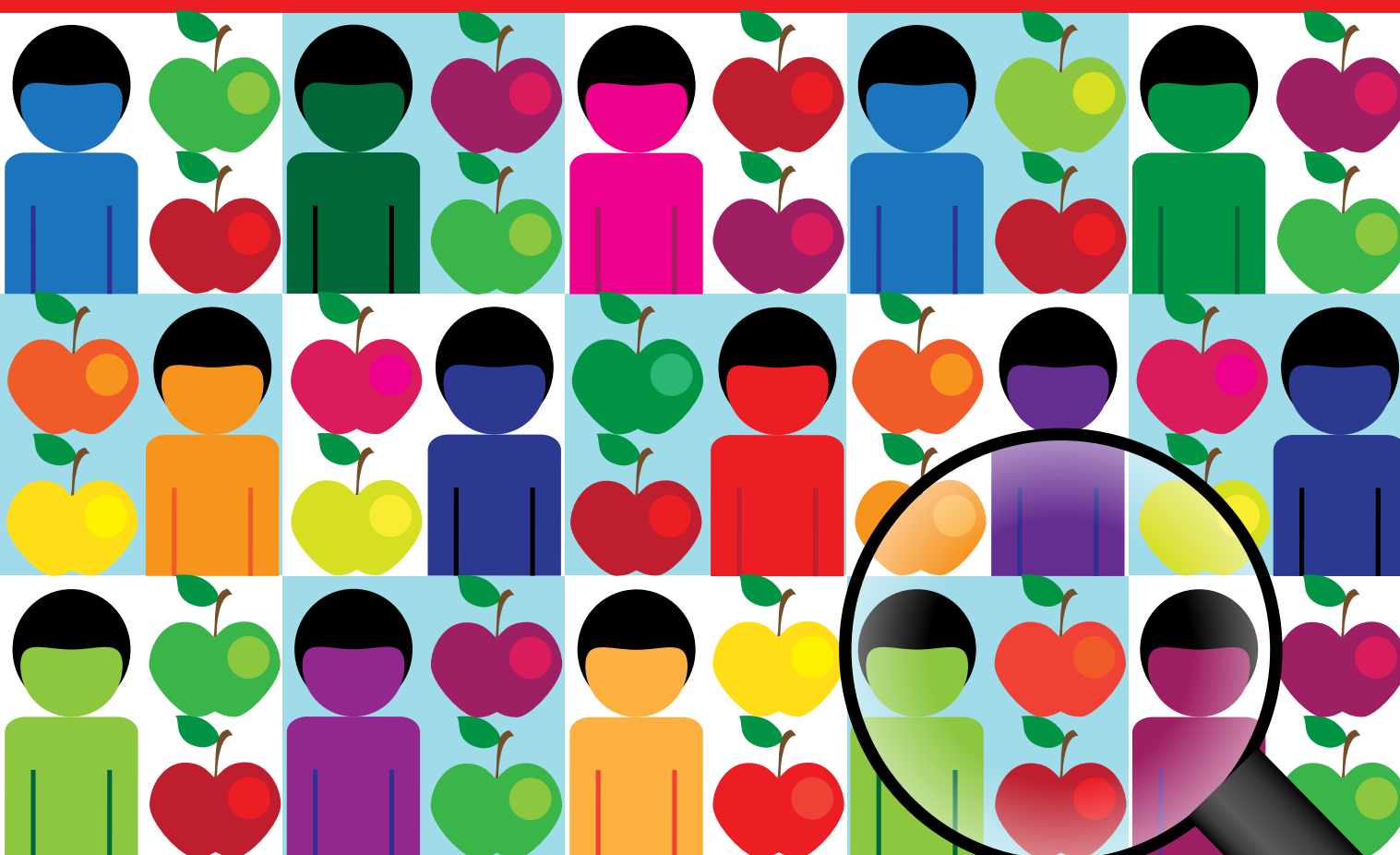




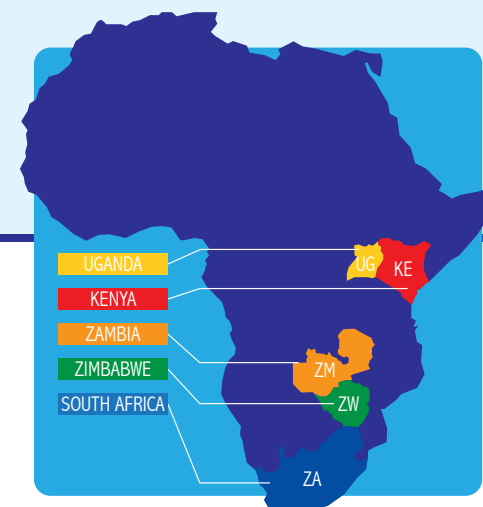


Budget Transparency and Child Nutrition



RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM

-  KENYA
-  SOUTH AFRICA
-  UGANDA
-  ZAMBIA & ZIMBABWE



About the AT4HR

The Accountability & Transparency for Human Rights (AT4HR) Foundation was formed in 2011 to advance children's rights by promoting transparency, accountability and participation. The AT4HR conceptualised and led the Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition project and was responsible for developing the methodology, managing the research and peer review processes, as well as analysing and reporting on the findings.
www.AT4HR.org

Organisations involved in this study

- Accountability & Transparency for Human Rights
- International Budget Partnership (IBP)
- Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (CRGI) of Save the Children
- Children's Legal Action Network (CLAN) in Kenya
- Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) in South Africa
- Uganda Debt Network (UDN)
- University of Zambia, Department of Economics
- Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA)
- National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) in Zimbabwe

Please see the Acknowledgements section for more information on the roles the various organisations played in the study.

About this report

This is a joint publication of the AT4HR, IBP and Save the Children.
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Date of publication: April 2013.

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Anna Schnell & Erica Coetzee
Accountability & Transparency for Human Rights
April 2013

Acronyms used in this report

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AT4HR	Accountability & Transparency for Human Rights Foundation
BTCN	Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition (Project/Questionnaire)
CLAN	Children's Legal Action Network (in Kenya)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRGI	Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (of Save the Children)
IBP	International Budget Partnership
MDG4	Millennium Development Goal number 4 (The commitment by world leaders to reducing the mortality rate of children under 5 by a third by 2015).
NANGO	National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (in Zimbabwe)
OBI	Open Budget Initiative
PSAM	Public Service Accountability Monitor (in South Africa)
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
ZCEA	Zambia Civic Education Association

Icons used in this report



Policy & co-ordination



Budget planning



Actual spending



Implementation



Participation



Budget transparency



Planning for the future

Executive Summary

In order to track whether we are making progress in reducing child mortality, citizens and child rights monitors need access to information from their governments. This study set out to establish the degree of budget transparency in five African countries in relation to one critical issue: child nutrition. The aim was to identify important transparency gaps, so that we as civil society can advocate more precisely for the budget information we need to keep effective oversight.

Methodology

- A questionnaire on Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition (BTCN) was developed and used to conduct research in Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- It contained 34 questions asking after the public availability of different types of information pertaining to budgeting for child nutrition. It also had 11 questions about public participation in the government's decision-making about child nutrition.
- The research was applied to the national and sub-national level in each country.

Clarification of terms

Child nutrition interventions is a short-hand term for all government programmes, initiatives, services or projects that have the direct or indirect aim of improving children's nutritional status. In each country, five of the government's **child nutrition interventions** were assessed in terms of their budget transparency.

Budget transparency is defined, for the purposes of this study, as the public availability of information necessary for monitoring government programming and service delivery. The study considered budget information to be **publically available** when:

- The information could be accessed online; or
- The information could be found in a hard copy budget document in a public library or similar public resource centre; or

- The information could be requested (and was duly provided) from a government office; or
- The information was provided freely (or at a very low cost) within 2 weeks of a request for such information having been made via letter, email or telephone.

General (cross-country) findings

- The level of budget transparency in relation to child nutrition was found to be inadequate across the five countries. On average, less than half of the information that should ideally be publically available could be found at the national level and even less could be accessed at sub-national levels.
- The countries had higher levels of transparency when it came to information about policy and planning for child nutrition. Looking at the national level, the average cross-country score when it came to information about *planning* for child nutrition was **46** (out of an ideal 100).
- By comparison, the average cross-country score for transparency about the *implementation* of child nutrition interventions was **29** (out of an ideal of 100).
- This means that citizens who want to know what their governments are doing to combat child malnutrition have a much better chance of reading about their government's intentions and plans, than they do of being able to track whether and how those plans were put into practice.
- Generally speaking, access to expenditure information about child nutrition interventions was very poor. This was especially true of actual expenditure information, but even on the budget planning side there was vast room for improvement.
- The lowest scoring section in the questionnaire was the one concerned with public participation in governments' child nutrition decisions.



Key findings in Kenya

- Kenya had the highest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about government child nutrition interventions at both the national and sub-national levels.
- It had the second highest score for public participation in government decisions about child nutrition.
- Kenya fared well in providing access to information about the government's policies, planned expenditures and service delivery targets for improving child nutrition.
- Greater transparency is required in providing public access to more and better actual expenditure information on child nutrition, as well as reporting on actual results achieved and beneficiaries reached.



Key findings in South Africa

- South Africa had the second highest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about government child nutrition interventions at the national and sub-national levels.
- It had the highest score for public participation in government decisions about child nutrition at the national level.
- The government was most transparent in the areas of policy and planning for child nutrition and providing information about actual expenditures and service delivery targets.
- However, not enough adequately detailed information about planned spending on child nutrition could be found at either the national or sub-national levels. Greater transparency is also needed in monitoring implementation results and beneficiaries reached.



Key findings in Uganda

- Uganda had the second lowest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about child nutrition at the national level. It also had the second lowest score for public participation in decision-making around child nutrition at the national level.
- Access to budget information about the government's child nutrition interventions was generally very limited at the national level and almost non-existent at the sub-national level.
- The government was most transparent in the areas of policy and budget planning for child nutrition at the national level.
- Very little information existed in the public domain about the government's actual spending on child nutrition, service delivery targets or implementation results.
- Public participation in decision-making about the government's child nutrition interventions was vastly inadequate.



Key findings in Zambia

- Zambia had the lowest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about child nutrition at the national level. It also had the lowest score for public participation at the national level, but ranked third for public participation at the sub-national level.
- Zambia's best performance in the questionnaire was in the area of planned spending on child nutrition. It was also possible to find at least some policy information about the government's child nutrition interventions.
- Budget transparency levels were higher in Chingola district than in the other two districts surveyed.
- Much *more* and much *more detailed* information is needed about actual expenditures, service delivery targets, beneficiaries and the results of the government's child nutrition interventions at the national level and at district level in Zambia.



Key findings in Zimbabwe

- Zimbabwe had the third highest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about child nutrition interventions at both the national and sub-national levels.
- It also ranked third (together with Uganda) when it came to public participation in government decisions about child nutrition at the national level.
- There was a moderate level of transparency around policy and planning for child nutrition.
- Zimbabwe fared exceptionally well in providing public information about the intended beneficiaries of its child nutrition interventions, including the targeting of vulnerable children.
- However, it was not possible to identify and adequately track the government's planned expenditures on child nutrition. Greater transparency was also required in providing public access to more and better actual expenditure information, as well as reporting on implementation outcomes and beneficiaries reached.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations for Action

While the full report offers more comprehensive and country-specific points for advocacy, there are a number of cross-cutting findings that run through the entire report and can be seen to affect more than a single country. The following key issues stand out:



BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

- In general, citizens and child rights monitors need access much more detailed and robust information about their governments' child nutrition interventions, both at the national level and especially at sub-national levels – be it provincial, district, county or municipal.



POLICY & CO-ORDINATION

- Across most of the countries, more information is needed in the public domain about the geographical spread of children at risk of malnutrition.
- If governments are giving consideration to the obstacles children may face in accessing nutrition interventions, this should be made more explicit in budget documents.



BUDGET PLANNING

- More information is required about planned spending on child nutrition over more budget years, including narratives to explain and contextualise budget figures.



ACTUAL SPENDING

- The most critical transparency gaps are, without doubt, in the areas of actual expenditures on child nutrition, actual service delivery data and comparisons between planned and actual spending and performance.

- In four out of five countries, audit reports need to be made public much sooner after spending has taken place.



IMPLEMENTATION

- The public should be able to see comparisons between estimated beneficiaries of child nutrition interventions and actual outcomes.
- More and better information is needed on whether and to what extent obstacles in the way of children's access to child nutrition interventions have been overcome.



PARTICIPATION

- All five countries need more and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) in government's decision-making about key interventions that aim to realise children's rights.

Introduction

Whether a child lives or dies: this is a terrifying, vital question for millions of parents and families in countless circumstances around the world. It is a question that moves mountains and cuts to the bone – it defies and outstrips the words and figures in research reports. Whether a child lives or dies is something humankind understands as essential. It is essential at the personal level: to the child him or herself, to the individual people who know and love that child. But it is also essential at the collective level. We share a fundamental compact as communities, as societies, as citizens, to protect our children's lives, to see our children grow into adulthood.

State obligations to reduce child mortality

World leaders committed themselves to reducing the mortality rate of children under 5 by a third by 2015. This is known as the Millennium Development Goal number 4 (MDG4). They have also committed to international and regional treaties, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), which recognise the child's right to survival and development. Whether a child lives or dies is therefore clearly also a government issue.

Child mortality is affected by the kinds of health care and basic services that governments provide to their citizens. When governments commit themselves to MDGs, rights treaties and other goals, they are promising to take reasonable steps

Article 6 of the CRC says that:

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 14 of the ACRWC states that:

Every child shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health. This includes the provision of nutritious food and safe drinking water; as well as adequate health care.

to achieve certain targets within agreed timeframes. Such commitments should be reflected in public policies, strategies, budgets and programmes. Government decision-makers, planners and service providers should be held to account when they fail to take the necessary actions to reduce child deaths and improve children's chances of survival.

The challenge that underlies this study

Child rights advocates and researchers have, for many years now, been monitoring what country governments are doing to improve the livelihoods of children. In many different parts of the world, civil society organisations try to track how public resources are being used (or not used) to deliver programs and services to children. Some also investigate how children are benefiting (or not benefiting) from government interventions and which are working better than others. One central hurdle that invariably obstructs their efforts is inadequate budget information. Poor access to useful information undermines public participation in government decision-making about child nutrition, including the participation of children themselves.

Those working in the arena of child rights monitoring often complain that:

- There is simply too little budget information in the public domain to really be able to exercise oversight over critical programs and services aimed at children.
- Government information is frequently inconsistent, irregular and unreliable.
- Budget information is made available so late that its usefulness is diminished.
- Government information about child-related programs is often captured and presented in ways that make it difficult to track particular interventions or target groups.
- Information about child-related programs is not detailed enough to enable effective monitoring.

In spite of repeated calls for more and better budget information to be made available by country governments, little significant progress has been made. The central challenge of this research project and report grew from the notion that we, as civil society actors need to:

- Be more precise in stating exactly which kinds of budget information (relating to children and the delivery of children's rights) it would be reasonable to expect governments to make available to the public;
- Establish more clearly exactly where the critical 'information gaps' are in different countries (and sub-national provinces, districts and so forth); and
- Ramp up efforts to advocate for specific kinds of budget information to be made available at defined intervals and/or by reasonable deadlines.

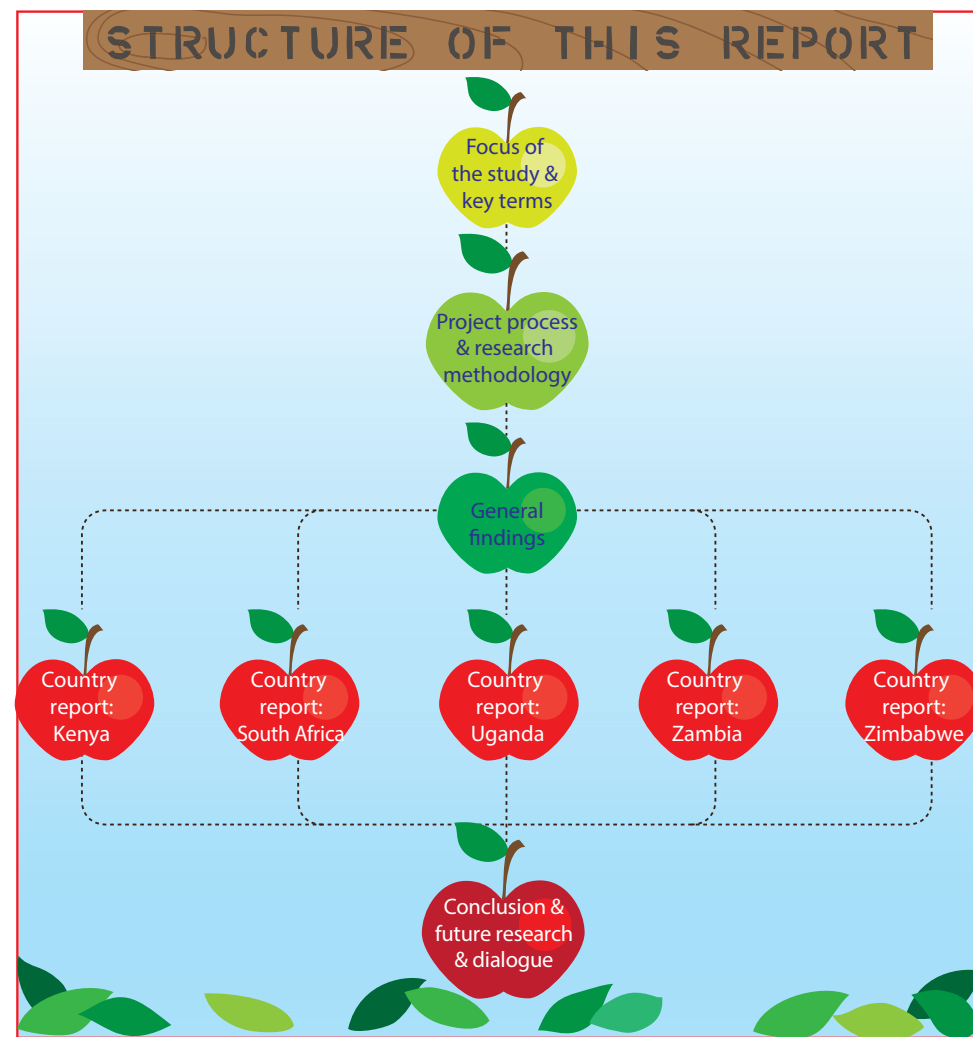
In essence, this research is prompted by the belief that civil society (and government) actors will be in a better position to monitor progress in realising children's rights if we know for sure what kinds of budget information we have, and can state clearly what kinds of budget information we need.

It would not have been feasible to tackle the challenge above all in one go. For the purposes of this pilot study, we chose one important children's issue and took a detailed look at the budget information needs and gaps that surround it in five African countries.

It should be noted that this project merely set out to uncover and record the present situation pertaining to budget transparency in the selected countries. It fell beyond the scope of study – and this report – to investigate *why* information was not available when it could not be accessed in the public domain, or to analyse the characteristics and root causes of poor and good transparency practices where they occur. Such further research would be of obvious value to inform the design of solutions and improvements in budget transparency in the countries involved.

The structure of this report

The next section of this report explains the focus of the study and clarifies some of the key terms used throughout the report, most importantly what we mean by “child nutrition interventions” and “budget transparency”. After that, a brief overview is given of the project process and research methodology, including a graphic synopsis of the BTCN questionnaire on page 16. The findings flowing from the research make up the bulk of the report. First the general findings cutting across all five countries are presented, followed by short reports on budget transparency and child nutrition in each of the countries. The conclusion draws attention to possible areas for future research and dialogue.



Research focus & definition of terms

This report investigates child nutrition and budget transparency in Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The continent of Africa has the highest rate of children dying before the age of five. It would therefore be useful to consider whether better access to budget information about child nutrition interventions in Africa can support more effective monitoring and service delivery.

Why focus on child nutrition?

This pilot study focuses on child nutrition as a key area affecting children's health in general and child mortality in particular. The choice of this focus was informed by a number of strategic and practical considerations. Firstly, child nutrition is clearly a critical issue. It plays a pivotal role in children's well-being and survival. When children die before their fifth birthdays, it is most often as a result of pneumonia, measles, diarrhoea, malaria, HIV/AIDS or complications during pregnancy, labour and soon after birth. Children who are malnourished are at far greater risk of dying from these causes because they are too weak to fight disease. This is exacerbated when the same children have inadequate access to health care, clean water and safe sanitation. If their parents also lack knowledge about preventative practices and danger signs, children's chances of survival are further compromised. Together, these factors make some children more likely to contract life-threatening diseases and medical conditions, and limit their chances to recover from them. (Save the Children UK, *A Life Free From Hunger: Tackling Child Malnutrition*, 2012).

Secondly, country governments around the world have publicly committed themselves to reducing child mortality. The MDG4, CRC and ACRWC are important examples of such commitments. This creates an expectation. We would expect these governments to have some kinds of programs and budgets in place to advance child nutrition and combat child malnutrition.

Thirdly, government interventions to advance child nutrition are likely to be reasonably easy to identify within government sectors, departments and budgets. This means that the identified programmes could more readily be scrutinised for the purposes of this pilot study.

It is worth emphasising, however, that budget transparency is just as crucial for monitoring other issues and sectors affecting children. This study, at least in part, hopes to contribute to a broader research agenda on budget transparency in relation to other children's rights.

Public budgets and child nutrition: what's the connection?

In order to improve children's nutrition levels and reduce child mortality, governments need to spend money. Making commitments to children on paper is easy. Turning those commitments into effective programs and services that bring about desired results – this is a more complex and demanding undertaking – and one which demands budget resources. It is reasonable to expect a government to use public resources fairly and wisely, and to prioritise those most in need when it makes resource decisions. Therefore, if citizens want to see what their governments are really doing to combat child malnutrition, an important place to look is in their country's budgets.

To uncover what information is available (and not available) in relation to child nutrition, this study places the spotlight specifically on government budget documents. It takes a broad view, however, of what to include under this label:

Budget documents refers to all the formal planning, communication and reporting mechanisms used by a government to present and disseminate information about its budgets and budgeting. It may include print publications, unpublished documents as well as online sources. Typically the most common types of budget documents produced by a government to this end would include a pre-budget statement, the executive's budget proposal, a popular version of the budget or citizens' budget, the enacted budget, in-year budget reports, a mid-term budget review, year-end reports and audit reports. Sector specific planning and reporting documents may also present budget information, such as strategic plans and annual reports.

To be clear, looking for budget information on child nutrition, was not limited to budgetary amounts. The research called for investigation on whether governments made all of the following kinds of information available in relation to their child nutrition programming:

- demographic data;
- policy information;
- revenue information;
- budgeted and actual expenditure figures;
- narrative discussions and explanations of quantitative data;
- performance indicators and service delivery targets;
- records of public participation; and
- public education media.

What do we mean by 'budget transparency'?

A country's level of budget transparency is reflected in the extent to which people in that country can access budget information. The International Budget Partnership (IBP) conducts a biennial survey that ranks countries in terms of their budget transparency in an Open Budget Index (see www.internationalbudget.org). Against the backdrop of this broader OBI study, this report investigates how budget transparency can be applied to a specific population sector (namely children) - and what it might look like when viewed through the prism of government programming for children's rights.

Transparency is a key element in democratic practice, and helps to ensure and enhance participation and accountability. In an ideal case, budget transparency requires more than the mere existence of information; the information should also be reliable, understandable, useful and timely. However, given the constraints of this pilot study, a narrow definition of 'budget transparency' was applied:

This study considered information as **publically available** when:

- The information could be accessed online; or
- The information could be found in a hard copy budget document in a public library or similar public resource centre; or
- The information could be requested (and was duly provided) from a government office; or
- The information was provided freely (or at a very low cost) within 2 weeks of a request for such information having been made via letter, email or telephone.

What do we mean by 'child nutrition interventions'?

This report uses the phrase 'child nutrition intervention' as a short-hand term to refer to any and all government programmes, initiatives, services and projects that have the direct or indirect aim of improving children's nutritional status. Here are some examples of diverse kinds of government interventions that could bring about benefits for child nutrition.

Examples of interventions that could advance child nutrition

- Income support/cash transfers targeted at children and/or vulnerable adults.
- Food transfers (targeted at poor families, households or/and communities).
- Support to small scale farmers, including subsidies or capacity-building.
- Food fortification.
- Providing meals to children at schools (school feeding programmes).
- Enhancing nutritional intake at early childhood development (ECD) facilities.
- Promotion of exclusive breast-feeding up to 6 months.
- Promotion of breast-feeding plus complementary feeding post 6 months.
- Vitamin A and Zinc supplementation for children (from 6 months of age).
- Improving the nutrient intake of breastfeeding mothers.
- Special care for children exposed to and infected with HIV.
- Growth monitoring of very young children.
- Food supplements for new mothers at risk of malnutrition and their children.
- Programmes providing social support for pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Providing insecticide-treated bed-nets in areas of high risk for malaria (as infection has a detrimental effect on children's nutritional intake).
- Strategies to prevent infectious diseases amongst children.
- De-worming of children aged 6 to 59 months.
- Access to clean water for children at risk of malnutrition and their families.
- Improving access to adequate sanitation facilities.
- Educating caregivers of children on basic hygiene practices to prevent infection.

