

PROJECT DETAILS

Country(ies):	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Duration:	Jan 2006-Dec 2011
Budget:	Euro €1,380,000.00
Funder:	Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
Partner(s):	Member Parliaments
Status:	Active

About the Parliamentary Centre

The Parliamentary Centre is a Canadian not-for-profit, non-partisan organization that supports parliaments around the world. Our assessment, strategic planning and training programs, combined with research products and networking channels, help legislatures measure their performance, build capacity, tackle key issues and promote mutual learning.

In short - we help legislatures better serve their people.

About the Project

The African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network (APRN) was created in 2003 in response to demands by African parliamentarians for a network that would bring together Members of Parliament from all over Africa interested in central issues such as poverty reduction to discuss and share best practices, lessons-learned and experiences in that area; as well as to improve their poverty monitoring capacity

and increase their policy-making knowledge. APRN was fully implemented in 2004 and has since been growing in membership with 15 countries involved actively in program activities. These are: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. African MPs involved in committees or parliamentary networks with responsibilities for poverty reduction issues are the core group at the heart of APRN. The network also involves on a regular basis parliamentary staff that constitute the institutional memory of parliaments and play a key role in assisting parliamentarians in their work.

Accomplishments

After nearly six successful years of working with Parliamentarians from 15 countries across Africa, some of the project's key accomplishments include:

- Enhanced capacity of MPs in reviewing their countries' budgets with particular focus on pro-poor including gender sensitive budgeting;
- Increased ability of MPs to actively engage in informed budget debates and taking initiatives in promoting pro-poor issues such as micro-credit programs as in the case of the National Assembly of Benin;

- A significant number of APRN alumnae have risen to positions of prominence within their governments. For instance, the former Minister of Women and Children Affairs in Ghana, now in charge of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, was a beneficiary of APRN's budget oversight trainings and is currently at the forefront of promoting gender sensitive budgeting in the country. The Honourable Anne Makinda, former Chair of the APRN Executive Committee, has recently been elected Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania;
- As a result of the APRN Support Initiative, African MPs have been really inspired and in recent years have become more knowledgeable in budget legislation which in turn renders them more proactive in enhancing the scope of their role in the national budget. Kenyan MPs have revised their Standing Orders and MPs in Ghana are in the process of revising their Standing Orders.
- The development of a handbook and guidelines on Poverty Reduction and the Budget Process for MPs and parliamentary staff.



Participants from Botswana, Ghana and Zambia discuss and share experiences on pro-poor budgeting during a group discussion.

Testimonials

Here follows some quotes made by participants during the evaluations of either APRN trainings or the project's mid-term valuation:

- “The various legal provisions from different countries have helped me understand where our own budgetary process falls short and how the process can be improved. I have also benefited from the experiences of staff of other parliaments on how to enhance my role, in relation to the training program.”
- “My expectations have been met, through discussions and group work. I am able to identify the aspirations of the poor when drafting and scrutinizing a budget. I am able to identify the loopholes of a given budget. Thanks a lot for the workshop!”
- “It now remains upon me to help parliamentarians fully understand the intricacies involved in the budget formulation, implementation and evaluation so that the level of parliamentarians involvement is made clear and effective. In so doing this will increase the level of participation and meaningful contribution of parliamentarians and staff of parliament”.
- “I have understood the budget process very well and the pro-poor budgeting which I did not know has a great impact on me. The ICT aspect was very interesting and practical. The mail merging that I learnt is going to help me a lot in my work schedule. The group work was very effective and we shared a lot of ideas. I have gained more knowledge in preparing my reports on the annual budget estimates. Moreover, I have made an international network of friends for other parliaments.”