date:

Interview start time:

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon! Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us. My name is Maya, and this is Francesco, my colleague and supervisor. I am going to be asking most of the questions today, although Francesco may jump in in the middle or at the end with a few additional questions that arise for him during the interview.

We are working on a project which aims to improve the budgeting process in various ways including through introducing evidence around who bears the benefits and burdens of taxes and social spending on social protection, health and education. We will refer to this as Fiscal Incidence Analysis.

We want to get a better understanding of the context that we are working in. In particular, we would like to understand who is already working on these topics, or who might be interested to work on them if they knew more about it. We also want to understand how and where these people and organisations currently meet or communicate with each other. We are interested in people, organisations and networks producing research on these topics (research producers), but also, those who are using the information (research users), and those who are sharing information with others and communicating it widely (research dissemination).

We will be using the information you give us to understand whether there are important ways in which GDN can support people, organisations and networks working with FIA to produce, use or disseminate the analysis more effectively. If there are, we will see if there are donors who would be willing to fund the work.

Any information which comes out of these interviews will be shared with you for validation and further comment, to be sure that we are interpreting you correctly and we will also share the link to the interview with you should you want it.

Do we have your permission to record the interview?

Do you have any questions for us, before we get started?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Perhaps to start off, we could begin by asking you to give us some background by describing how the annual process of fiscal policy-making happens in [Country name]?
2. Which are the main institutions working on taxes and social spending? What type of institution is this? What is their current role and what is their objective?
3. Which of the institutions that you mentioned are responsible for leadership of any kind in the context? [We mean leadership in a very broad sense – they might organise events, determine access to journals, control use of funding, gather people informally, or be very visible on social media to name a few examples.]
4. Are there any research networks, events, or forums for sharing information, discussing findings, facilitating exchanges between these organisations? Who participates?
5. Do you think there is any need or value to be added from a more formalised system of sharing information? What sort of mechanism might be most useful? (Some prompts if nothing comes to mind: newsletters/google groups/networking events).

Thank you so much for your time! I have some final questions:

6. Who, in your opinion, could be a useful addition to the existing system of organisations working in this area (even if it might seem a little unusual or surprising)? What role would they play and what might motivate them to do so?
7. What barriers to entry might be preventing these organisations from entering into the space? (Some response options might be: small organisational size, limited skillset, confidence, power relationships, funding, perceptions, others)?
8. Are there particular individuals that you suggest we speak with, given our interest in understanding the system better?
9. In case I have a few follow-up questions would you be willing for me to send you them by email or, if you prefer, schedule a brief follow-up interview?
10. Would you be interested in coming together with a few other researchers to hear the preliminary results of the interviews, and share your thinking together with the group?

END.

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