Every country will have a different collection of strategies for combating child malnutrition. In addition, various government functions, for example the provision of sanitation services, can have a significant indirect impact on children's nutritional status, without having the overt purpose of combating child malnutrition.

Appendix A contains a brief summary of key considerations emerging from government strategies to improve child nutrition. However, it is important to note that the scope of this study did not include a review or assessment of the adequacy or effectiveness of the child nutrition interventions being implemented in the countries that formed part of the research. The aim was rather to uncover how much budget information regarding the selected government interventions could be accessed by the public.

Objectives & methodology

The primary research tool used in this study was the Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition Questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied in five African countries, namely Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Aim and objectives

The broad aim of the Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition study was to shed light on how transparent government budgeting is when it comes to one critical responsibility we have towards children: ensuring that they have enough nutrition to survive into adulthood. The specific objectives were to:

- Take a detailed look into transparency around government programming for child nutrition in five African countries, namely Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- In these five countries, assess and record how much and what kinds of information are publically available pertaining to government interventions aimed at advancing child nutrition.
- Use the findings to formulate recommendations for advocacy and to identify important areas for further research.

The BTCN project process

The project involved a number of stages over a 14 month period:

- **Development of a proposal:** It outlined the need for research on budget transparency in the child health sector at national and sub-national levels. AT4HR approached the IBP for funding and started discussions with the CGI of Save the Children.
- **Setting research parameters:** The scope of the project was further defined in consultation with experts on budget transparency and children's rights. The focus was set on child nutrition and five research countries were selected.
- **Formation of partnerships:** Agreements were formalised with researchers and resource persons in the five participating countries.
- **Questionnaire development:** A draft questionnaire was presented and workshopped with the researchers and Save the Children programme officers from the five countries. The questionnaire was then revised and distributed to the researchers.
- **Country-based research:** The rest of this section of the report explains how the researchers went about selecting child nutrition interventions in their countries and the geographical areas they would focus on. The questionnaire was then applied in each country.
- **Peer review:** The completed questionnaires were reviewed by two independent peer reviewers in each country. Discrepancies were reviewed by the AT4HR and final scores were decided on in consultation with the researchers.
- **Analysis of findings:** A workshop was held with all the researchers and program officers from the five countries to discuss and analyse the findings. Preliminary advocacy plans were also developed. The findings were then finalised, cross-checked and tabulated by the AT4HR.

Selection of child nutrition interventions in each country

The researchers in each country selected five child nutrition interventions to focus on when completing the BTCN Questionnaire. Working in consultation with child health experts, they scanned the relevant government sectors in their respective countries to identify the broadest possible range of interventions that either directly or indirectly enhance the nutritional status of children. In most instances, these interventions fell into the sectors of health, social development or welfare, agriculture and education. Using a guided, step-by-step approach, the researchers (with the help of their reference groups) then scored the full range of interventions in terms of the following criteria:

- **Importance:** Higher scores were given to those government interventions seen to be the *most critical* to combating child malnutrition in the country.
- **Targeting:** Higher scores were given to those government interventions best geared to reach children who are the most vulnerable to malnutrition.
- **Child rights obligations:** Higher scores were given to government interventions that could most clearly be linked back to the government's legal obligations to realise children's rights.
- **Traceability:** Higher scores were given to those government interventions that could most easily be identified as distinct programs or lines of expenditure in a country's budget.
- **Decentralisation:** Higher scores were given to government interventions that were implemented (and even better, budgeted for) at sub-national levels of government.

Based on the scoring exercise above, five child nutrition interventions were selected in each country that best matched the criteria. See the country findings for further information on the specific interventions that were surveyed in each country.

Selection of sub-national regions in each country

The study looked into budget transparency at both the national level and sub-national level in each country. The dual emphasis was important because:

- The implementation of interventions aimed at children often happens at sub-national levels and it should be possible to track public funds to where they are spent.
- The extent and nature of budget information about interventions at sub-national levels may vary considerably from that which is available at national level.
- There may be noteworthy variations in budget transparency between different sub-national units, for example different provinces or districts, in the same country.

Due to the limited scope of this pilot study, the researchers selected one sub-national level to focus on in their respective countries. For example, in Zambia, the researchers chose the district level, while the South African researcher chose the provincial level. The choice of level took into account the various systems of decentralisation in the different countries. The aim was to focus attention on the level of government (besides the national) that is most closely involved in budgeting for and delivering child nutrition interventions.

The researchers then identified three sub-national units (for example, three provinces, districts or municipalities) to include in their survey research. The questionnaire had to be applied to the same three sub-national units throughout - for example to the same three provinces, three districts or three municipalities. Researchers were asked to select sub-national units that were different from each other in some significant ways, for example areas that had:

- differing socio-economic profiles;
- varying track-records or likely capacity for budget reporting; and/or
- diverse settlement patterns – for example urban, peri-urban and rural.

Please see the country findings for more information on the specific sub-national areas included in the research in each country.

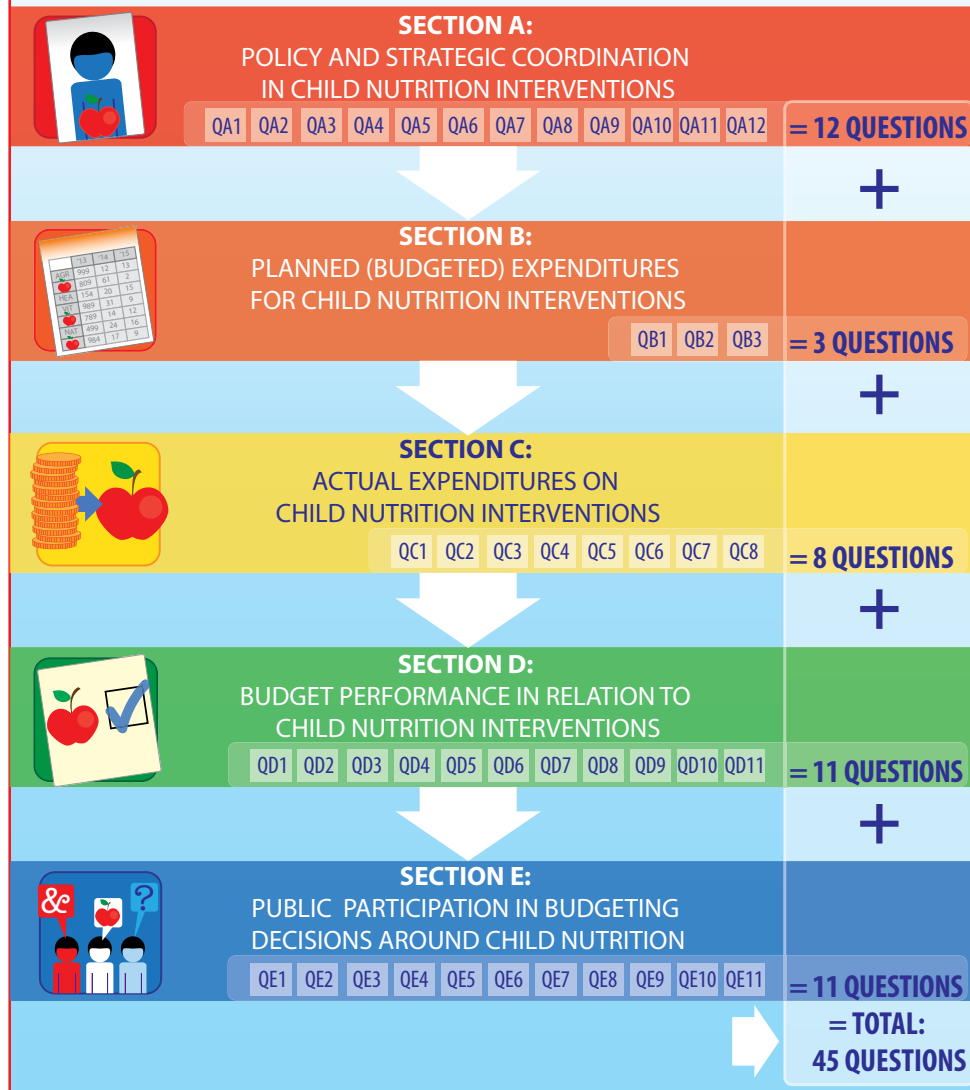
The BTCN questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 45 questions, divided into five groups. See the chart or on page 16 for an overview of how the questionnaire is structured. Appendix B contains a full list of the questions. The questionnaire itself can be accessed online at www.AT4HR.org.

The questionnaire provides five sample answers for each question, from which the researcher selected the most accurate response, providing both references and comments to substantiate their choices. In all cases, the five answers range from most to least transparent (scored 'a' to 'e'). Each of the 45 questions had to be asked in relation to:

- the **five child nutrition interventions** selected to survey in that country;
- at the **national level**; and
- in each of the **three sub-national areas** (districts, counties or provinces) selected in that country.

STRUCTURE OF THE BUDGET TRANSPARENCY & CHILD NUTRITION QUESTIONNAIRE



Criteria guiding the analysis of findings

In analysing the findings from the questionnaires, the aim was to take note of:

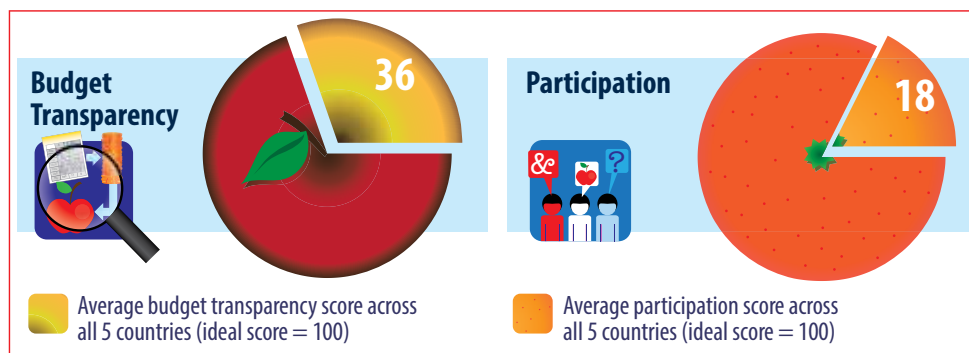
- Emerging patterns and collective areas of promise and concern across all five countries;
- Noteworthy differences between the countries;
- Indications of where budget transparency (for child nutrition) is weak and strong within each country;
- Differences and similarities between the national and sub-national levels in each country; and
- Differences and similarities amongst the three sub-national units in each country.

The results of these analyses are presented in this report. The following section gives an overview of the most important cross-country findings. This is followed by a summary of the findings in each country.

General findings

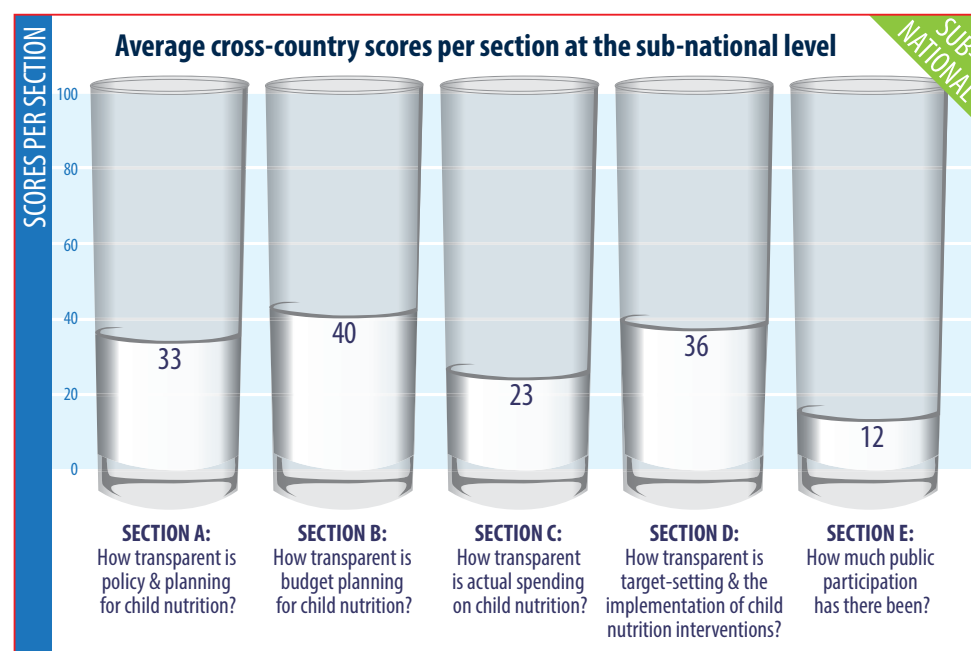
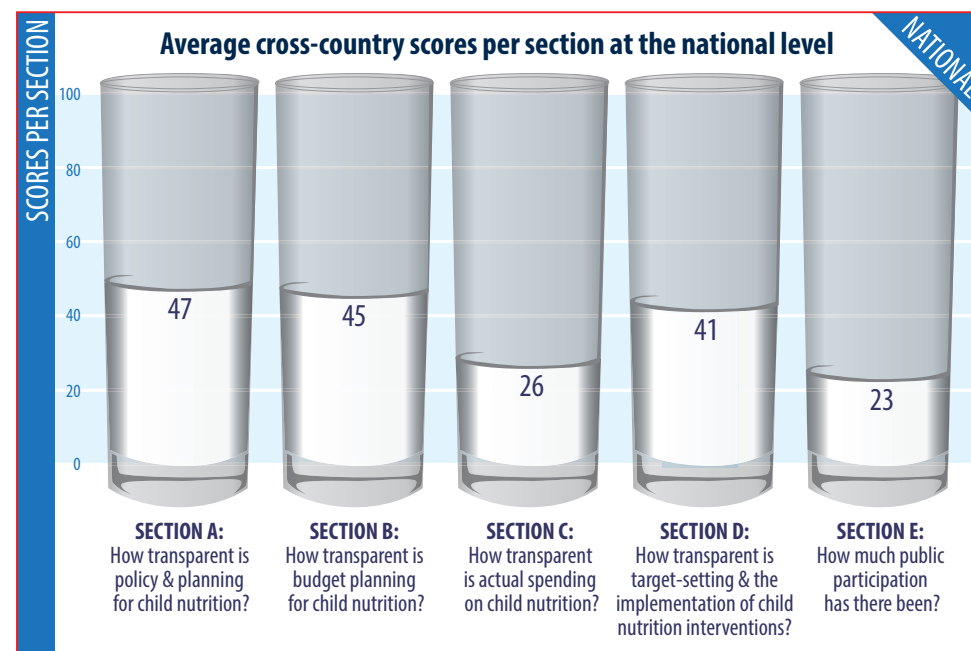
The Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition pilot study surveyed five African countries to establish whether 34 important kinds of budget information pertaining to key child nutrition interventions were available in the public domain.

The study found that there is generally a low level of budget transparency in relation to child nutrition across the five countries. The overall average transparency score for all five countries was only **36** – out of an ideal score of 100. This low level of budget transparency was accompanied by even worse scores when it came to participation in budgeting for child nutrition. The average participation score across all five countries was **18** – out of an ideal score of 100.



Overall scores per section

The questionnaire asked after the public availability of child nutrition information grouped into five main categories. The cross-country average scores were as follows at the national level and at the sub-national level:



The charts above show that, on average:

- The five countries had higher levels of transparency when it came to information about policy, planning and planned expenditures for child nutrition;
- The countries fared worse when it came to information about actual expenditures and the implementation of child nutrition interventions.
- The lowest scoring section overall was the one concerned with public participation in governments' child nutrition decisions.
- Budget transparency levels for all five categories of information were higher at the national level than at sub-national levels when looking across all the countries.

Appendix C presents the individual country scores for each section of the questionnaire. Some caution must be applied when comparing the country scores against one another. Firstly, in each country, a unique sample of five child nutrition interventions was placed under the spotlight. The interventions ranged widely from country to country in terms of size and scope, complexity and length of existence. Secondly, different researchers completed the questionnaire in the various countries. While every effort was made to ensure consistency in the responses, allowance must be made for some differences in interpretation.

With these proviso's in mind, the country scores per section highlight the following points about the relative levels of transparency about child nutrition interventions:

- Kenya displayed the highest levels of public access to information in the areas of budget planning (Section B), setting delivery targets and implementation (Section D), as well as to policy information at the sub-national level (Section A).
- South Africa scored highest in making policy information available at the national level (Section A). It was also most transparent when it came to actual expenditure information (Section C) and public participation at the national level (Section E).
- Across most of the sections, Zimbabwe occupied the middle ranking, while Uganda and Zambia had the lowest scores.

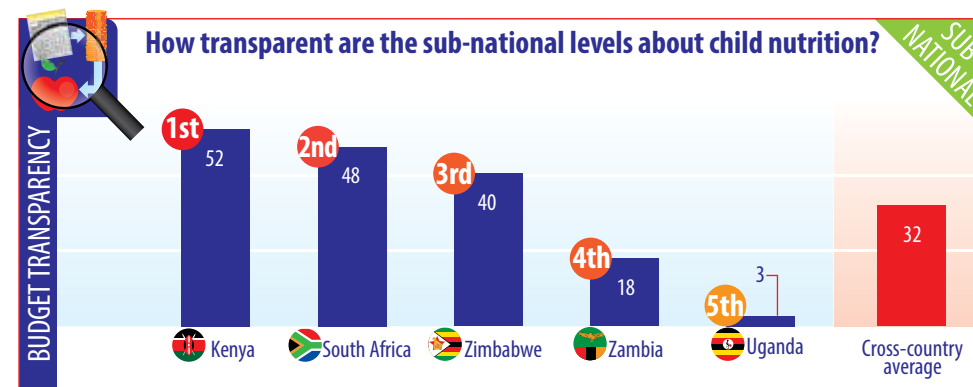
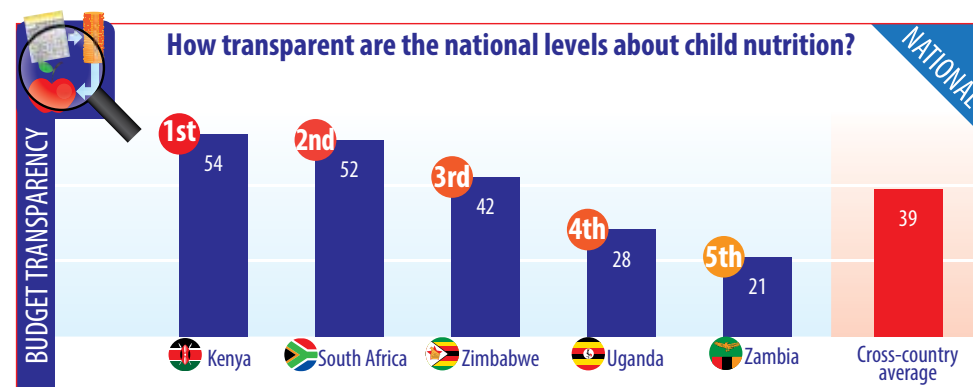


Overall budget transparency scores

Sections A to D of the questionnaire focus on transparency. Looking at the four sections together, we can compare the overall budget transparency scores for the countries. Following the convention of this report, the scores are out of an ideal total of 100.

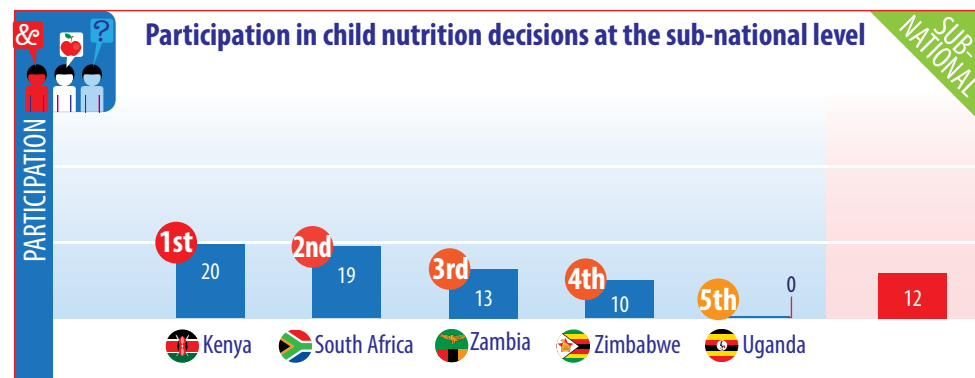
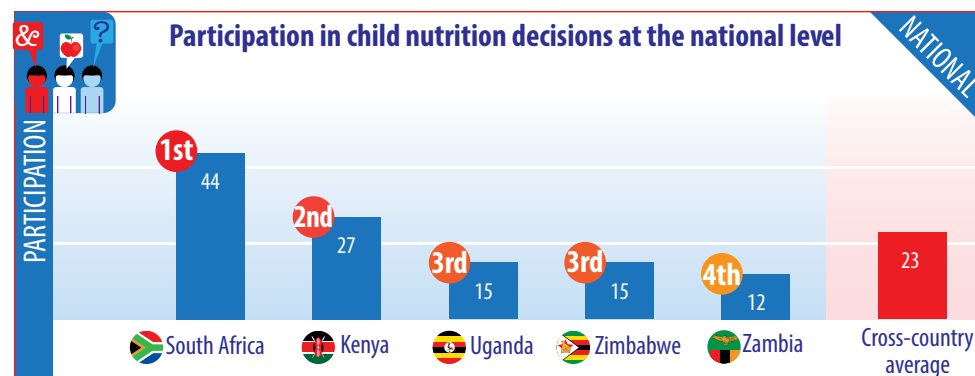
The findings show that:

- Kenya showed the highest levels of transparency relating to child nutrition, with a score of **54** at the national level and **53** at the sub-national level.
- South Africa had the second highest overall transparency scores, followed by Zimbabwe.
- Looking at the national level, Zambia showed the lowest overall levels of public access to information about government's child nutrition interventions.
- When it comes to information in the public domain at the sub-national level, Uganda had the lowest overall score – of only **2.8** out of a possible 100.



Overall participation scores

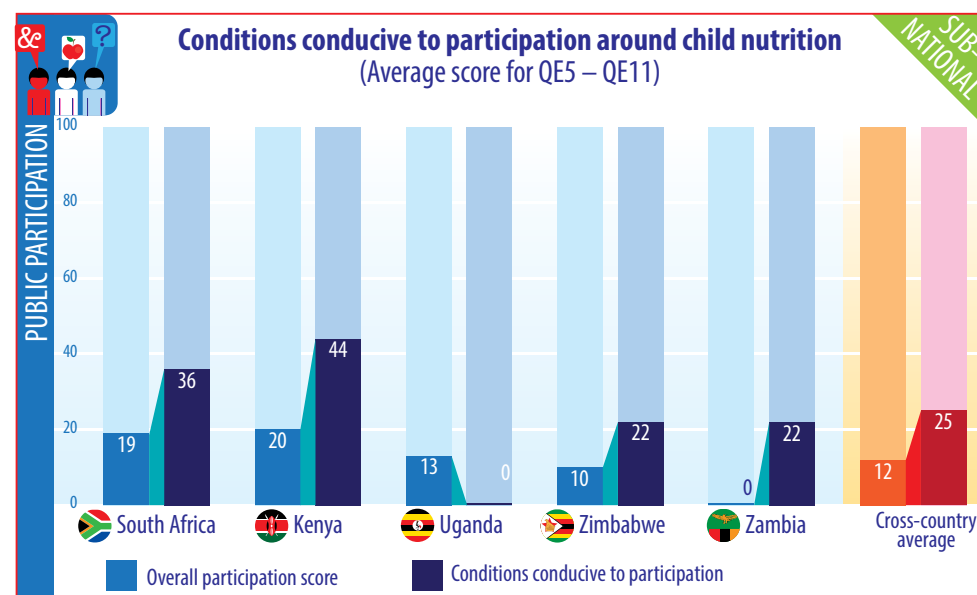
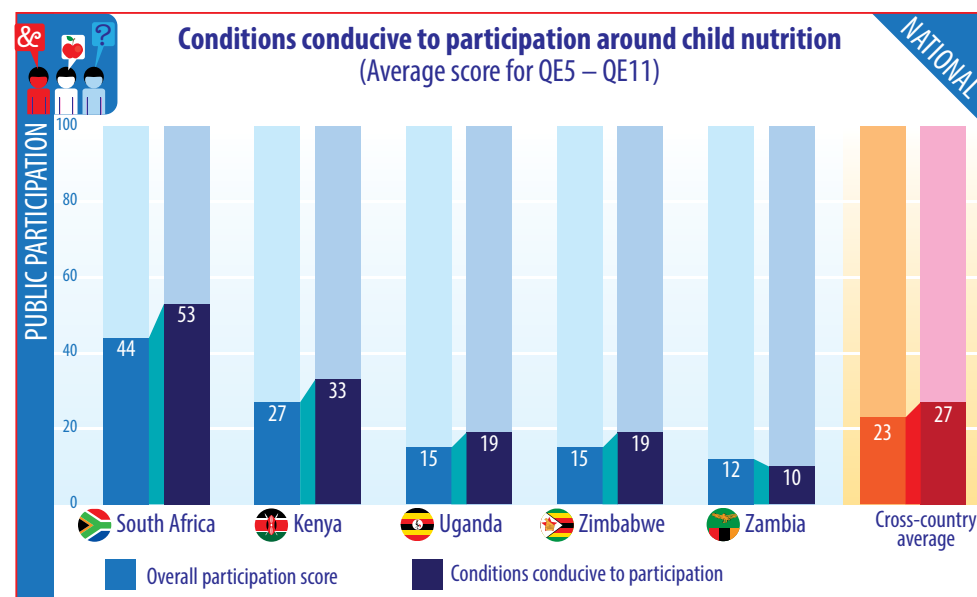
Section E of the questionnaire focuses on participation in government decisions regarding child nutrition. The countries achieved the following overall scores:



The findings indicate that:

- In the area of budget participation and public feedback, South Africa had the highest national score, while Kenya had the highest score at the sub-national level.
- Overall, Uganda fared the worst with a very low level of public participation around child nutrition at the national level and none at all at the sub-national level.
- As a general pattern across all five countries, the levels of participation are poor at the national level and abysmal at the sub-national level.
- Interestingly, only Zambia scored higher on participation at the sub-national level than at the national level.
- The weakest participation scores across the five countries were those that had to do with consulting directly with children (Questions E2, E3) and producing budget summaries in a format appropriate for children to read (QE7).

