

The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Pro-Poor Local Government Budget Processes A case of Dokolo District.

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Background: This study focused on the “Role of Civil Society Organizations in Pro-Poor Local Government Budget “. A case study of Dokolo District. The main purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which civil society organizations promote pro-poor local government budget processes. The specific objectives of the study were; to examine the extent to which Civil Society Organizations contribute to local government revenue enhancement, to examine the extent to which Civil Society Organizations influence the enactment of pro-poor local government budget allocations/priorities, to examine the extent to which Civil Society Organizations promote pro-poor implementation of enacted local government budgets and to examine the extent to which Civil Society Organizations prevent leakages to local government budget resources.

Methods: The study used descriptive and correlational design, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population of the study included officials of 10 civil society organizations and both technical and political leaders of 6 local governments in Dokolo district. The sample size of the study was 89 respondents determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). The target respondents included both male and females.

Findings: The findings of the study was as follow: that civil society organizations contribute to local government revenue enhancement, building the capacity of local governments in revenue mobilization, providing off-budget support to local governments: that civil society organizations promote pro-poor local government budget allocations through forums such as budget conferences and budget dialogues; that civil society organizations influence local government to implement their budgets in ways that serve the best interests of the poor and/or the underprivileged and/or their priorities; by pressurizing local government to implement pro-poor priorities that local governments would otherwise not implement and by speeding up or reducing delay in the implementation of pro-poor priorities or projects; and that civil society organizations promote local government budgets by preventing leakages to pro-poor local government resources by among others checking shoddy work in pro-poor projects, public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) to check loss of funds meant for pro-poor projects.

Recommendations: In lights of the findings this study therefore recommended as follows: that local governments should leverage civil society organizations as an important resource in enhancing their revenue; that local governments should involve civil society organizations in all phases of the budget circle; that local governments should embrace the use of social accountability forums and tools such as barazas, public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) and social movements for checking local government budget resources leakages to enhance decentralized service delivery. Based on what remains unknown, this study suggests future research on the role of social accountability in fighting poverty.

Key words: Civil Society, Organizations, Pro-Poor, Local Government, Budget.