The charts below present the countries' mean scores for those questions in Section E that ask whether conditions and mechanisms are in place that are conducive to participation (See questions E5 to E11 in Appendix B).



So if we single out the questions in Section E that concern the prevalence of conditions conducive to participation, the findings show that:

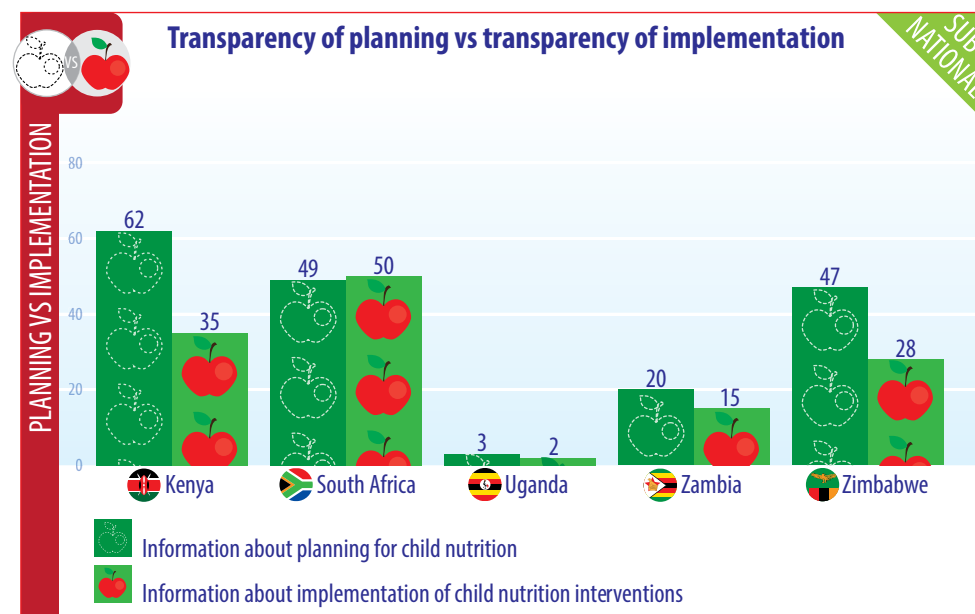
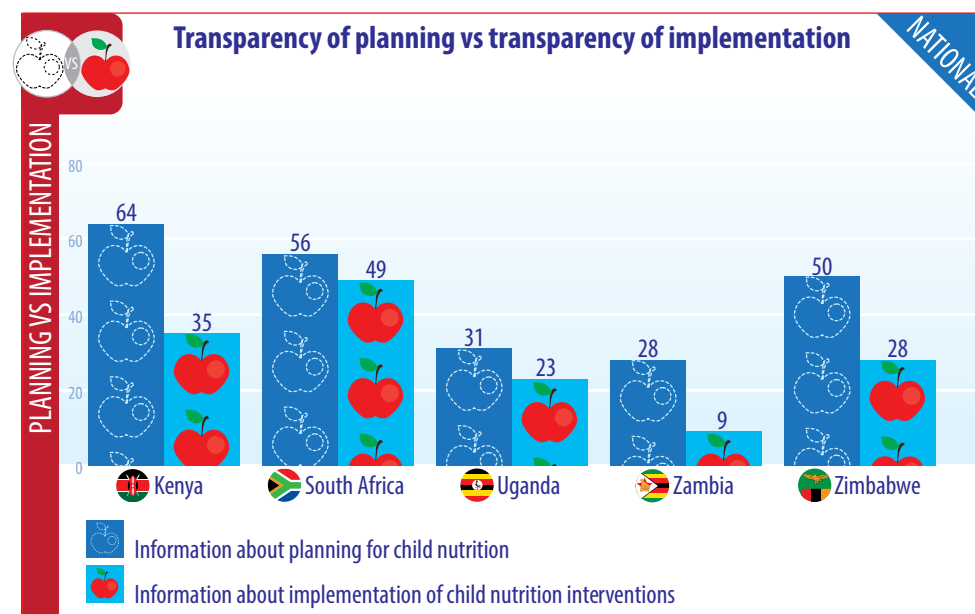
- With one exception, all the countries achieve higher scores at both the national and sub-national level than they did for Section E as a whole.
- The cross-country average score pertaining to conditions conducive to participation was **27** at the national level and **25** at the sub-national level. The difference between these scores and those for Section E as a whole are especially stark at the sub-national level.
- This suggests that even though some mechanisms and conditions are in place to support participation, these are not being used when it comes to decision-making about child nutrition interventions. For example, three of the five countries have laws in place that give children (and adults) the right to access budget information without restriction.
- It would seem that at the sub-national level in particular, mechanisms may exist that could be used more actively to catalyse participation in decision-making around child nutrition.

Planning and implementation

The findings of this study show that in all five countries, budget planning is more transparent than budget implementation. Greater transparency has been achieved in policy development and budget planning for child nutrition than in the areas of budget implementation, monitoring and reporting. The charts on the right compare the countries' average scores for the questions pertaining to policy and planning (Sections A, B and D1-D7) with their average scores for questions regarding the implementation and monitoring of child nutrition interventions (Sections C and D8-D11).

The comparison highlights the following points:

- Looking at the national level, the average cross-country score when it came to information about planning for child nutrition was **46**. By comparison, the average cross-country score for transparency about the implementation of child nutrition interventions was **29**.
- This means that child rights monitors and/or citizens who want to know what their governments are doing to combat child malnutrition have a much better chance of accessing information about government's intentions and plans, than they do of accessing information about whether and how those plans were put into practice.
- At both the national and sub-national levels, three countries – Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe – fared moderately well at putting planning information into the public sphere. Kenya had the highest score at the national level with **64**, while South Africa and Kenya scored **56** and **50** respectively.



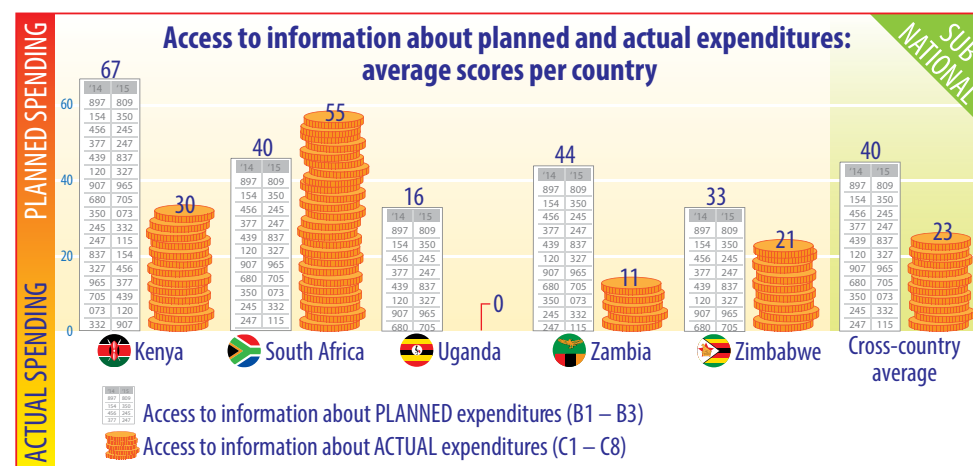
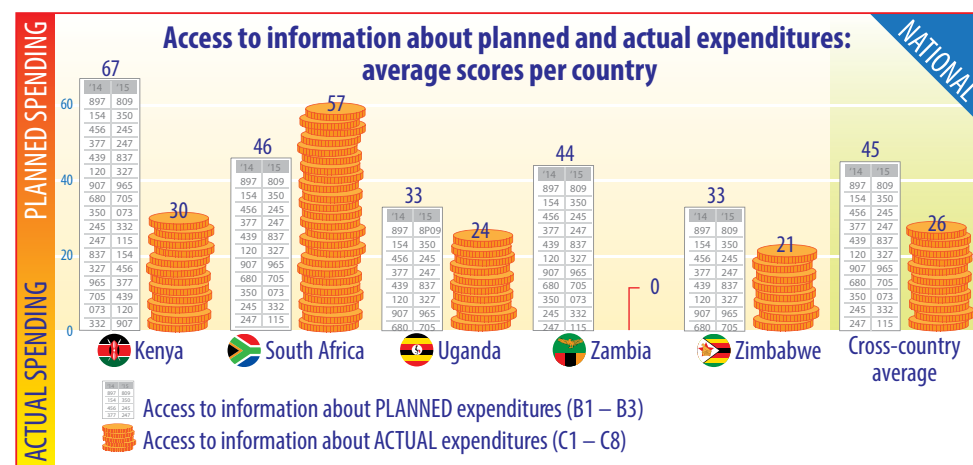
- Accessing planning information at sub-national levels was slightly more challenging, with Kenya scoring **62**, South Africa **49** and Zimbabwe **47**.
- In Uganda and Zambia, it was even more difficult to access planning information about the governments' child nutrition interventions. At the national level, these countries scored **31** and **28** respectively. At the sub-national level, Zambia had a score of **20** and Uganda only **3**.
- When it came to information about the implementation and monitoring of child nutrition interventions, South Africa had the highest score of **50** at the national level, followed by Kenya with **35** and Zimbabwe with **28**.
- South Africa had the smallest gap in score (7 points) between how much planning information versus implementation information was available at the national level. The gap between these two categories of information was a sizeable **29** points in Kenya and **22** points in Zimbabwe, suggesting that much can be done to bring the transparency of implementation onto a par with the transparency of planning.
- There is extremely little access to information about actual expenditures or service delivery for the governments' child nutrition interventions in Zambia and Uganda. The situation is especially dire at the sub-national level in Uganda, where the researcher could access only **2%** of the requested information.

Budgeting for child nutrition interventions

Section B of the questionnaire considered levels of transparency about planned expenditures on child nutrition. Section C looked at access to information about actual expenditures on these interventions. The tables on the right present the country findings

These findings illustrate that:

- Generally speaking, the overall level of access to budgeting information about child nutrition interventions is poor. This is especially true of actual expenditure information, but even on the budget planning side there is a great deal of room for improvement.
- In terms of planned expenditures for child nutrition, Kenya had an average score of **67** at both the national and sub-national levels. This was well above the cross country averages of **45** for the national level and **40** for the sub-national level.
- The worst faring country was Uganda, with access to information about planned expenditures for child nutrition being scored at only **33** at the national level, and at **16** at the sub-national level. The situation is even more dire when it came to actual expenditure information, with none at all available at the sub-national level.
- In Zambia, no actual expenditure information on the government's child nutrition interventions could be accessed at the national level.
- South Africa was the only country that showed higher transparency scores for actual



expenditure information (**57** at the national level) than for planned expenditures on child nutrition (**46** at the national level).

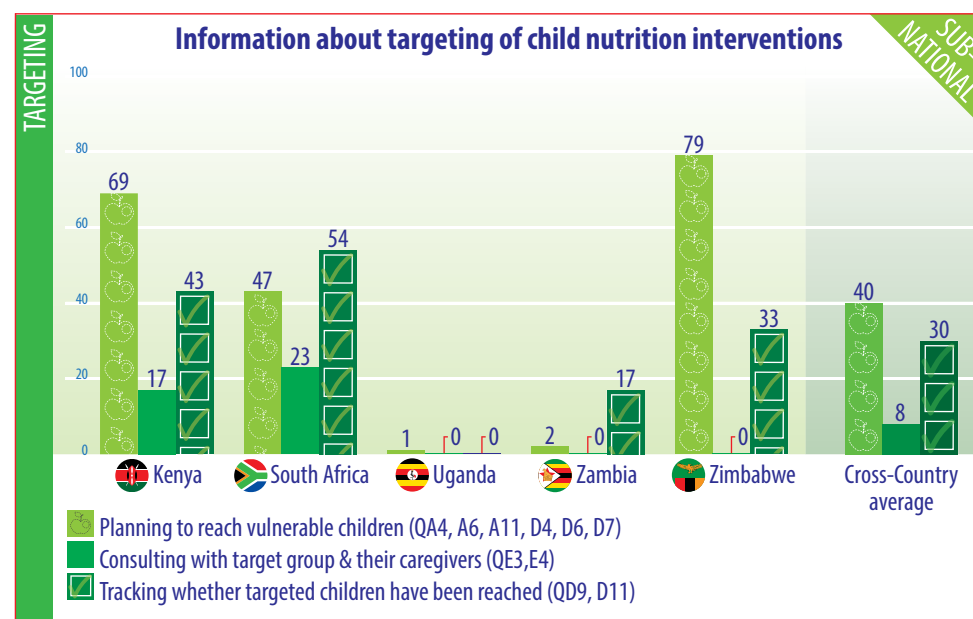
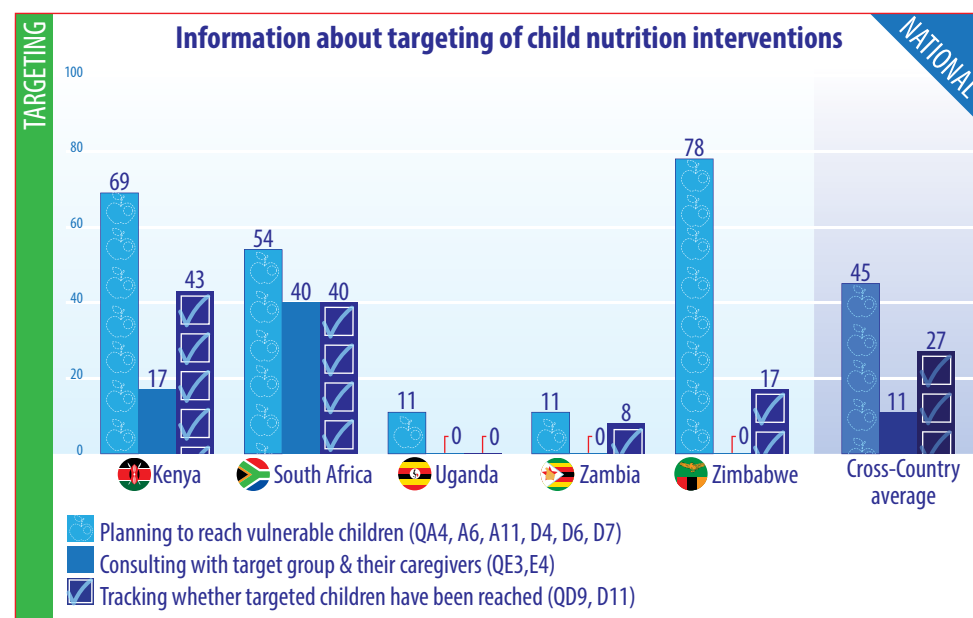
- It was not only the expenditure side of budgeting for child nutrition that lacked transparency. The study found that information about sources of revenue for child nutrition interventions was not well covered in budget documents (see QA8). With the exception of South Africa (which scored **100** at the national level and **93** at the sub-national level), the other four countries all showed considerable need for improvement in providing details on how planned child nutrition interventions were to be financed. Uganda scored **47** at the national level, but the other scores of all the countries at both levels were below **33**.

Targeting of children in need of nutrition

A number of questions in the BTCN questionnaire deal with the targeting of beneficiaries for the governments' child nutrition interventions. Child rights organisations and concerned citizens may well be interested to know which and how many children in which parts of a country have been identified as being in need of nutritional support or supplementation. They may also want to monitor whether the targeted children represent those most in need, whether the interventions end up reaching the targeted children, and so forth. Therefore having public access to information about the targeting of children can be seen as essential for oversight purposes.

The tables on the right present the countries' scores pertaining to transparency about targeting. Some interesting points emerge from this analysis:

- In two countries – Zimbabwe and Kenya – governments place a reasonable amount of information in the public domain about the children they intend to reach with their nutrition interventions. Zimbabwe scored an impressive **78** at the national level and **79** at the sub-national level when it comes to transparency about its targeting intentions.
- All the countries fare much worse at making information available about whether targeted children have actually been reached. With a difference in score of **26** points, Kenya is considerably more transparent about its targeting plans than it is about its actual performance in reaching targeted children. In Zimbabwe, citizens are almost five times more likely to find information about *intended* beneficiaries nation-wide than they are to find corresponding information about who actually benefited.
- Zambia and especially Uganda make extremely little information available about the targeting of child nutrition interventions. This would make it impossible to monitor who is meant to benefit from the governments' efforts to reduce child malnutrition and/or to track whether, where or how progress is being made.
- Across the five countries, decisions regarding the targeting and implementation of child nutrition interventions are clearly not being made by asking the target beneficiaries for their views. The cross-country average regarding consultations with target beneficiaries or their care-givers was **11** at the national level and **8** at the sub-national level, out of an ideal score of 100.
- One of the least transparent aspects of planning for child nutrition seems to be low levels of access to information regarding the geographical distribution of child malnutrition (QA4). With the exception of Zimbabwe (where public access was found to some such information), very little information was available in the other four countries on how governments planned to spread budget resources geographically to match the distribution of children most in need.



National and sub-national transparency

- Throughout this report, the findings illustrate from various different angles that budget transparency in all five countries is generally worse at the sub-national levels than it is at the national level.
- The gap between national and sub-national transparency about child nutrition interventions was largest in the areas of policy information (Section A) and public participation (Section E).
- The findings also suggest that **better budget transparency seems to manifest in greater consistency in access to information across levels of government**. The overall highest scorer in budget transparency for child nutrition (Kenya) also showed the smallest differences in its scores at national level and sub-national level. There was only a score difference of 1.4 points in the level of transparency at the two levels.
- Zimbabwe echoed this trend, with only 2 points of difference between its overall transparency score at the national level and the sub-national level.
- The country with the worst overall score (Uganda), showed the largest discrepancies between national level and sub-national level scores; its overall transparency score was ten times higher at the national level (**29**) than at the sub-national level (**2.8**).



Recommendations for Action

The country reports to follow contain more specific findings from the BTCN research in each country and raise transparency issues that are geared to these different contexts. However, a number of important themes emerge by looking at the findings collectively. In regional and cross-country forums, it may be possible to highlight some findings from this research that are relevant across multiple countries:



POLICY & CO-ORDINATION

- Critical weak points in budget transparency for child nutrition include scant information about the geographical spread of children suffering from malnutrition and about sources of revenue to finance the interventions. Qualitative information to explain and contextualise budget figures is also lacking.
- Governments do not share enough information with the public on how they have taken obstacles to implementation into account. This was one of the lowest scoring areas in the questionnaire (QA5, QA7, QD5), making it near impossible to track the governments' capacity to actually deliver child nutrition interventions.



BUDGET PLANNING

- More information is required about planned spending on child nutrition over more budget years, including narratives to explain and contextualise budget figures.



ACTUAL SPENDING

- In order to monitor progress towards MDG4 and other child nutrition goals, it is imperative for country governments to make much more detailed and robust budget

information publically available. Most notable is the need for timely information about actual expenditures, actual service delivery data and comparisons between planned and actual spending and performance.



PARTICIPATION

- A great deal more and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) is required to inform government's decision-making about how to combat child malnutrition.



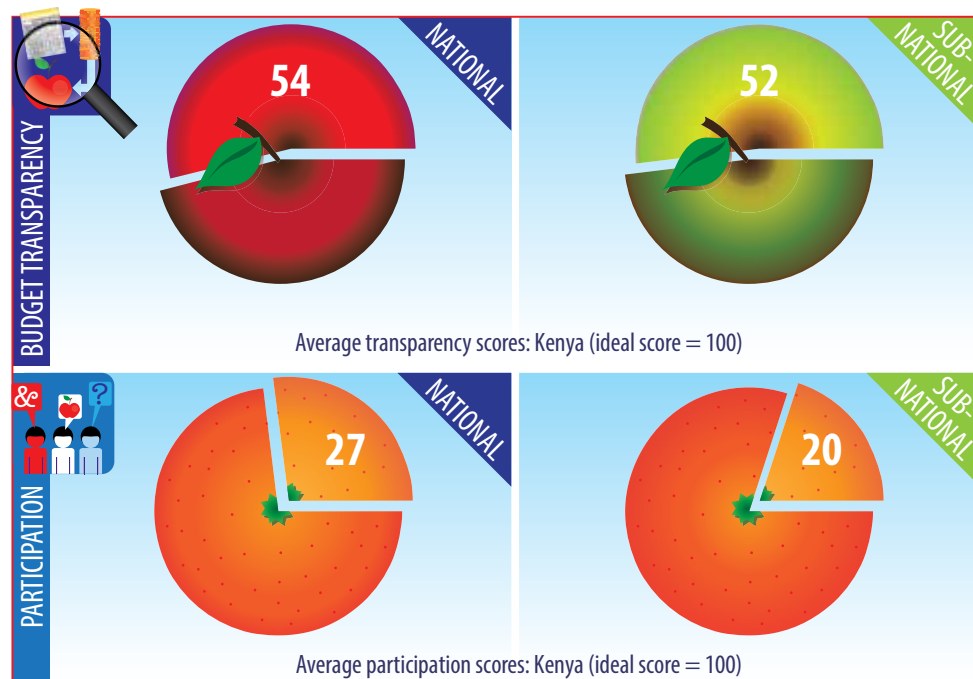
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

- The sample of countries included in this study is too small to construct a viable index of budget transparency for child nutrition. However, the idea of such an index might be worth exploring. It could galvanise interest around the challenge of improving progress towards MDG4. The Budget Transparency for Child Nutrition questionnaire is available in the public domain as a research tool that can be used by interested researchers in other countries. Over time it may be possible to amalgamate such efforts into a formal cross-country index that regularly measures transparency in relation to child nutrition.
- Child nutrition is not the only issue that requires access to better, more regular and more detailed government information. It would be useful to explore ways of advancing budget transparency in relation to more children's rights and across more countries.

Country Findings:

Kenya

Kenya's overall budget transparency score was **54** at the national level and **52** at the sub-national level. These scores measure public access to information about the government's child nutrition interventions against an ideal of 100 points. Kenya's overall participation score was **27** at the national level and **20** at the sub-national level – again out of an ideal score of 100. The participation score measures the extent of public participation in government's decision-making around child nutrition interventions.



The child nutrition interventions included in the study

Looking across sectors and departments, eleven government interventions were identified in Kenya that had a direct or indirect aim of advancing children's nutritional status. After ranking them in terms of the criteria outlined in the methodology section (see page 15), the following five interventions were selected to place under the spotlight in this study:

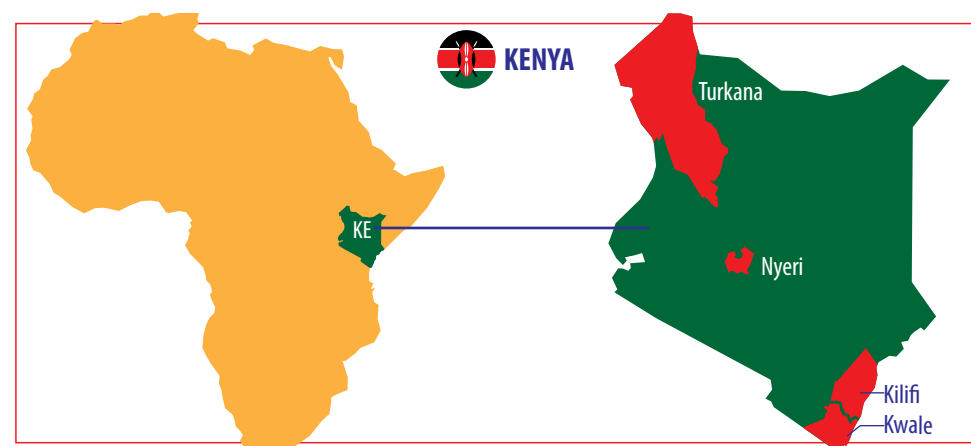
1. Maternal nutrition for pregnant women.
2. Promotion of exclusive breastfeeding of children up to six months.
3. Complimentary feeding and food safety program for children after six months.
4. Feeding program in early childhood development (ECD) centres.
5. Food fortification.

All five of the interventions fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, with the exception of the fourth intervention, which is the responsibility of both the Ministry of Public health and safety as well as the Ministry of Education.

The sub-national areas selected for the study

The study considered public access to information about the five interventions above at the national level in Kenya. This is reported as the 'national score' in the presentation of findings to follow. In addition to the national score, the study also investigated the availability of information about the same five interventions in the following three counties:

1. Kwale/Kilifi County
2. Nyeri County
3. Turkana County



These three counties were selected as the sample for assessing sub-national transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions. The selection was made on the basis that these counties have quite different development profiles and may be expected to display variations in transparency (See the criteria outlined in the methodology section on page 15).

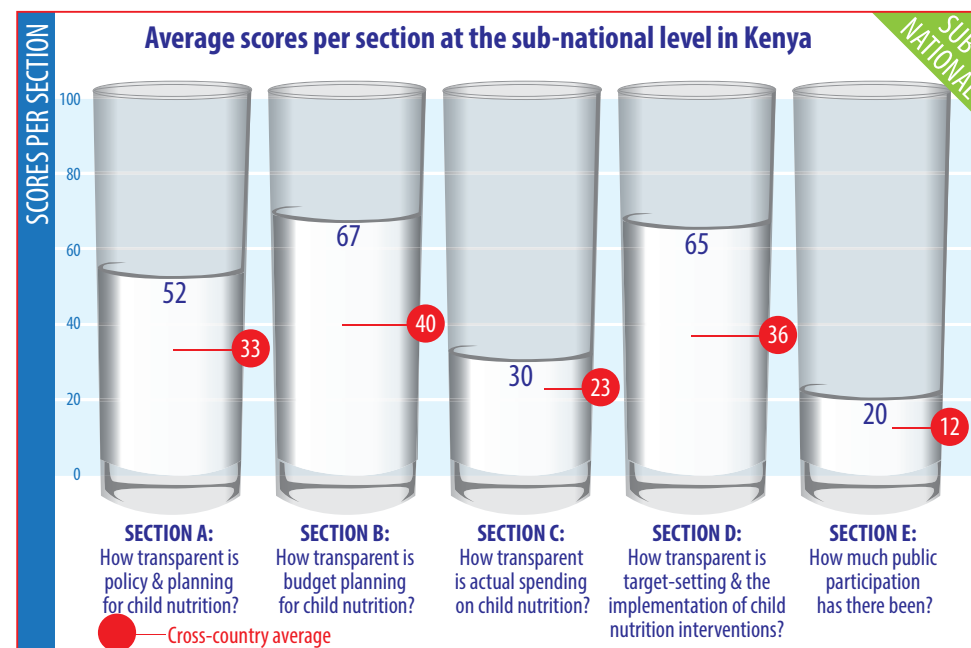
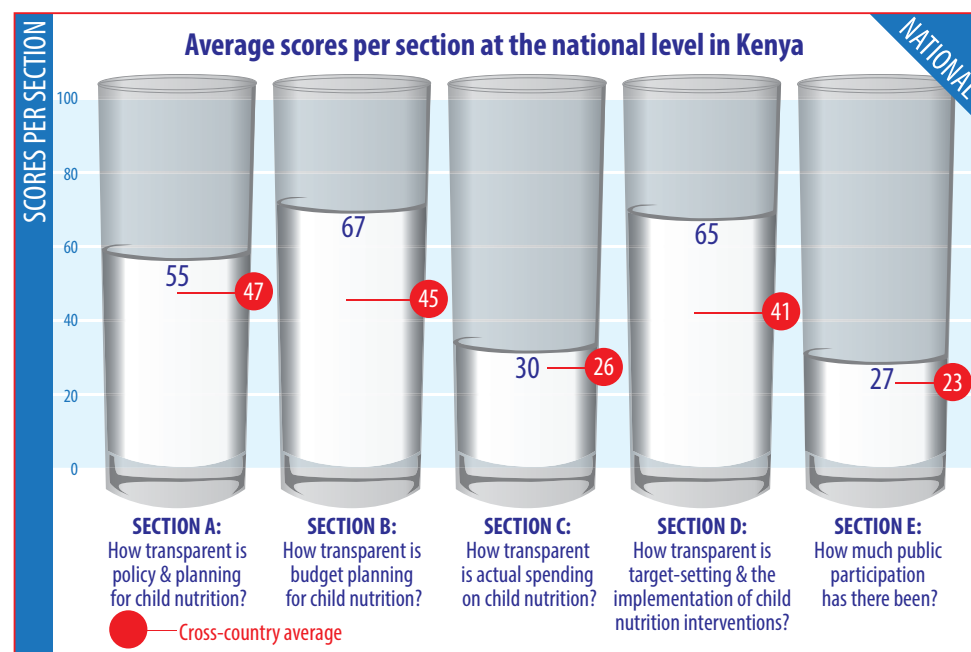
With the exception of question E9, every one of the other 44 questions in the BTCN Questionnaire was asked of the national level in Kenya and then of each of the selected counties.

How did Kenya score in each section of the questionnaire?

The charts on the right present the mean scores recorded in Kenya for each section of the questionnaire, first at national level and then at sub-national level.

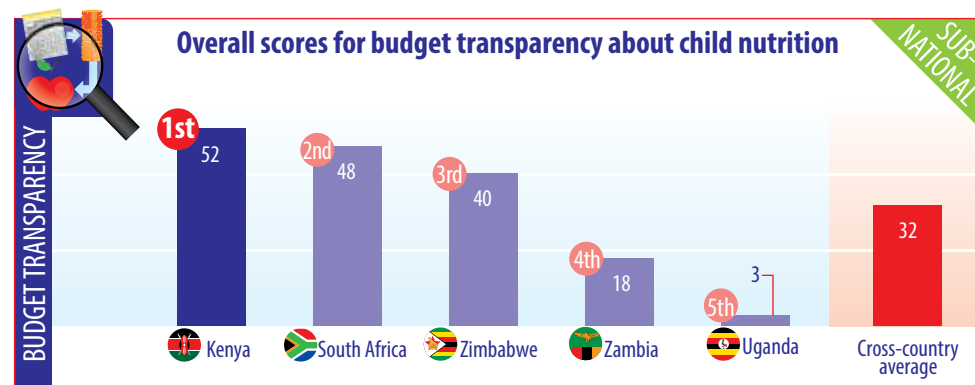
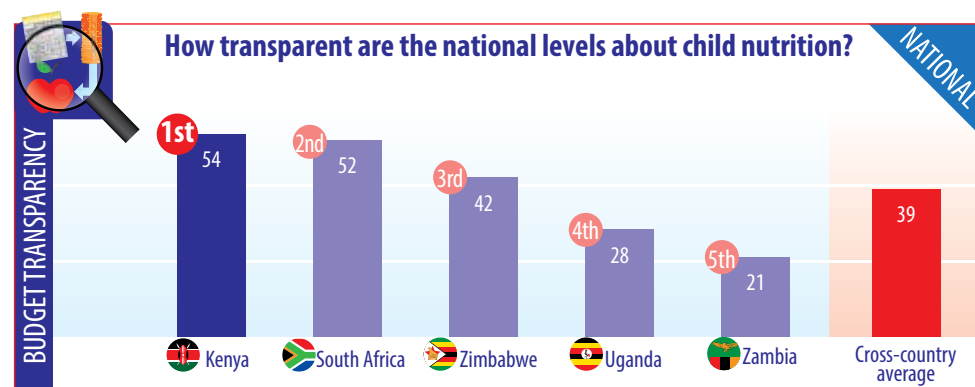
The findings show that when it comes to information about the government's child nutrition interventions in Kenya:

- Your chances of accessing budget information in one of the three counties is almost exactly the same as your chances of finding that information at the national level.
- Across all five sections of the questionnaire, Kenya's scores were well above the cross-country averages.
- The government is most transparent in the areas of budget planning and setting targets for implementation.
- There is a fair amount of information available explaining the policies and plans that underpin the government's child nutrition interventions.
- It was much more challenging to find information in the public domain about actual spending on child nutrition.
- Levels of public participation in decision-making about the government's child nutrition interventions are very low at both the national and sub-national levels.



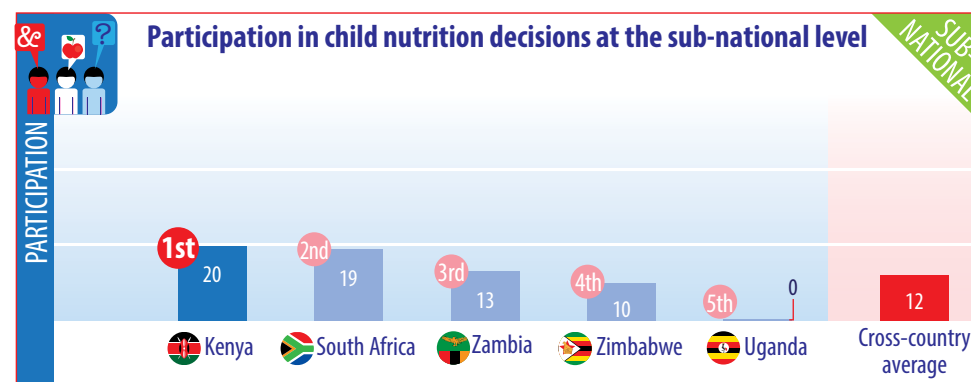
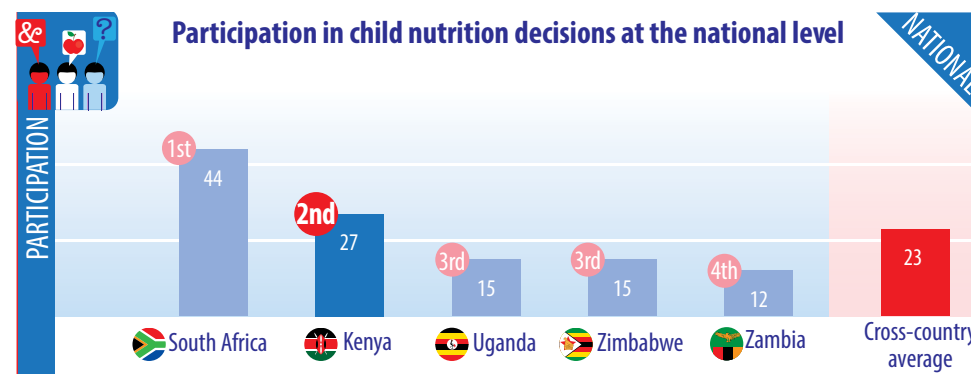
How did Kenya fare relative to the other countries?

At the same time as this study was being undertaken in Kenya, it was also being conducted in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda and South Africa. The exact same 45 questions that were asked about public access to child nutrition information in Kenya, were asked in the other country studies too. The countries' overall scores can be ranked as follows:



While some caution must be applied in comparing the country findings (see the proviso's raised on page 18), the following points of interest are worth noting:

- Kenya had the highest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about government child nutrition interventions. This was consistent at both the national and sub-national levels.
- Kenya had the highest score for public participation in government decisions about child nutrition at the sub-national level. It had the second highest score, after South Africa, for participation at the national level.



- Kenya scored higher than any other countries for public access to information about budget planning (Section B), setting delivery targets and implementation (Section D), as well as to policy information at the sub-national level (Section A).
- Kenya had the second highest scores (after South Africa) for transparency around policy and planning for child nutrition at the national level (Section A) and actual expenditure (Section C).

Correlation between national and sub-national findings in Kenya

The survey findings in Kenya showed very little variation between national and sub-national levels. This was striking in that there were significant differences between the two levels in most of the other countries. The findings also reflected a lack of variation in transparency amongst the three counties. In fact, the sub-national scores for all three counties were identical to each other for all 45 questions. The study therefore found that exactly the same kinds and amounts of information about the government's child

nutrition interventions could be accessed whether you were in Kwale/Kilifi county, in Nyeri or Turkana. This suggests that:

- A great deal of the information may be generated at the national level in a consistent format and then passed down to the county level; or
- Clear norms and standards have been established to regulate the kinds of information that should be generated at the county level and strong oversight is being exercised to ensure that counties comply.

Positive signs of budget transparency for child nutrition

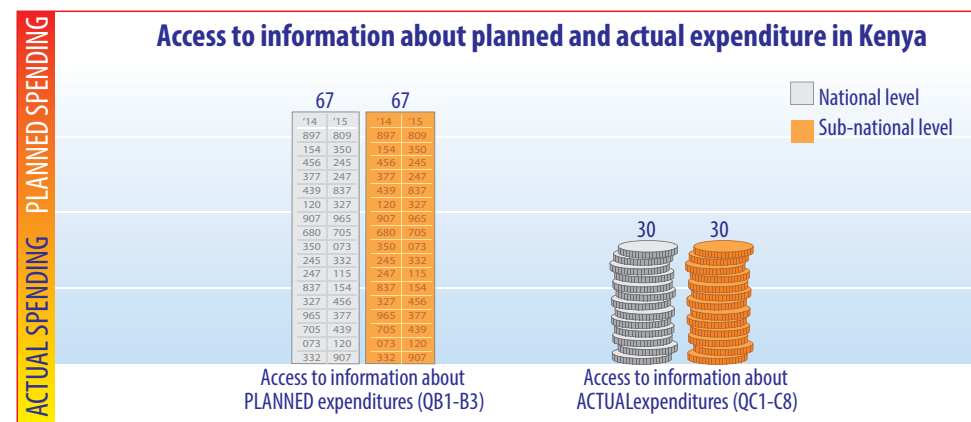
The following strengths emerge from the Kenya country study:

- Kenya's laws ensure that citizens (including children) have the right to access budget information without restriction.
- The public can access quite a lot of information that explains why the government's child nutrition interventions are designed the way they are. This includes information explaining how the interventions are informed by policies, child rights obligations, evidence about the scale of child malnutrition in the country and considerations about co-ordinated planning. By implication, it should be reasonably possible for child rights monitors and interested citizens to be able to gauge whether the interventions are sound in conception.
- Kenya is faring exceptionally well in providing public access to information about the government's planned expenditures on child nutrition interventions – for the budget year and at least one year beyond.
- An adequate amount of information exists in the public domain about the government's targeting of children to benefit from its nutrition interventions. This information makes reference to the government's intentions of reaching vulnerable children, including children in their early years.
- The government does well in providing information about its service delivery targets in relation to child nutrition, at both the national and sub-national levels.

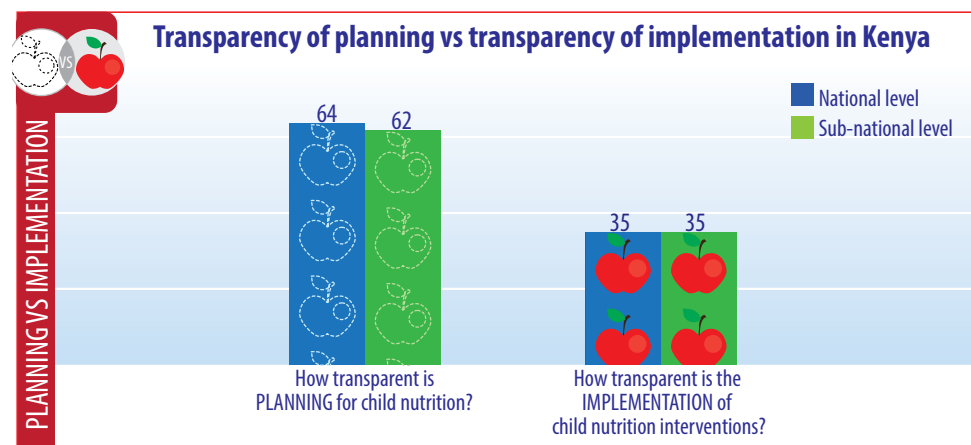
Areas in need of improvement

- Too little information (and with too little detail) is being made publically available about the sources of revenue to finance the government's child nutrition interventions.
- Kenya's good performance in providing planned expenditure data could be strengthened further by adding more narrative information to budget documents, so that the public can understand the considerations and assumptions behind the budget figures.
- A key area where greater transparency is urgently required is in providing public access to more and better actual expenditure information on child nutrition. This includes the need for more detailed expenditure data over more years, for comparisons between

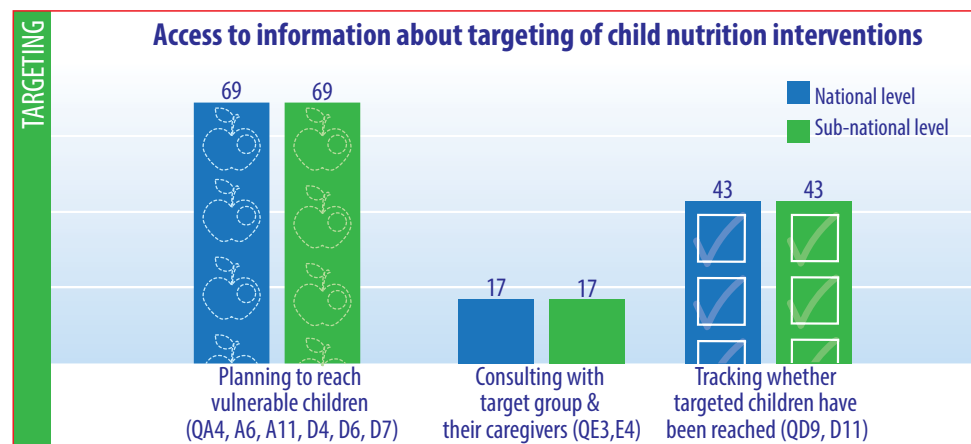
budgeted and actual expenditures, and for narrative explanations of actual expenditure figures. The chart below compares public access to information about planned expenditures in Kenya with access to information about actual expenditures.



- Another critical area of concern is the absence of any actual expenditure information on child nutrition that has been audited in any of the two years prior to the budget year.
- While the government excels at sharing its service delivery targets with the public, there is very little information available in the public domain about the actual results achieved through the child nutrition interventions. The chart below compares Kenya's average scores for the questions pertaining to policy and planning (Sections A, B and D1-D7) with their average scores for questions regarding the implementation and monitoring of child nutrition interventions (Sections C and D8-D11).



- Transparency needs to improve dramatically in reporting on the actual numbers of beneficiaries reached through the government's child nutrition interventions, including explanations of differences between estimated beneficiary numbers and actual outcomes. The chart below presents the research findings about the targeting of child nutrition beneficiaries.



- Finally, public participation in government decision-making about child nutrition in Kenya is severely inadequate, even though some mechanisms exist (especially at the sub-national level) that could be used in this regard. Kenya achieved its weakest participation scores for those questions that had to do with consulting directly with children (Questions E2, E3) and producing budget summaries in a format appropriate for children to read (QE7).



KENYA

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study suggest that budget transparency around child nutrition in Kenya can be enhanced in the following important ways:



POLICY & CO-ORDINATION

- Access to evidence on the geographical distribution of child malnutrition in Kenya – and clarity on whether such evidence has informed the design of the government's interventions.



BUDGET PLANNING

- More narrative information is required to accompany and explain budget data.
- Improve transparency about sources of revenue to finance key programmes and interventions.



ACTUAL SPENDING

- Public access to more detailed, timely in-year and year-end actual expenditure information.
- Audited figures to be available within two years of actual spending.
- The government should provide comparisons between planned and actual expenditure and explanations of disparities.



IMPLEMENTATION

- More detailed and timely service delivery information is needed, showing whether and how targets have or have not been met.
- Government to provide comparisons between estimated beneficiaries and actual outcomes.



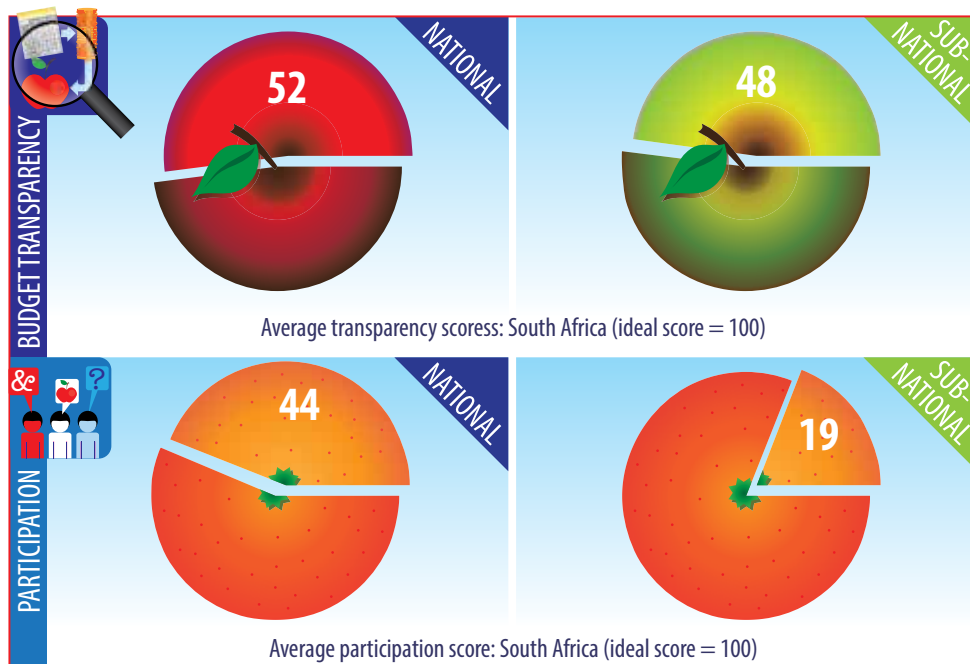
PARTICIPATION

- More and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) in government's decision-making about key interventions that aim to realise children's rights.

Country Findings:

South Africa

South Africa's overall budget transparency score was **52** at the national level and **48** at the sub-national level. These scores measure public access to information about the government's child nutrition interventions against an ideal of 100 points. South Africa's overall participation score was **44** at the national level and **19** at the sub-national level – again out of an ideal score of 100. The participation score measures the extent of public participation in government's decision-making around child nutrition interventions.



The child nutrition interventions included in the study

Looking across sectors and departments, ten government interventions were identified in South Africa that had a direct or indirect aim of advancing child nutrition. After ranking them in terms of the criteria outlined in the methodology section (see page 15), the following five interventions were selected to place under the spotlight in this study:

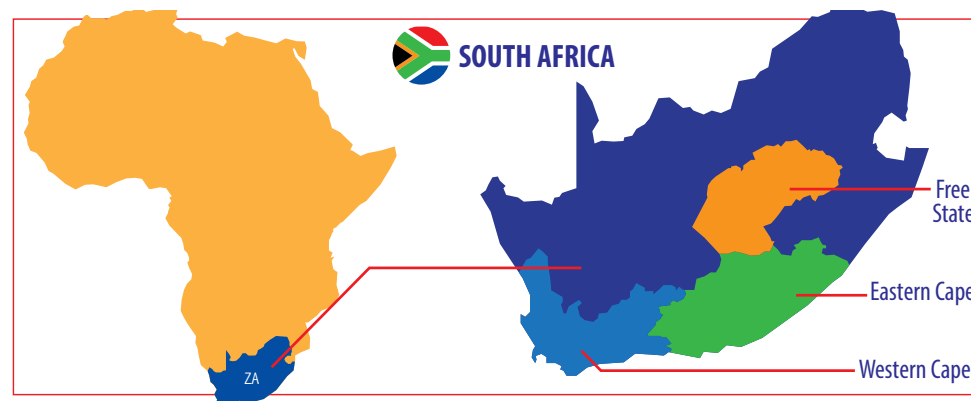
1. The National School Nutrition Programme.
2. The Child Support Grant (CSG).
3. Promotion of early breastfeeding.
4. Vitamin A supplementation.
5. Early childhood education centre grants.

The first intervention falls under the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education. The second is a joint mandate of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the Department of Social Development. The third and fourth interventions fall under the Department of Health, while the fifth is a joint responsibility of the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development.

The sub-national areas selected for the study

The study considered public access to information about the five interventions above at the national level in South Africa. This is reported as the 'national score' in the presentation of findings to follow. In addition to the national score, the study also investigated the availability of information about the same five interventions in the following three provinces:

1. Eastern Cape province
2. Free State province
3. Western Cape province



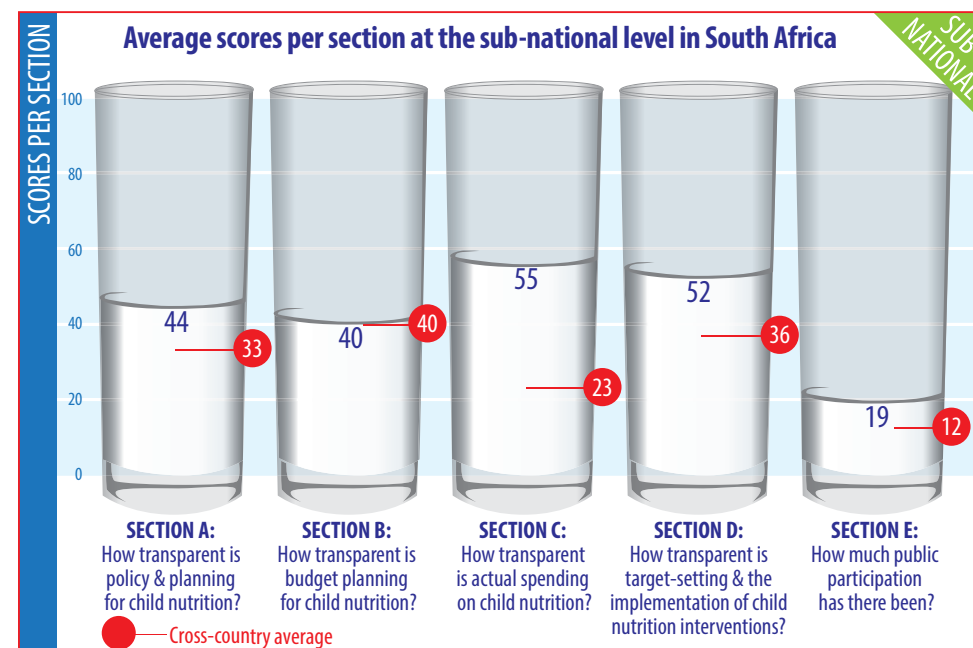
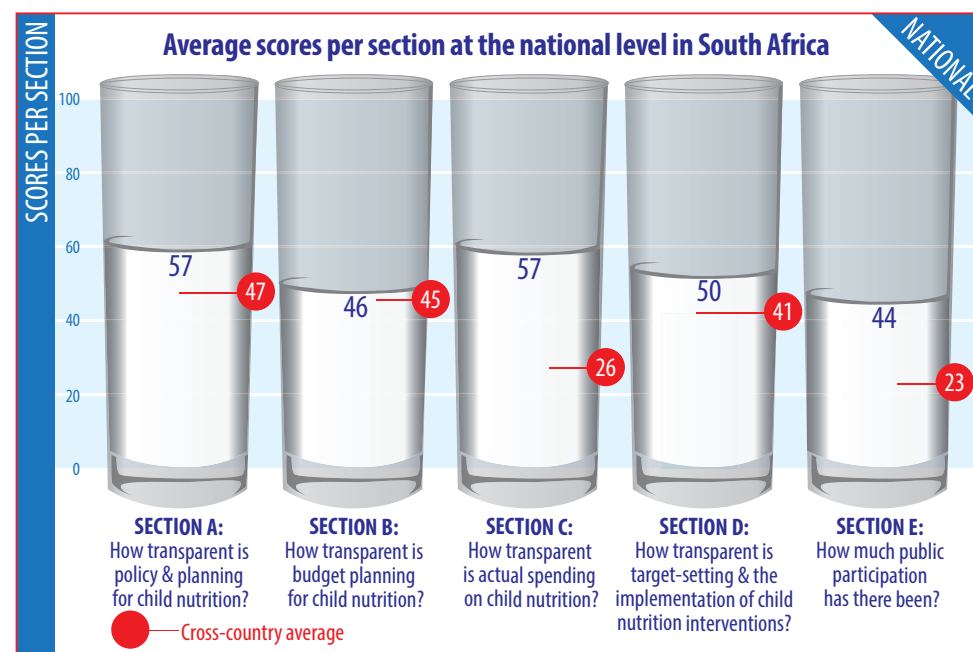
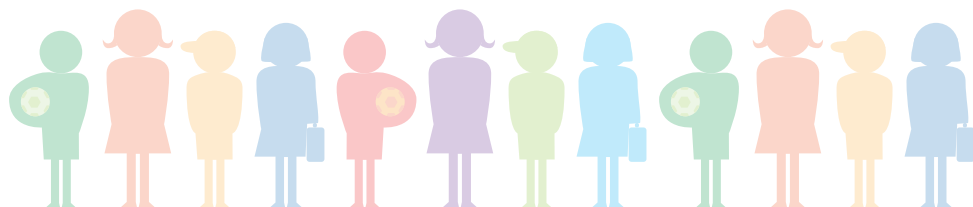
These three provinces were selected as the sample for assessing sub-national transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions. The selection was made on the basis that these provinces have quite different development profiles and institutional capacities, and may therefore be expected to display variations in transparency (See the criteria outlined in the methodology section on page 15).

With the exception of question E9, every one of the other 44 questions in the BTCN Questionnaire was asked of the national level in South Africa and then of each of the selected provinces.

How did South Africa score in each section of the questionnaire?

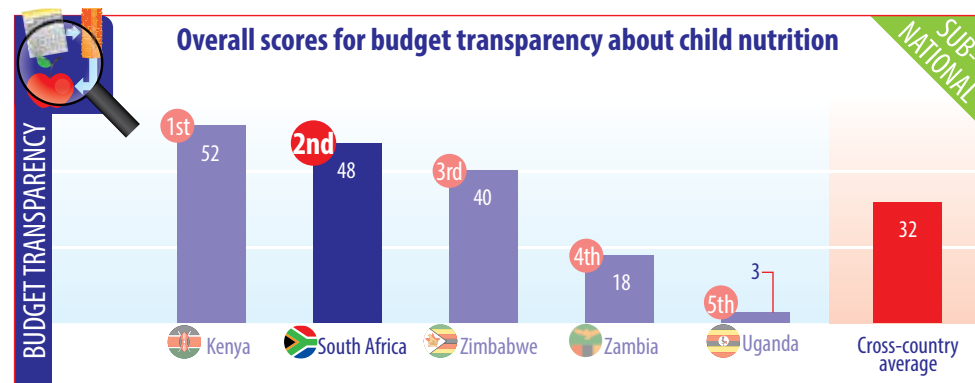
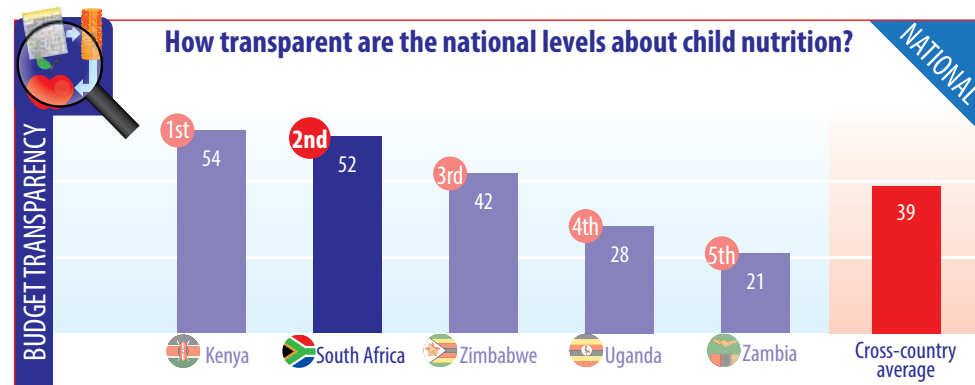
The charts that follow present the mean scores recorded in South Africa for each section of the questionnaire, first at national level and then at sub-national level. The findings show that when it comes to information about the government's child nutrition interventions in South Africa:

- Your chances of accessing budget information are generally slightly better at the national level than at the sub-national level.
- At the national level, the government is most transparent in the areas of policy and planning for child nutrition and making actual expenditure information available.
- South Africa's mean scores across the sections at the national level were relatively even, with only 13 points of difference between the highest and lowest scoring sections.
- Across all five sections of the questionnaire, South Africa's scores fell above the cross-country averages.
- At the sub-national level, the most accessible information in the public domain pertained to actual expenditures, service delivery targets and implementation.
- Not enough adequately detailed information about planned spending on child nutrition could be found at either the national or sub-national levels.
- The extent of public participation in decision-making about the government's child nutrition interventions is insufficient at the national level and dismal at the sub-national level.



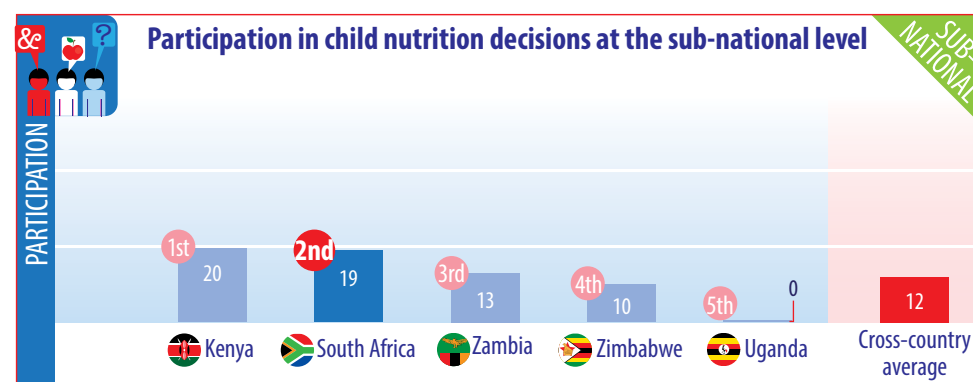
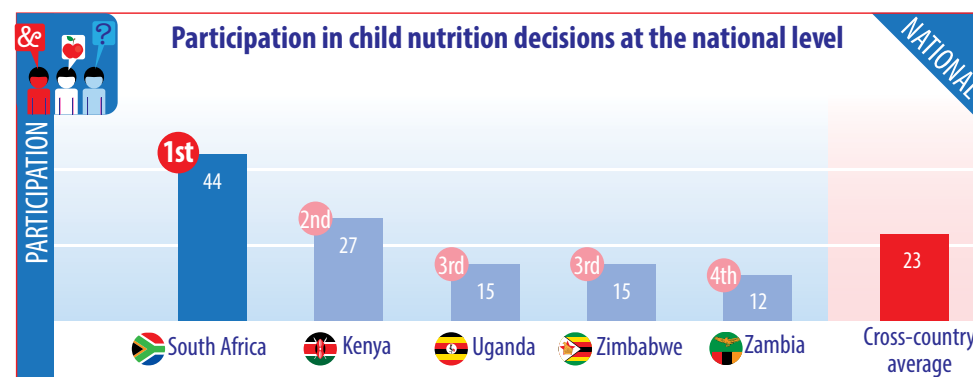
How did South Africa fare relative to the other countries?

At the same time as this study was being undertaken in South Africa, it was also being conducted in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya. The exact same 45 questions that were asked about public access to child nutrition information in South Africa, were asked in the other country studies too. The countries' overall scores can be ranked as follows:



While some caution must be applied in comparing the country findings (see the proviso's raised on page 18), the following points of interest are worth noting:

- South Africa had the second highest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about government child nutrition interventions. This was consistent at both the national and sub-national levels.
- South Africa had the highest score for public participation in government decisions about child nutrition at the national level. It had the second highest score, after Kenya, for participation at the sub-national level.

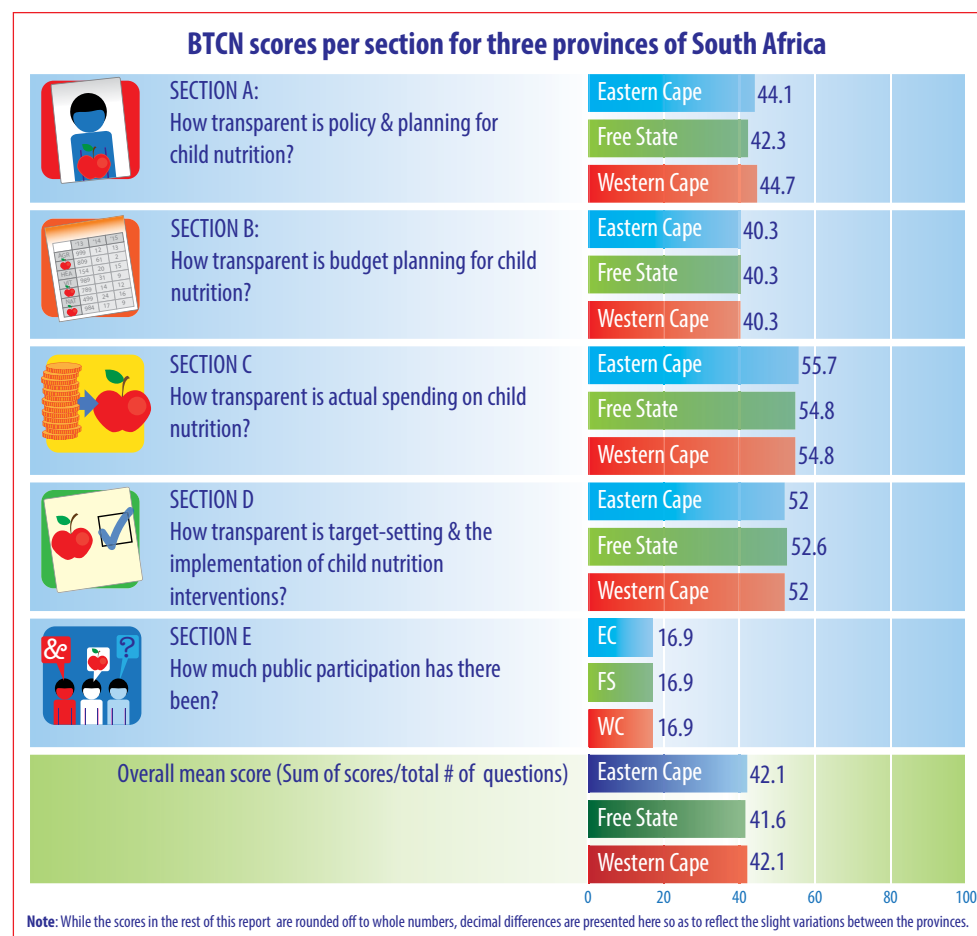


- South Africa scored higher than any other countries for public access to information about policies and plans for child nutrition at the national level (Section A). It also had significantly higher levels of transparency than the other countries in the area of actual expenditure information (Section C).
- South Africa had the second highest scores (after Kenya) for transparency around policy and planning for child nutrition at the sub-national level (Section A) and for budget planning (Section B). It also came in second after Kenya with respect to making information available about service delivery targets and implementation (Section D).

Differences and similarities in national and sub-national findings in South Africa

The survey findings in South Africa showed some variation between national and sub-national levels. While information about service targets and implementation was more readily available in the provinces, the national level showed higher levels of transparency across the other sections. The largest score differences between the national level and the sub-national level were in the areas of policy and planning information (13 point difference) and public participation (25 point difference).

However, the findings reflected little variation in transparency across the three provinces. The average section scores for the three provinces are presented in the chart below.



As the provincial governments have a fair amount of autonomy in budgeting for and implementing most child nutrition interventions, this consistency in transparency levels across the three provinces may at first seem surprising. However, it can be explained by the fact that legislation and regulations for public finance management in South Africa prescribe a stringent, uniform planning and reporting framework through which all public entities are legally bound to report on a regular basis. In addition, some interventions are financed through conditional grants which, by definition, are ring-fenced funds with clear reporting guidelines. The national treasury is also accountable to ensure that provincial departments submit information as required.

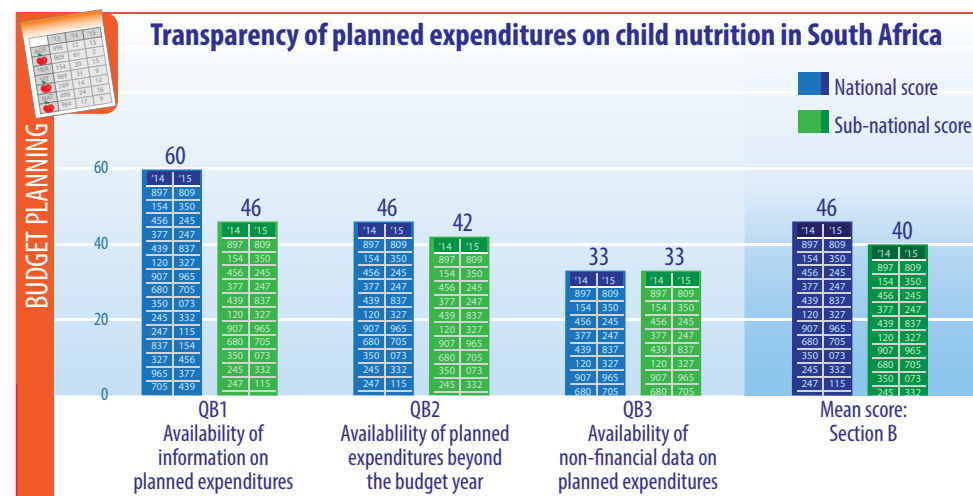
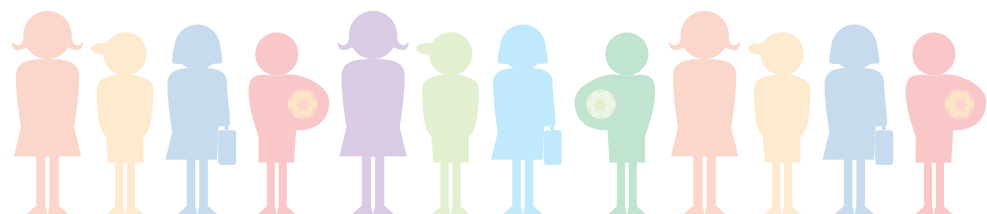
Positive signs of budget transparency for child nutrition

- South Africa's laws ensure that citizens (including children) have the right to access budget information without restriction.
- A fair amount of information is available in the public domain that explains why the government's child nutrition interventions are designed the way they are. This includes information explaining how the interventions are informed by policies, child rights obligations and evidence about the scale of child malnutrition in the country and considerations about co-ordinated planning. By implication, it should be reasonably possible for child rights monitors and interested citizens to be able to gauge whether the interventions are sound in conception.
- Budget documents provide extensive details on the sources of revenue that will be used to finance child nutrition interventions.
- It is possible in South Africa for the public to access some actual expenditure information on child nutrition – though there is still considerable room for improvement in this regard. Here the study recorded varied findings, with actual expenditure on some interventions being more transparent than others. However, there were examples of fairly detailed actual expenditure information being available for at least some of the interventions, in some cases for more than one year and more regularly than on a yearly basis. In the case of two interventions, budget documents also presented comparisons between planned and actual expenditures.
- The time lapse between actual spending on child nutrition interventions and the release of audit reports was found to be reasonable. South Africa was the only country in the study that could provide access to audited expenditure information less than two years after spending took place.
- The performance indicators set in place by the government to monitor its child nutrition interventions are in most instances well enough designed to enable the government itself (and civil society actors) to track whether service delivery targets have been met. (Interestingly, this was one of the few findings where the scores differed considerably across the three provinces).

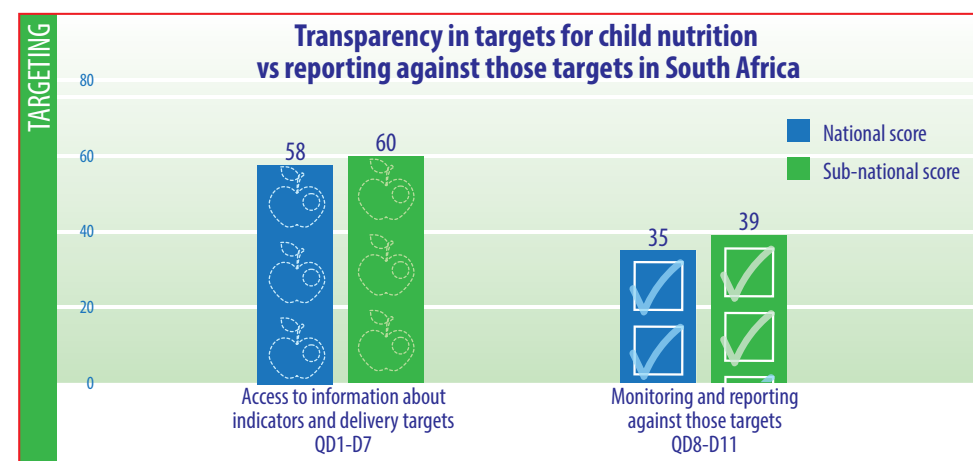
- A fair amount of information exists in the public domain about the government's targeting of children to benefit from its nutrition interventions. This information makes reference to the government's intentions of reaching children in their early years.
- While public participation in government decision-making about child nutrition was generally inadequate in South Africa, some efforts had been made at the national level to consult with primary caregivers of vulnerable children.

Areas in need of improvement

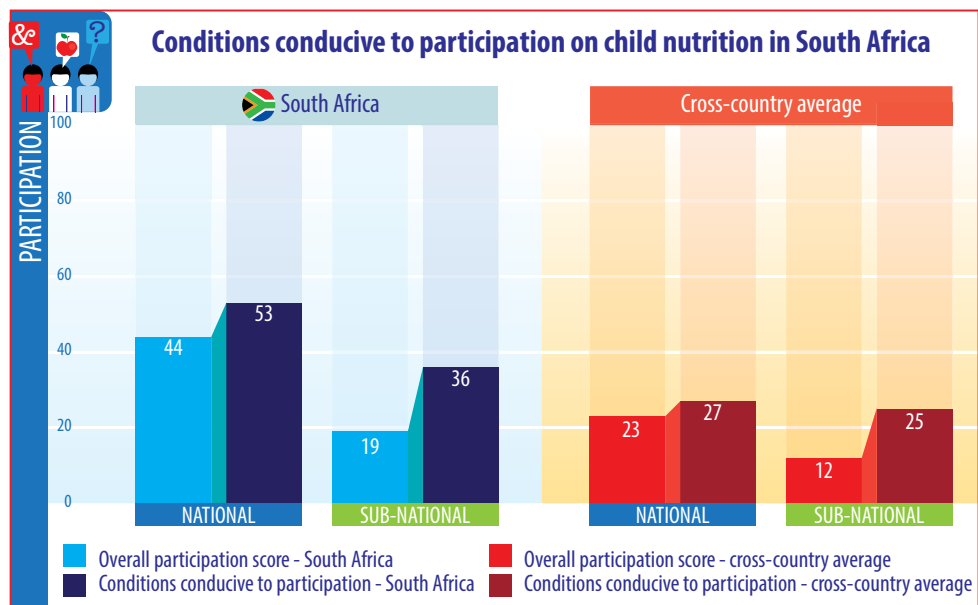
- Current information about government's policy and planning for child nutrition gives hardly any consideration of the obstacles children may encounter when they try to access planned interventions. Furthermore, the performance targets for monitoring the implementation of the interventions make very little reference to overcoming obstacles in children's access.
- Unless transparency around planned spending on child nutrition interventions can be improved at both the national and sub-national levels, it remains simply impossible to monitor whether allocations to advance child nutrition are sufficient and whether they are distributed in an equitable way.
- It is not possible to identify and adequately track the government's planned expenditures on some of the child nutrition interventions included in the study. For example, the Promotion of Early Breastfeeding and Vitamin A Supplementation are delivered as part of a package of primary health interventions and form part of sub-programs within larger health budgets. It is understandably difficult to provide accurate estimates of planned spending related to them. However, some projections and assumptions must have informed the planned expenditures, and these were not explained in budget documents. Important details were also found to be lacking. The chart on the right sets out the scores recorded for Section B of the questionnaire in South Africa, most of which were below 50.



- Another critical area of concern is the lack of explanation, in year-end reports, of differences between planned and actual spending on child nutrition interventions (QC7). South Africa scored **20** out of an ideal 100 for this question at both the national and sub-national levels.
- While the government shares a fair amount of information with the public about its service delivery targets for child nutrition, it fares less well in monitoring and reporting against those targets. The chart below compares South Africa's average scores for those questions that deal with defining indicators and setting targets (QD1-D7) with the scores for those questions that deal with monitoring and reporting against those targets (QD8-D11).



- While public participation in government decision-making about child nutrition in South Africa is inadequate, especially at the sub-national level, some mechanisms and conditions exist that could foster improvements. The chart below compares South Africa's total scores for Section E at the national and sub-national level, with its scores for those questions dealing with conditions conducive to participation (QE5-E11). This shows that at both levels, conditions conducive to participation in South Africa exceed the cross-country average. The scope for participation is not matched by the actual levels of participation currently taking place in relation to child nutrition.



- Finally, South Africa achieved one of its weakest participation scores for failing to produce, at national or sub-national level, any budget summaries in a format appropriate for children to read (QE7).



SOUTH AFRICA

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study suggest that budget transparency around child nutrition in South Africa can be enhanced in the following important ways:

POLICY & CO-ORDINATION



- Access to evidence on the geographical distribution of child malnutrition in South Africa – and clarity on whether such evidence has informed the design of the government's interventions.
- If the government is considering obstacles children might face in accessing nutrition interventions – and monitoring whether these obstacles are being overcome – this needs to be more transparent in its documents.

BUDGET PLANNING



- More detailed information on the government's planned expenditures for child nutrition at the national and sub-national levels, including narrative information to accompany budget data.

BUDGET PLANNING + ACTUAL SPENDING



- Greater disaggregation of expenditure data relating to child nutrition in the health sector so that specific interventions – for example Vitamin A supplementation – can be identified and tracked.
- Clearer separation and transparency in budgets related to the various programs and aspects of early childhood development. (As more than one sector and level of government is involved in delivering this intervention, a lack of clarity can easily compromise overall accountability).

ACTUAL SPENDING



- Comparisons and explanations, in year-end reports, of the differences between planned and actual expenditure on child nutrition interventions.

IMPLEMENTATION



- The need for more detailed and timely service delivery information showing whether and how service delivery targets have or have not been met.
- Budget documents should provide comparisons between estimated beneficiaries of child nutrition interventions and actual outcomes.

PARTICIPATION

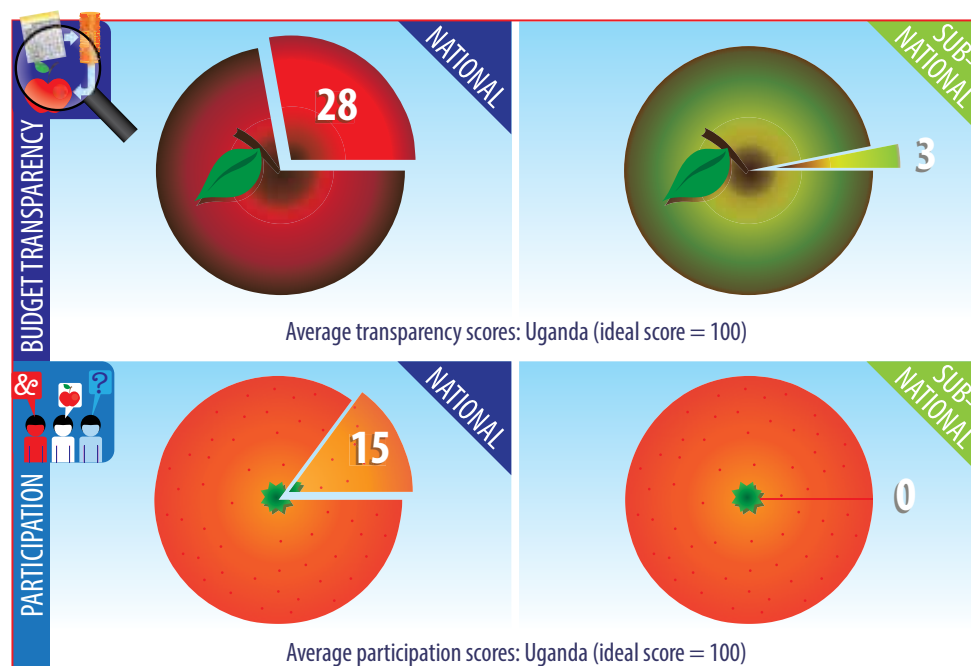


- More and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) in government's decision-making about key interventions that aim to realise children's rights.
- The government should publish summaries of its budgets (especially those most relevant to children) in a format that children would find easy to read.

Country Findings:

Uganda

Uganda's overall budget transparency score was **28** at the national level and **3** at the sub-national level. These scores measure public access to information about the government's child nutrition interventions against an ideal of 100 points. Uganda's overall participation score was **15** at the national level and **0** at the sub-national level – again out of an ideal score of 100. The participation score measures the extent of public participation in government's decision-making around child nutrition interventions.



The child nutrition interventions included in the study

Looking across sectors and departments, 21 government interventions were identified in Uganda that had a direct or indirect aim of advancing children's nutritional status. After ranking them in terms of the criteria outlined in the methodology section (see page 15), the following five interventions were selected to place under the spotlight in this study:

1. The integration of nutrition issues into plans and budgets at all levels of government by mainstreaming nutrition and creating vote functions for nutrition.
2. The promotion of antenatal and postnatal care services among all pregnant and lactating mothers to monitor child growth, and the health and nutrition status of both the mother and the child.
3. The promotion and support of health and nutrition education to increase the level of awareness of good nutrition.
4. The promotion and support of breast feeding policies, programs and initiatives.
5. The promotion and support of local food processing and value addition at the household and community levels.

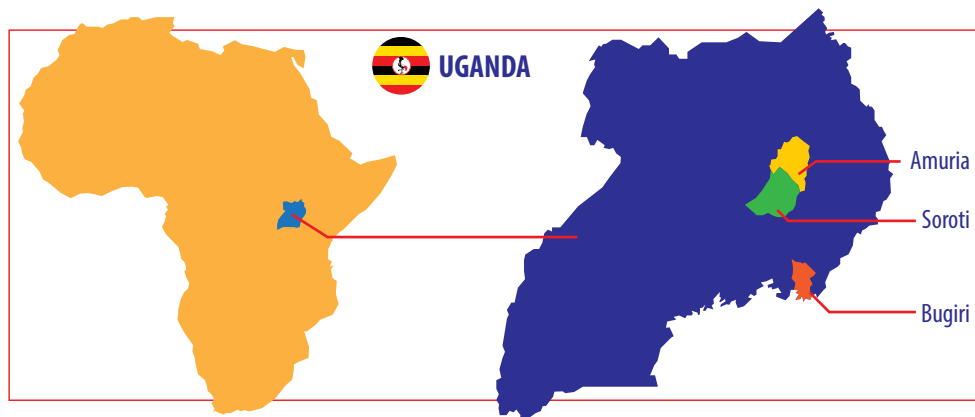
For the first four interventions, the Ministry of Health is the lead agency responsible for planning and budgeting for the interventions, although other ministries and local governments also play a role in implementation. The fifth intervention falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Tourism and Co-operatives. The private sector, development partners and other ministries may play a role in implementation.

The sub-national areas selected for the study

The study considered public access to information about the five interventions above at the national level in Uganda. This is reported as the 'national score' in the findings to follow. In addition to the national score, the study also investigated the availability of information about the same five interventions in the following three districts:

1. Amuria local government
2. Soroti district
3. Bugiri district

These three districts were selected as the sample for assessing sub-national transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions. The selection was made on the basis that these districts have quite different development profiles and may be expected to display variations in transparency (See the criteria outlined in the methodology section on page 15).



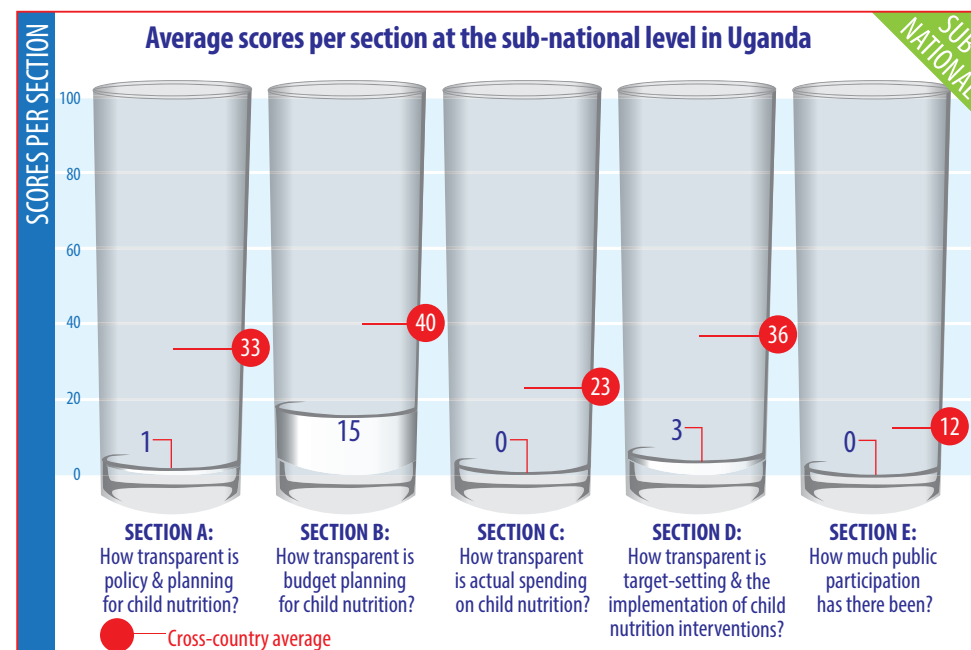
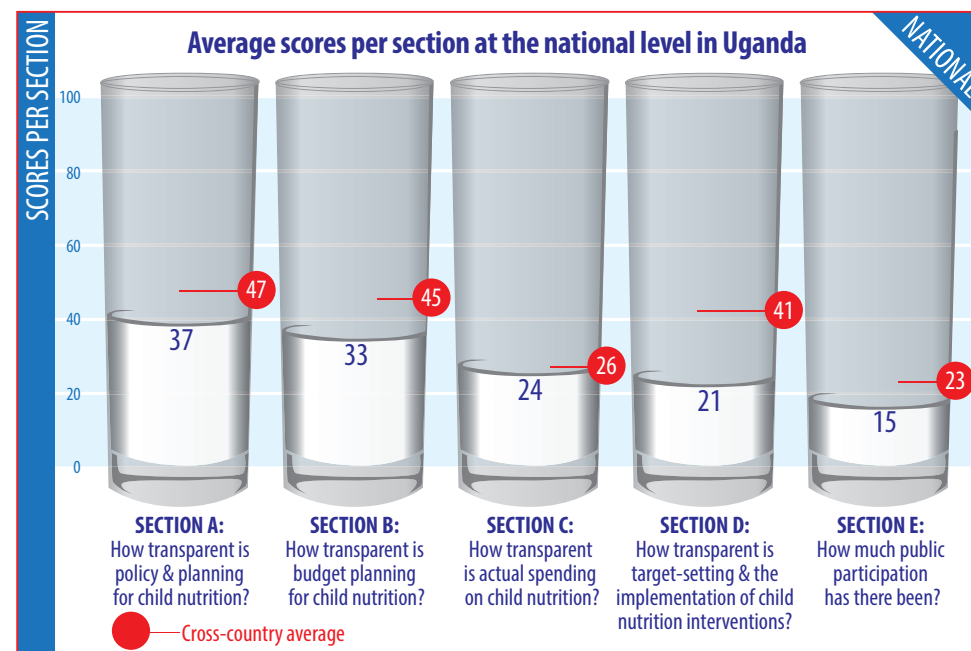
With the exception of question E9, each of the 44 questions in the BTCN Questionnaire was asked of the national level in Uganda and then of each of the selected districts.

How did Uganda score in each section of the questionnaire?

The following charts present the mean scores recorded in Uganda for each section of the questionnaire, first at national level and then at sub-national level.

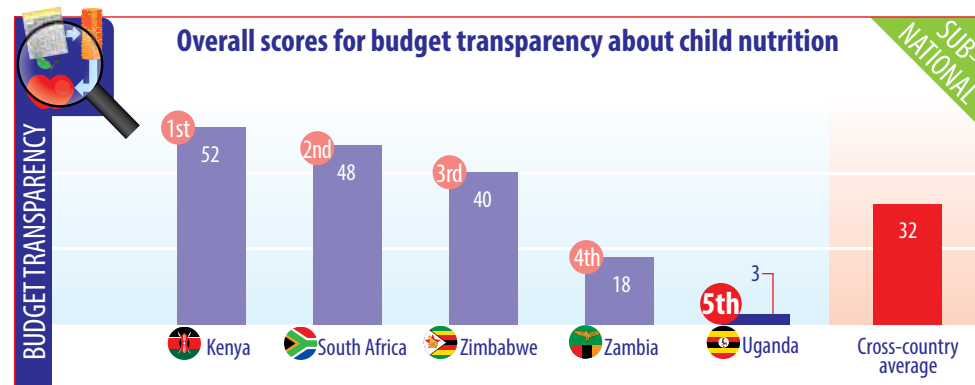
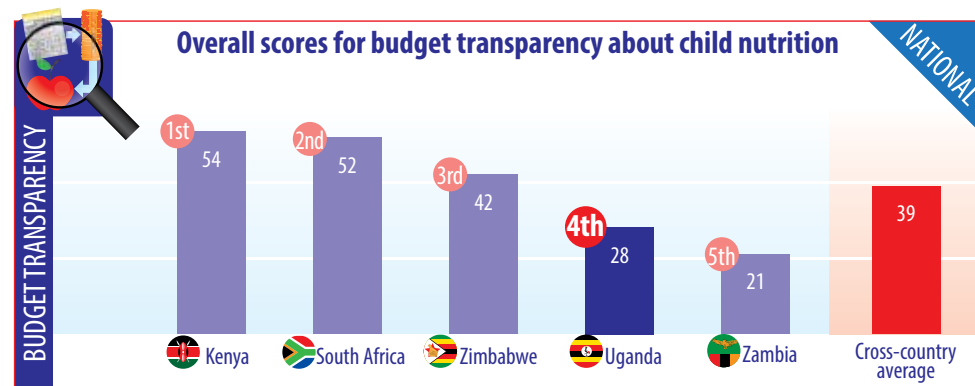
The findings suggest that:

- The level of transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions is generally very low in Uganda.
- While some information about the interventions is available to the public at the national level, transparency at the sub-national level is extremely poor.
- The government is most transparent in the areas of policy and budget planning for child nutrition at the national level. At the sub-national level, a small amount of budget planning information could also be found.
- Less than a quarter of the desired amount of information about actual expenditures, service delivery targets and implementation was available at the national level.
- At the sub-national level, no information was publically available about the government's actual spending on child nutrition. Almost no information could be found about the policies and plans underpinning child nutrition interventions, service delivery targets or results.
- Public participation in decision-making about the government's child nutrition interventions is rare at the national level and non-existent at the sub-national level.



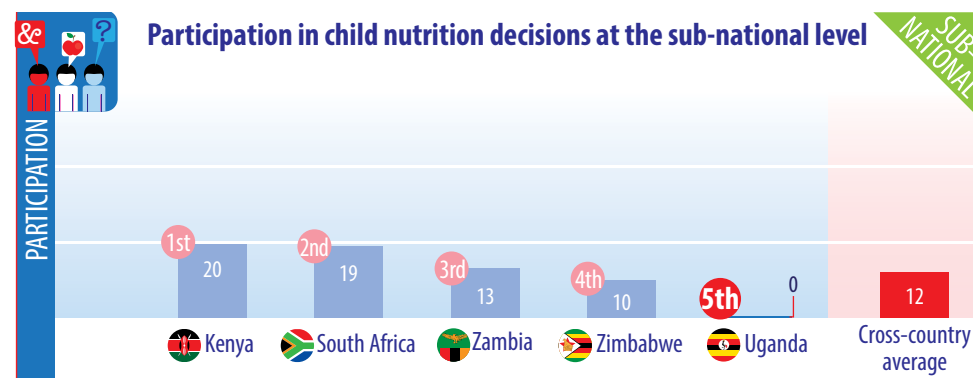
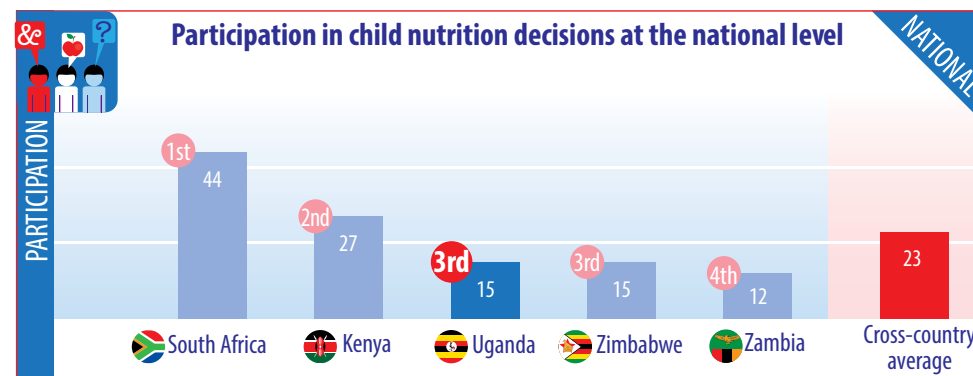
How did Uganda fare relative to the other countries?

At the same time as this study was being undertaken in Uganda, it was also being conducted in Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa and Kenya. The exact same 45 questions that were asked about public access to child nutrition information in Uganda, were asked in the other country studies too. The countries' overall scores can be ranked as follows:



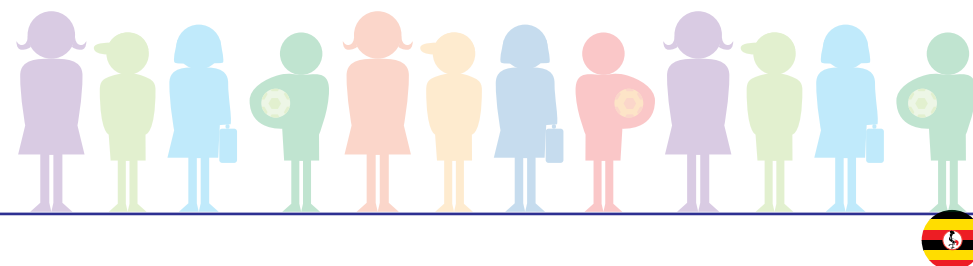
While some caution must be applied in comparing the country findings (see the proviso's raised on page 18), the following points of interest are worth noting:

- Uganda had the second lowest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about child nutrition at the national level.
- It also had the second lowest score (together with Zimbabwe) for public participation in decision-making around child nutrition at the national level.
- Uganda ranked as the least transparent country when it came to trying to access information about child nutrition at the sub-national level. This score stood out



for being considerably less than that of all the other countries. Uganda's score for sub-national budget transparency was six times worse than the next lowest scoring country (Zambia).

- Uganda also had the lowest score, compared to the other four countries, for public participation in child nutrition decisions at the sub-national level.
- Across all five sections of the questionnaire, Uganda scored below the cross-country averages.



Differences between national and sub-national findings in Uganda

The survey findings in Uganda showed large variation between the national and sub-national levels. Its overall transparency score in relation to child nutrition was ten times higher at the national level (**29**) than at the sub-national level (**2.8**). Uganda's overall participation score was fifteen points higher at the national level than at the sub-national level (where it was **0**).

There may be a correlation between Uganda's overall poor transparency performance in this study and these vast disparities between levels of government. By comparison, the country that showed the highest overall transparency scores for child nutrition (Kenya) had almost no variations between the national and sub-national levels. In other words, the same kinds of information about child nutrition that could be accessed at the national level could also generally be found at sub-national levels.

The findings also reflected some notable variations in transparency across the three districts. There were only 9 questions throughout the questionnaire where any information about the government's child nutrition interventions could be accessed at the sub-national level. In the case of each of these 9 questions, the three districts differed from each other in the information they had available to the public. For example, in Amuria district there was a small amount of information in the public domain about the sources of revenue for one of the child nutrition interventions, while in Soroti and Bugiri districts, some costing information on one or more of the interventions could be found.

Overall, the information on child nutrition most often available at district level had to do with planned expenditures. However again, there were considerable discrepancies across the districts in the amounts of budget planning information that could be accessed and in the spread of interventions they had information about. Soroti district had the highest score (relative to the other districts) for Section B of the questionnaire, while Amuria district was the least transparent.

Positive signs of budget transparency for child nutrition

While public access to information about the government's child nutrition interventions is clearly inadequate in Uganda, the following more positive findings should be acknowledged and where possible, built upon:

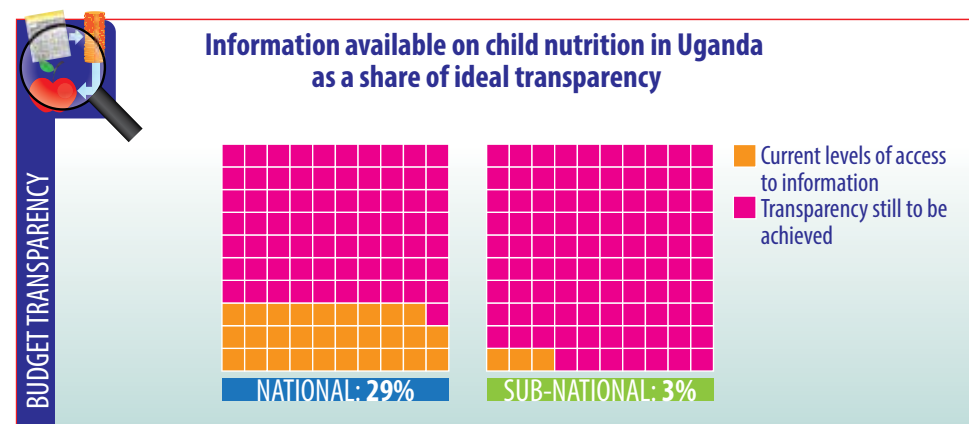
- Uganda's laws ensure that citizens (including children) have the right to access budget information without restriction. Clearly in practice, this legal provision is not currently translating into access to reasonable amounts of information of adequate

quality. However, the legal framework does exist and could be used as a foundation for advocacy.

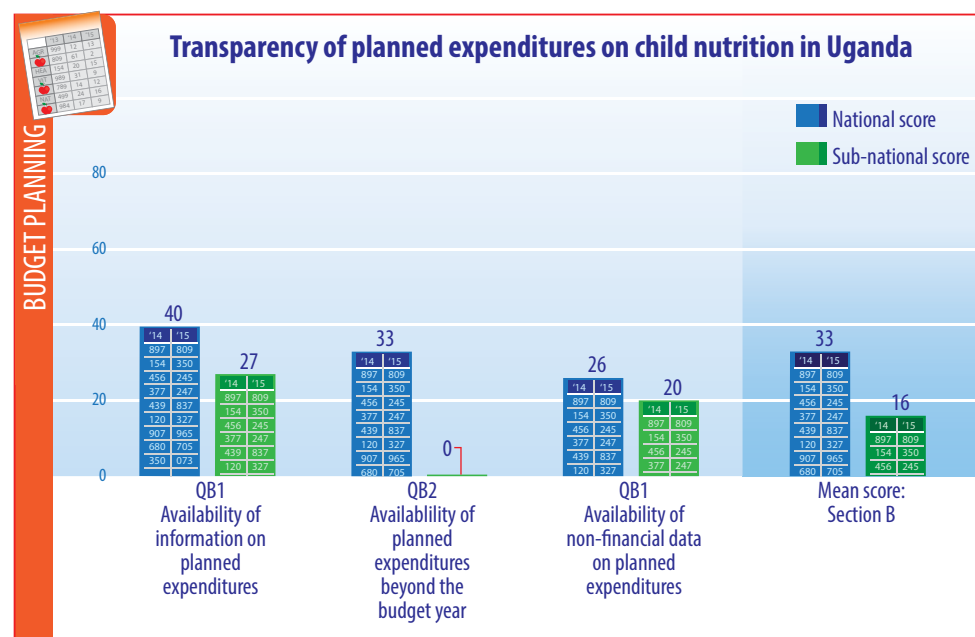
- At the national level, the public can access a fair amount of information that explains why the government's child nutrition interventions are designed the way they are. This includes information explaining how interventions are informed by policies, child rights obligations and the scale of child malnutrition in the country. By implication, it should be reasonably possible for child rights monitors and interested citizens to gauge whether the interventions are sound in conception.
- Uganda provides public access to some information about the sources of revenue being used to finance at least four of its child nutrition interventions, including the role of development aid. However, this was not true of all the child nutrition interventions and where information was provided, details were found to be lacking.
- Budget documents available at the national level in Uganda reveal attempts to cost four of the child nutrition interventions. Citizens (and others) therefore have a window on the assumptions being made by the government in budgeting for these interventions.
- Some information exists in the public domain about the government's service delivery targets in relation to child nutrition. At the national level, reporting documents also compare the results achieved against the delivery targets that were set.

Areas in need of improvement

- Overall, the public needs access to much more and much more detailed information about the government's child nutrition interventions at the national level and especially at district level in Uganda. The chart below shows how little information is currently available on child nutrition in Uganda, relative to the total amount of information that would be seen as 'fully transparent'.



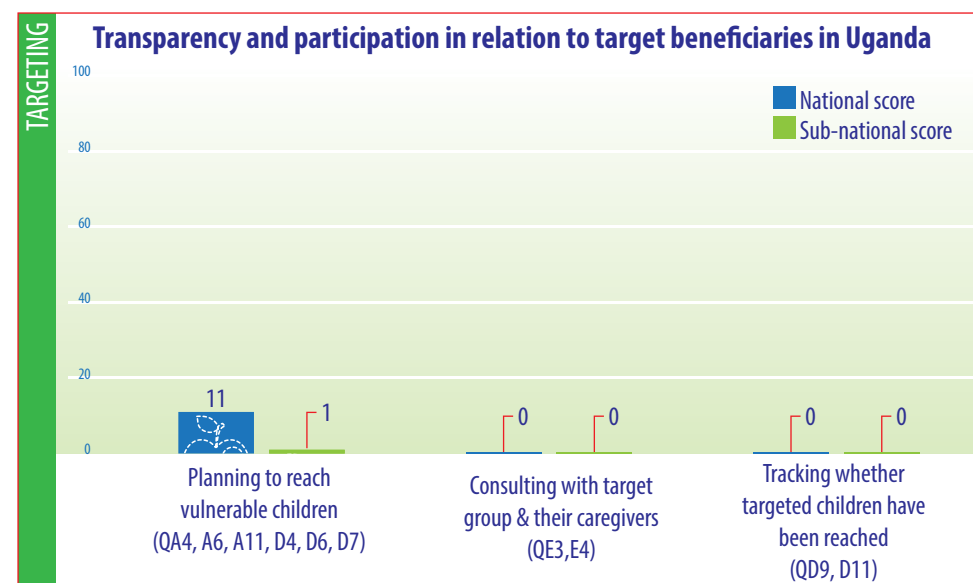
- Very little evidence exists in the public domain regarding the geographical distribution of the child malnutrition problem in Uganda (QA4). This makes it impossible to assess whether resources to advance nutrition amongst children are being spread fairly and whether delivery targets are sound.
- Budget documents do not reflect any consideration of obstacles children may face in accessing child nutrition interventions (QA5). There is furthermore no information to indicate that government is monitoring whether such obstacles are being overcome when interventions are delivered (QD5).
- Too little information (and with too little detail) is being made publically available about what the government is planning to spend on its child nutrition interventions. The chart below presents the average scores recorded for Section B of the questionnaire in Uganda, most of which were below 35. The findings show that no information beyond the current budget year could be found at the district level, and that which was available at the national level lacked important details. Almost no narrative information accompanied the budget data. Without such information, it is largely impossible to analyse or track the government's allocations for advancing child nutrition in Uganda.



- Greater transparency is also urgently required in providing public access to more and better actual expenditure information on child nutrition in Uganda. This includes the need for more detailed expenditure data over more years, for comparisons between

budgeted and actual expenditures, and for narrative explanations of actual expenditure figures.

- Drastic improvements are needed in making actual expenditure information available at the district level.
- Another critical issue in need of attention was the absence of any actual expenditure information on child nutrition that had been audited in any of the two years prior to the budget year.
- Transparency during the implementation of child nutrition interventions is equally in need of improvement. The public need a great deal more detailed information about service delivery targets, especially those that shed light on the targeting of beneficiaries. Reporting on actual results and beneficiaries reached is also essential. The following chart shows the average scores achieved in Uganda in relation to different sets of questions about the target beneficiaries of child nutrition interventions.



- The findings above clearly indicate the vast scope of information about child nutrition that cannot be accessed in Uganda in the public domain. They also confirm that public participation in government decision-making about child nutrition in Uganda is severely inadequate (including the participation of children themselves).
- No mechanisms exist at the national or sub-national level to enable consultations with children, their care-givers or civil society. Work is needed to create conditions that are conducive to participation.



UGANDA

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study suggest that budget transparency around child nutrition in Uganda can be advanced in the following important ways:



POLICY & CO-ORDINATION

- Access to evidence on the geographical distribution of child malnutrition in Uganda – and clarity on whether such evidence has informed the design of the government's interventions.
- Information on obstacles children might face in accessing nutrition interventions – and reporting on whether these obstacles are being overcome.



BUDGET PLANNING

- Improved information about sources of revenue and development aid, with more detailed information being provided consistently for all interventions at both the national and sub-national levels.
- Much more and much more detailed information on the government's planned expenditures for child nutrition at the national and sub-national levels, including narrative information to accompany budget data.



ACTUAL SPENDING

- Public access to detailed, timely in-year and year-end actual expenditure information.
- Comparisons and explanations, in year-end reports, of the differences between planned and actual expenditure on child nutrition interventions.
- Audited figures to be available within two years of actual spending.



IMPLEMENTATION

- The need for more detailed and timely service delivery information showing whether and how service delivery targets have or have not been met.
- Budget documents should provide comparisons between estimated beneficiaries of child nutrition interventions and actual outcomes.



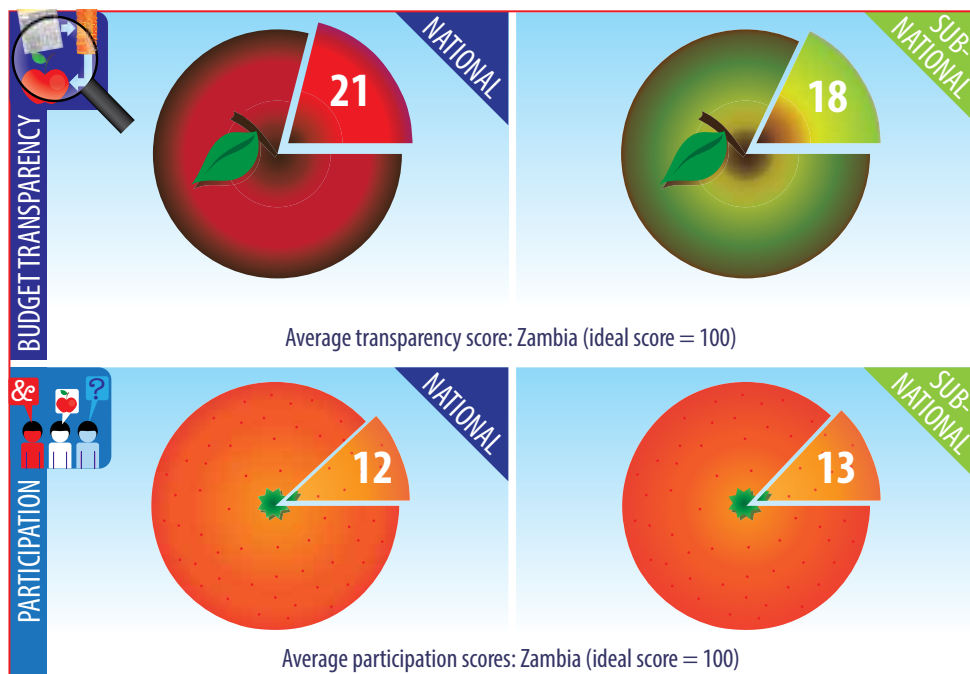
PARTICIPATION

- The creation of mechanisms and conditions conducive to public participation in the budget process.
- More and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) in government's decision-making about key interventions that aim to realise children's rights.

Country Findings:

Zambia

Zambia's overall budget transparency score was **21** at the national level and **18** at the sub-national level. These scores measure public access to information about the government's child nutrition interventions against an ideal of 100 points. Zambia's overall participation score was **12** at the national level and **13** at the sub-national level – again out of an ideal score of 100. The participation score measures the extent of public participation in government's decision-making around child nutrition interventions.



The child nutrition interventions included in the study

Looking across sectors and departments, eleven government interventions were identified in Uganda that had a direct or indirect aim of advancing children's nutritional status. After ranking them in terms of the criteria outlined in the methodology section (see page 15), the following five interventions were selected to place under the spotlight in this study:

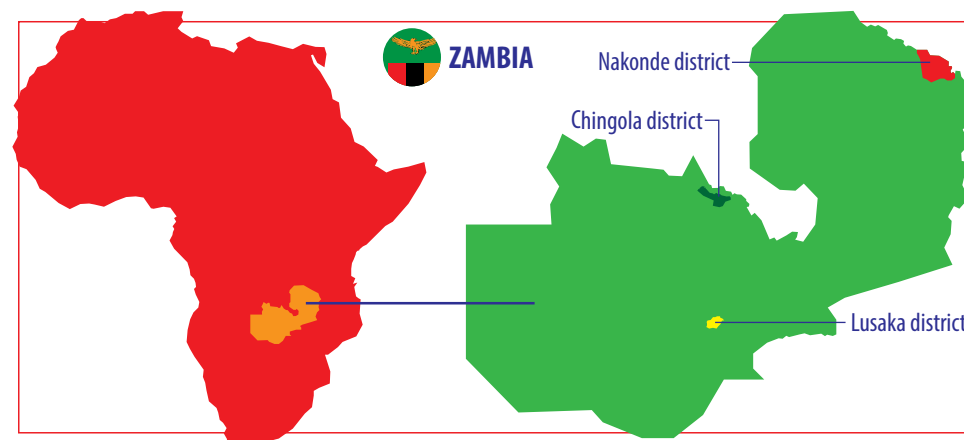
1. Promotion of breastfeeding (0-6 months).
2. Complementary feeding.
3. Management of severe malnutrition.
4. Ensuring micronutrient nutrition supplies for children are available (including the supplementation of Vitamin A and Iron for pregnant mothers).
5. Growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) at facilities, i.e. under five clinics.

All five of the selected interventions fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

The sub-national areas selected for the study

The study considered public access to information about the five interventions above at the national level in Zambia. This is reported as the 'national score' in the findings to follow. In addition to the national score, the study also investigated the availability of information about the same five interventions in the following three districts:

1. Lusaka district
2. Nakonde district
3. Chingola district



These three districts were selected as the sample for assessing sub-national transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions. The selection was made on the basis that the districts have varying track-records and institutional capacity for budget reporting and so may be expected to show different results. (See the criteria outlined in the methodology section on page 15).

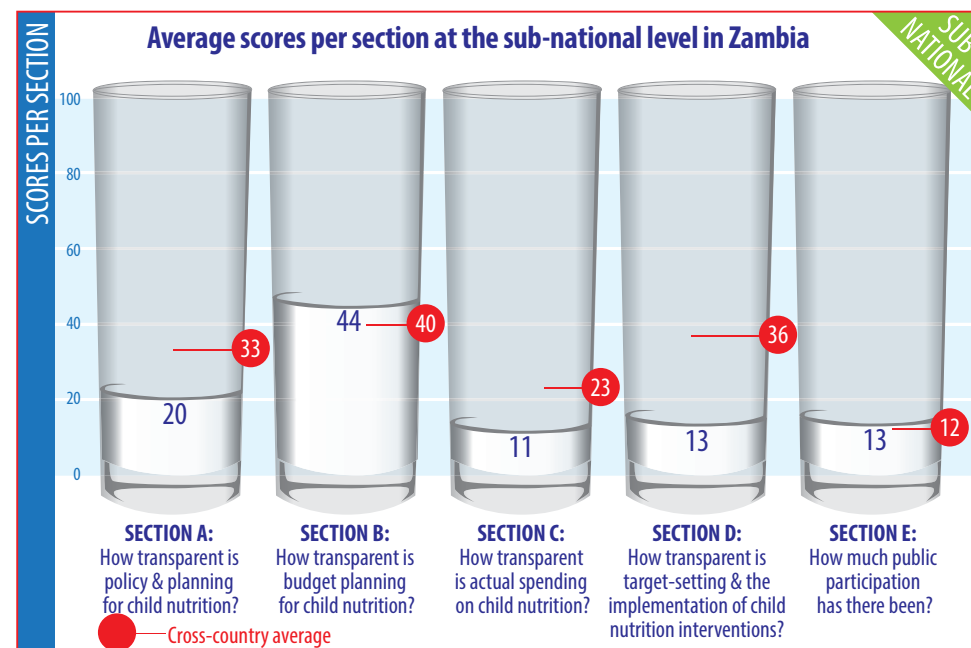
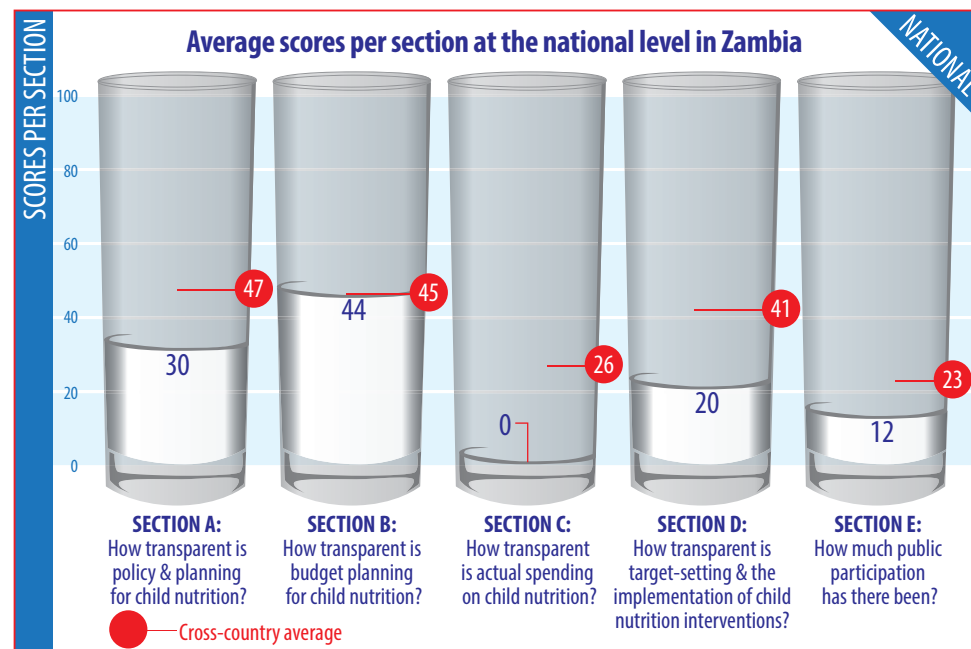
With the exception of question E9, every one of the other 44 questions in the BTCN Questionnaire was asked of the national level in Zambia and then of each of the selected districts.

How did Zambia score in each section of the questionnaire?

The charts to follow present the mean scores recorded in Zambia for each section of the questionnaire, first at national level and then at sub-national level.

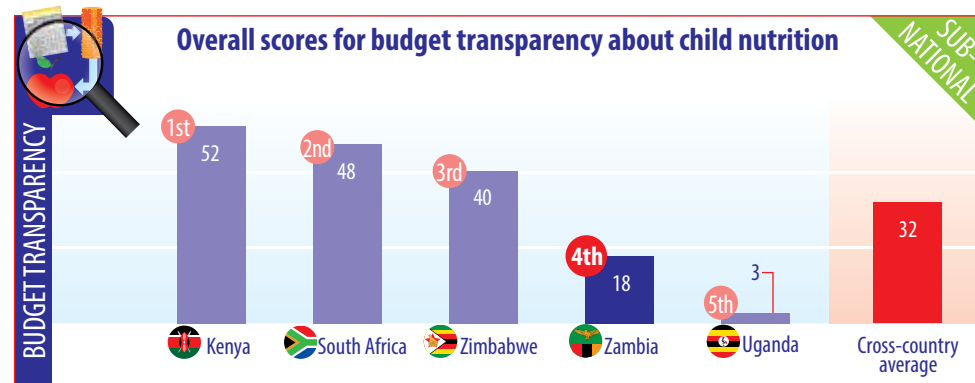
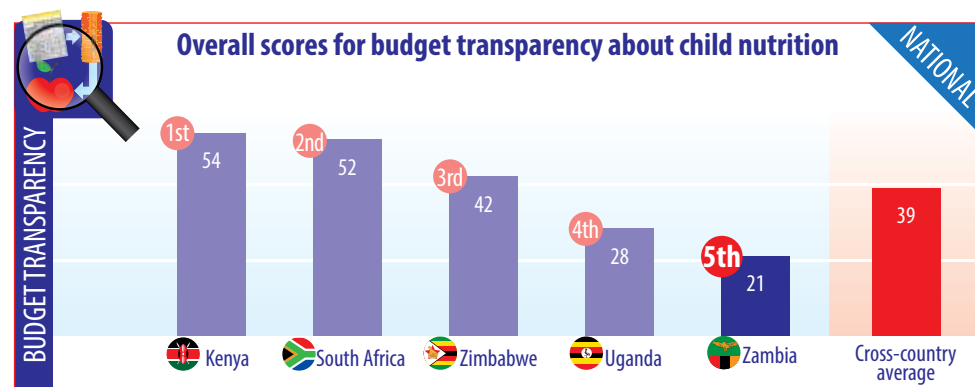
The findings suggest that:

- The level of transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions is generally inadequate in Zambia.
- The government is most transparent in the area of budget planning for child nutrition.
- Your chances of accessing planned expenditure information about child nutrition are just as good at the sub-national level than they are at the national level.
- There is some information in the public domain about the policies and plans underpinning the government's child nutrition interventions. About a third of the desired information could be found at the national level and around a fifth at the sub-national level.
- There is very limited access to information about actual expenditures on child nutrition, service delivery targets and results. At the national level, no actual expenditure information could be found at all.
- Hardly any public participation takes place in Zambia to influence decision-making about the government's child nutrition interventions at either the national or the sub-national level.



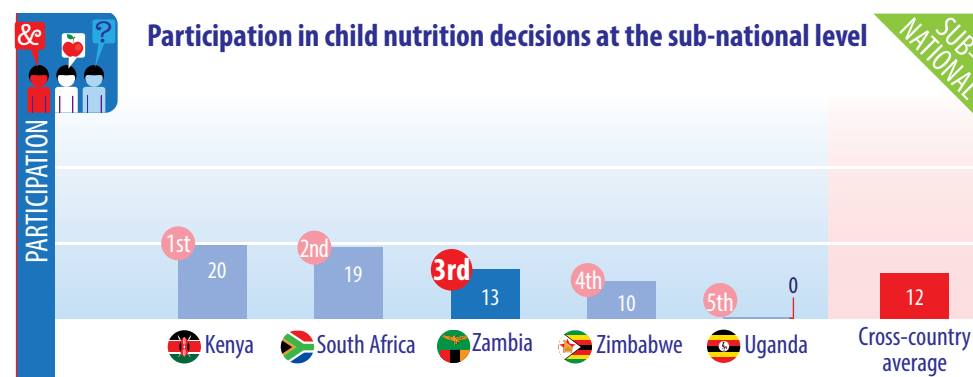
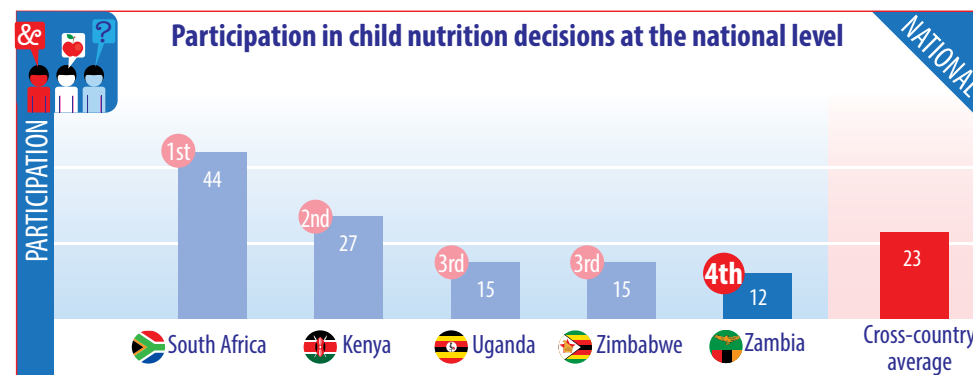
How did Zambia fare relative to the other countries?

At the same time as this study was being undertaken in Zambia, it was also being conducted in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya and Uganda. The exact same 45 questions that were asked about public access to child nutrition information in Zambia, were asked in the other country studies too. The countries' overall scores can be ranked as follows:

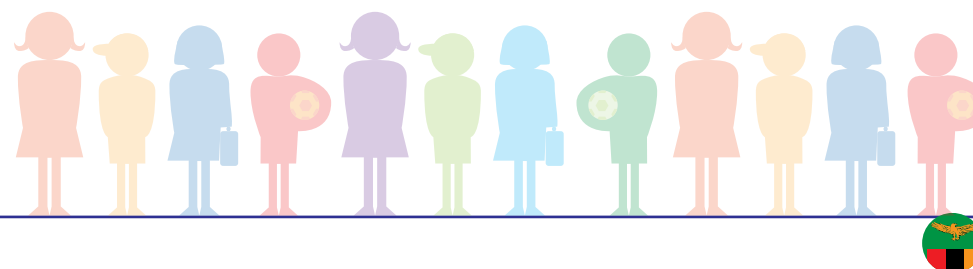


While some caution must be applied in comparing the country findings (see the proviso raised on page 18), the following points of interest are worth noting:

- Zambia had the lowest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about child nutrition at the national level.
- It ranked as the second least transparent country (after Uganda) when it came to trying to access budget information about child nutrition at the sub-national level.
- Zambia also had the lowest score, compared to the other four countries, for public participation in child nutrition decisions at the national level.



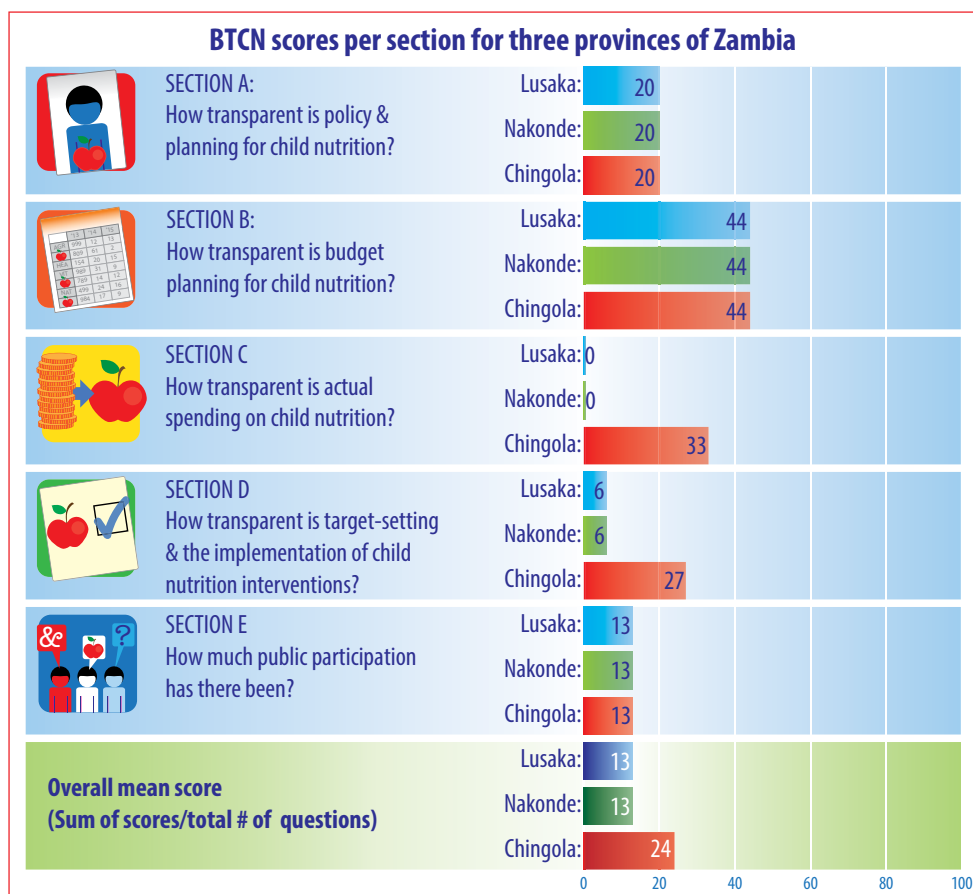
- Zambia's highest ranking in this study was for public participation in decision-making around child nutrition at the sub-national level. It was the only country that had a higher participation score at the sub-national level than at the national level.
- Across most sections of the questionnaire, Zambia scored below the cross-country averages. It scored above the cross-country average for access to planned expenditure information at the sub-national level and for public participation at the sub-national level.



Similarities and differences between national and sub-national findings in Zambia

The survey findings in Zambia showed some variation between the national and sub-national levels. However, the aggregate level of public access to information was not found to be vastly different at the two levels. The overall transparency score at the national level (**21**) was three points higher than at the sub-national level (**18**). This difference was largely due to discrepancies in access to actual expenditure information. Zambia was the only country in the study where public access to expenditure information was better at the sub-national level than at the national level.

Another interesting trend in Zambia was the variation in scores across the three districts. The chart below shows the average scores per section for the three districts.



While some countries (like Kenya and Zimbabwe) reflected almost no sub-national variation, the research in Zambia pointed to notable differences in transparency about child nutrition in the three districts. There were 23 questions in the questionnaire in response to which any information could be found at the sub-national level. Of these 23 questions, 10 reflected uneven patterns of access across the districts, with Chingola district most often providing access to more information and different kinds of information than the other two districts.

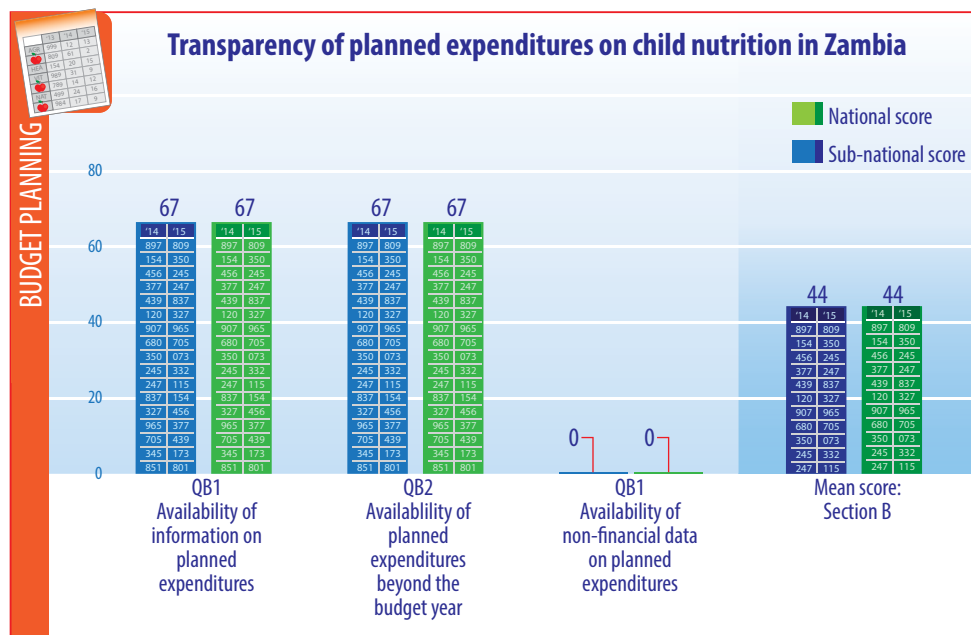
The findings indicate that it was possible to find some actual expenditure and service delivery information about child nutrition in Chingola district that could not be provided in the other two districts.

Positive signs of budget transparency for child nutrition

While the levels of transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions remain too low in Zambia, some more positive findings should be acknowledged:

- At the national level, the public can access at least some information that explains why the government's child nutrition interventions are designed the way they are. This includes a little information explaining how the interventions are informed by policies and a fair amount of evidence about the scale of child malnutrition in the country. A foundation therefore exists that can be built upon in future to include more and more varied policy and planning information at both the national and sub-national levels.
- Zambia is faring moderately well in providing public access to information about the government's planned expenditures on child nutrition interventions – for the budget year and at least one year beyond. The chart on the following page shows the findings for Section B of the questionnaire in Zambia. Clearly, by simply adding more narrative comments to its budget planning documents, explaining the thinking behind budget allocations to child nutrition, Zambia's mean score for transparency in this section of the questionnaire could be a third higher. Zambia's documents reflect some consideration of co-ordinated planning, budgeting and service delivery to advance child nutrition. It is also possible to access a fair amount of information about the role of development aid in financing child nutrition interventions.

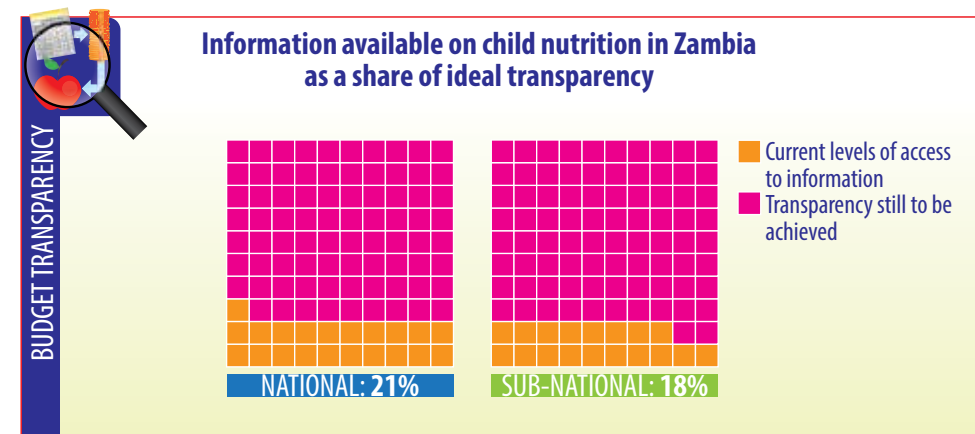




- Some actual expenditure information could be found in Chingola district – and where it could be found, the information was fairly detailed and available more often than on a yearly basis. Comparisons were also provided between planned and actual expenditures.
- Similarly, some information exists in the public domain about service delivery targets in relation to child nutrition In Chingola district. While transparency in Chingola district can still be improved upon in many ways, it does provide some good practice examples to investigate further and where appropriate, emulate in other districts.
- The government consulted with the public to a fair extent at both the national and sub-national levels in Zambia to inform the design and implementation of its child nutrition interventions.

Areas in need of improvement

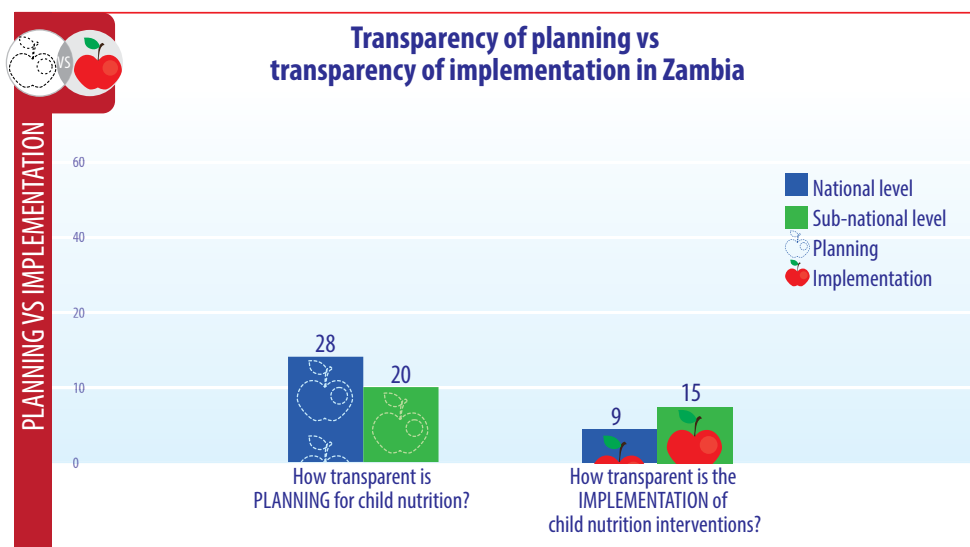
- Overall, the public needs access to much more and much more detailed information about the government's child nutrition interventions at the national level and at district level in Zambia. The chart below shows how little information is currently available on child nutrition in Zambia, relative to the total amount of information that would be seen as 'fully transparent'.



- The legal framework in Zambia does not currently guarantee the rights of children (or adults) to access budget information without restriction.
- No evidence exists in the public domain regarding the geographical distribution of child malnutrition in Zambia (QA4). This makes it impossible to assess whether resources to advance nutrition amongst children are being spread fairly and whether delivery targets are sound.
- Budget documents reflect very little consideration of obstacles children may face in accessing child nutrition interventions (QA5). There is no indication that government is monitoring whether such obstacles are being overcome when interventions are delivered (QD5).
- More narrative information is required in budget documents, so that the public can understand the considerations and assumptions behind budget figures pertaining to child nutrition.
- A key area where greater transparency is urgently required is in providing public access to more and better actual expenditure information on child nutrition. This includes the need for more detailed expenditure data over more years, for comparisons between budgeted and actual expenditures, and for narrative explanations of actual expenditure figures.



- Another critical issue in need of attention was the absence of any actual expenditure information on child nutrition in Zambia that had been audited in any of the two years prior to the budget year.
- Very little information is available in the public domain to suggest that vulnerable children are being prioritised in child nutrition interventions, or reflecting whether they are being reached.
- Transparency during the implementation of child nutrition interventions is in need of vast improvement. The public need a great deal more detailed information about service delivery targets, especially those that shed light on the targeting of beneficiaries. Reporting on actual results and beneficiaries reached is also essential.
- The following chart compares Zambia's average scores for the questions pertaining to policy and planning (Sections A, B and D1-D7) with their average scores for questions regarding the implementation and monitoring of child nutrition interventions (Sections C and D8-D11). These findings show that while transparency is severely lacking on both these fronts, it is especially on the implementation side that we see the most critical lack of information.



- Finally, few mechanisms exist at the national or sub-national level in Zambia to support public participation in and public education about the government's budget decisions. No consultations about nutrition issues took place either with children directly or with their care-givers (Questions E2, E3, E4) and no budget summaries could be found in a format appropriate for children to read (QE7).

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study suggest that budget transparency around child nutrition in Zambia can be improved in the following important ways:

POLICY & CO-ORDINATION

- Access to evidence on the geographical distribution of child malnutrition in Zambia – and clarity on whether such evidence has informed the design of the government's interventions.
- Information on obstacles children might face in accessing nutrition interventions – and reporting on whether these obstacles are being overcome.

BUDGET PLANNING

- Improved information about sources of revenue for financing child nutrition interventions.
- Much more narrative information in budget documents, to explain and contextualise budget allocations and expenditures.

ACTUAL SPENDING

- Public access to detailed, timely in-year and year-end actual expenditure information at the national and district levels.
- Comparisons and explanations, in year-end reports, of the differences between planned and actual expenditure on child nutrition interventions.
- Audited figures to be available within two years of actual spending.

IMPLEMENTATION

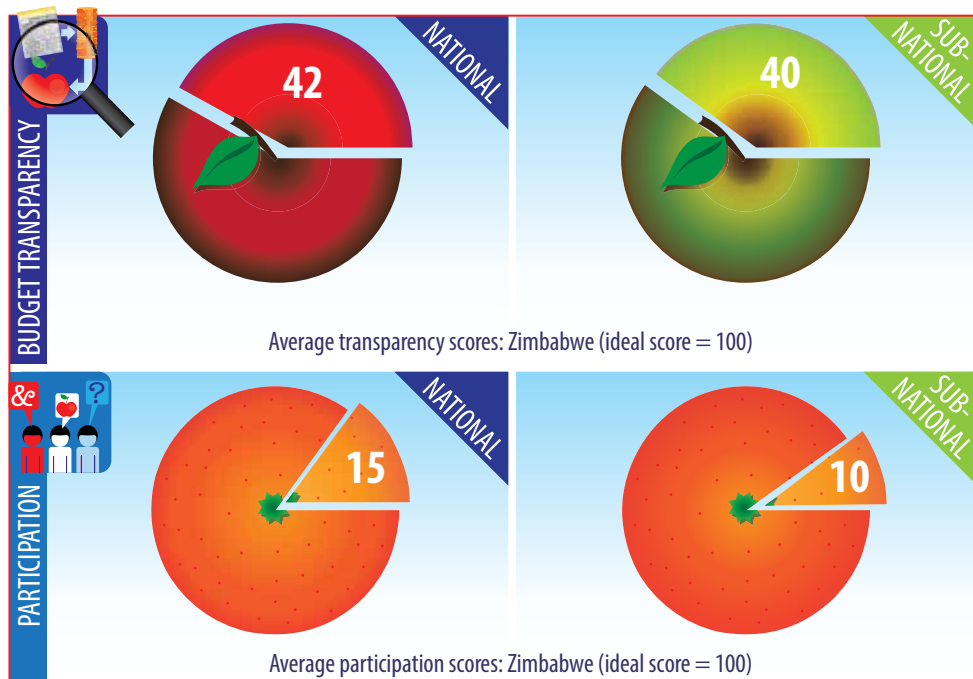
- The need for more detailed and timely service delivery information showing whether and how service delivery targets have or have not been met.
- Budget documents should provide comparisons between estimated beneficiaries of child nutrition interventions and actual outcomes.

PARTICIPATION

- The creation of mechanisms and conditions conducive to public participation in the budget process.
- More and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) in government's decision-making about key interventions that aim to realise children's rights.

Country Findings: Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's overall transparency score was **42** at the national level and **40** at the sub-national level. These scores measure public access to information about the government's child nutrition interventions against an ideal of 100 points. Zimbabwe's overall participation score was **15** at the national level and **10** at the sub-national level – again out of an ideal score of 100. The participation score measures the extent of public participation in government's decision-making around child nutrition interventions.



The child nutrition interventions included in the study

Looking across sectors and departments, ten government interventions were identified in Zimbabwe that had a direct or indirect aim of advancing child nutrition. After ranking them in terms of the criteria outlined in the methodology section (see page 15), the following five interventions were selected to place under the spotlight:

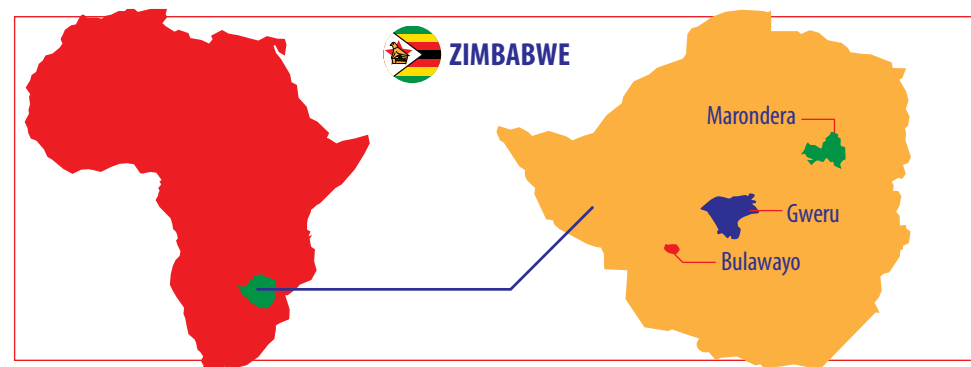
1. Vitamin A and Zinc supplementation for children from 6 months of age (Zimbabwe Expanded Programme on Immunisation).
2. The promotion of exclusive breast-feeding up to 6 months.
3. Special care for children exposed to or infected with HIV (Zimbabwe Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative).
4. Improving the nutrient intake of breast-feeding mothers.
5. Providing meals to school children at schools (Zimbabwe Child Supplementary Feeding Programme).

All five interventions fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Health & Child Welfare. In the case of the third intervention, the responsibility is further shared with the Ministry of Labour & Social Services. For the fifth intervention, the responsibility is also shared with the Ministry of Labour & Social Services and the Ministry of Education, Sport & Culture.

The sub-national areas selected for the study

The study considered public access to information about the five interventions above at the national level in Zimbabwe. This is reported as the 'national score' in the presentation of findings to follow. In addition to the national score, the study also investigated the availability of information about the same five interventions in the following three districts:

1. Bulawayo City Council
2. Gweru City Council
3. Marondera Municipality



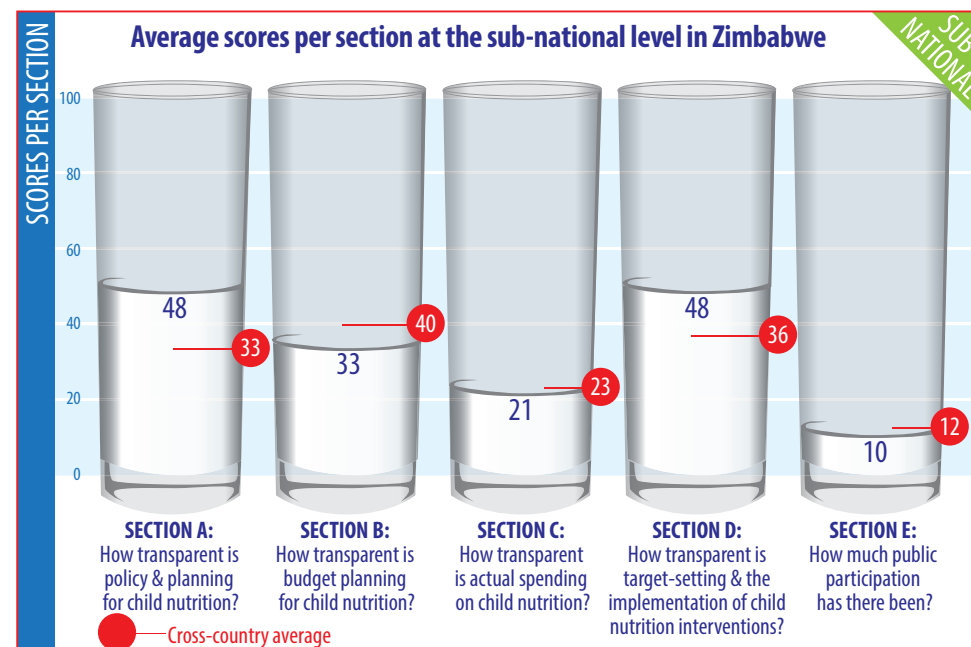
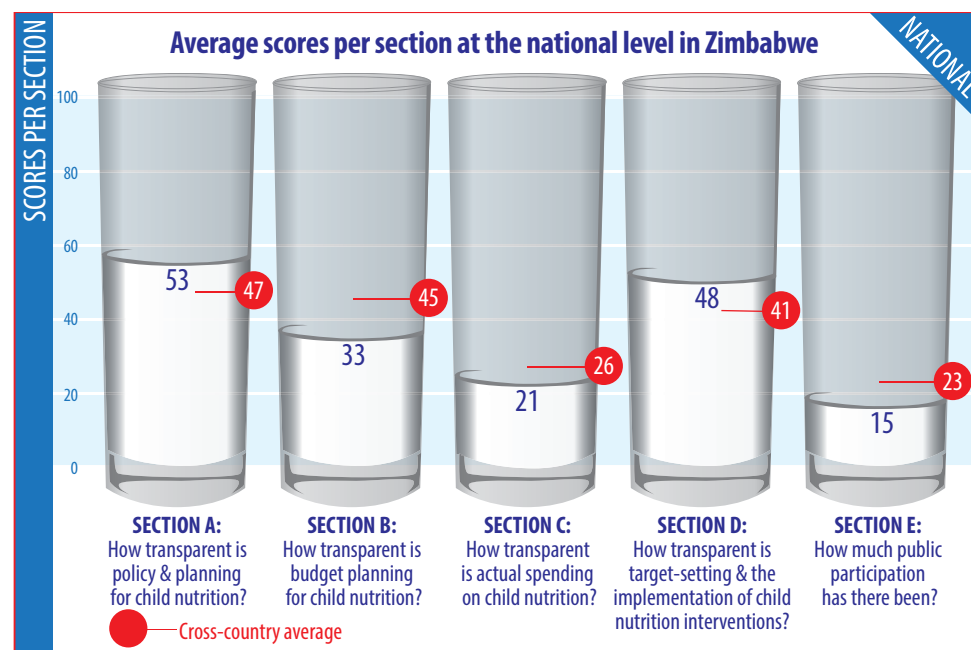
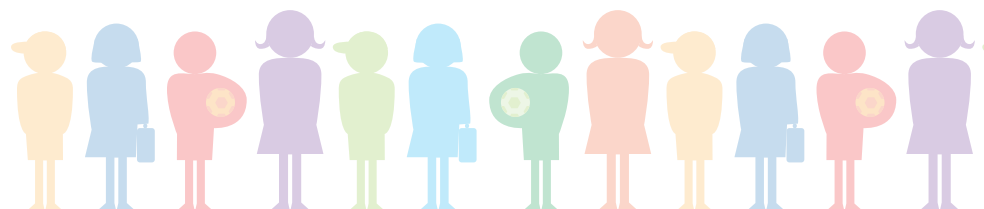
These three districts were selected as the sample for assessing sub-national transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions. The selection was made on the basis that the districts have quite different socio-economic profiles and may be expected to display variations in transparency (See the criteria outlined in the methodology section on page 15).

With the exception of question E9, every one of the other 44 questions in the BTCN Questionnaire was asked of the national level in Zimbabwe and then of each of the selected districts.

How did Zimbabwe score in each section of the questionnaire?

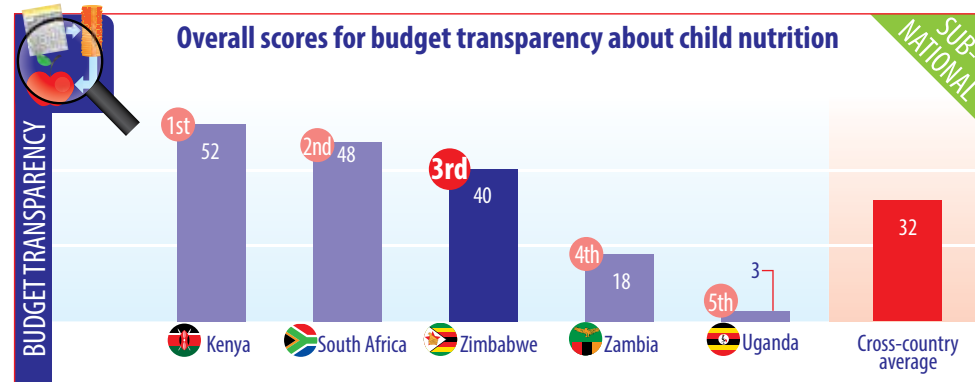
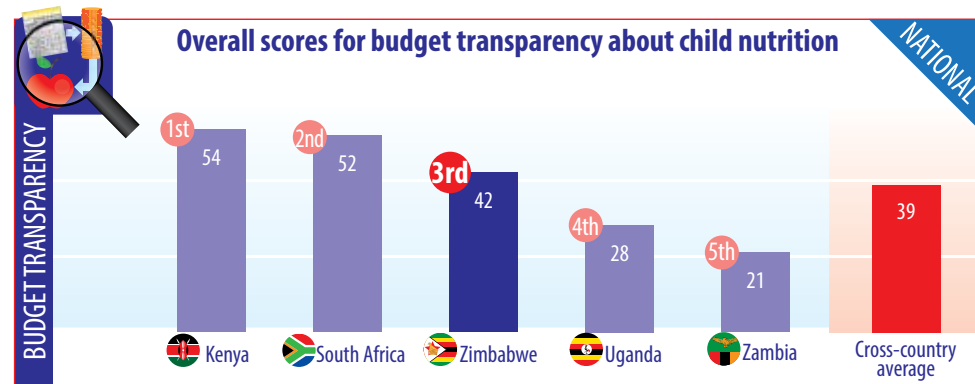
The charts on the right present the mean scores recorded in Zimbabwe for each section of the questionnaire, first at national level and then at sub-national level. The findings show that when it comes to information about the government's child nutrition interventions in Zimbabwe:

- The pattern of transparency at the national level is very similar to the district level. More or less the same amounts and kinds of budget information about child nutrition are available to the public at both levels.
- The government is most transparent in the areas of policy and planning for child nutrition and the implementation of child nutrition interventions.
- Little information can be found in the public domain about planned expenditures on child nutrition.
- Actual spending on child nutrition is even less transparent than planned spending. This is true of both the national and district level.
- There are extremely low levels of public participation in decision-making about the government's child nutrition interventions in Zimbabwe.



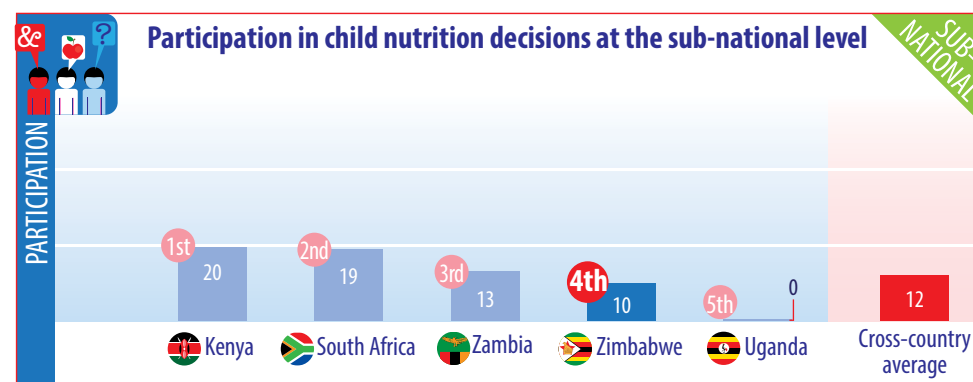
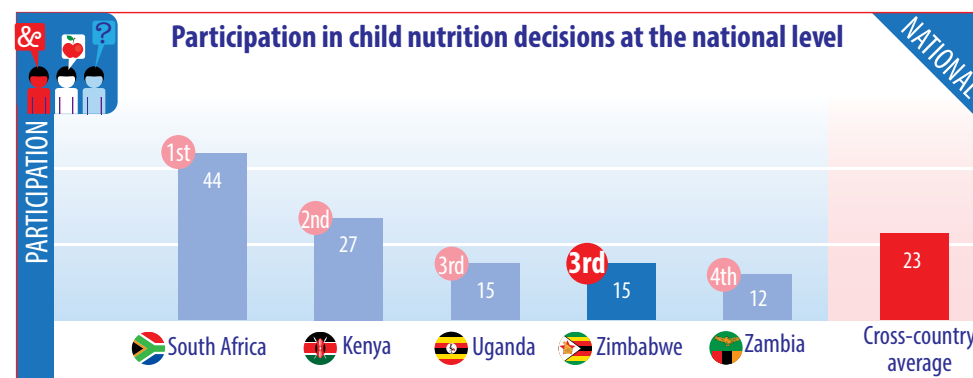
How did Zimbabwe fare relative to the other countries?

At the same time as this study was being undertaken in Zimbabwe, it was also being conducted in Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and South Africa. The exact same 45 questions that were asked about public access to child nutrition information in Zimbabwe, were asked in the other country studies too. The countries' overall scores can be ranked as follows:



While some caution must be applied in comparing the country findings (see the proviso's raised on page 18), the following points of interest are worth noting:

- Zimbabwe had the third highest score, relative to the other countries, for overall budget transparency about the government's child nutrition interventions. This was consistent at both the national and sub-national levels.
- It ranked third (together with Uganda) when it came to public participation in government decisions about child nutrition at the national level.



- Zimbabwe had the second lowest score out of the five countries for public participation at the sub-national level.
- Zimbabwe scored above the cross-country average in Section A of the questionnaire (access to information about policies and planning) as well as in Section D (transparency of delivery targets and implementation).
- Zimbabwe scored below the cross country average in Section B (access to planned expenditure information), Section C (access to actual expenditure information) and Section E (public participation in decisions about child nutrition).

Correlation between national and sub-national findings in Zimbabwe

The survey findings in Zimbabwe showed very little variation between the national and sub-national levels. This was striking in that there were significant variations between the two levels in most of the other countries. In Zimbabwe, the only real difference in transparency was that slightly less policy information was available at the district level.

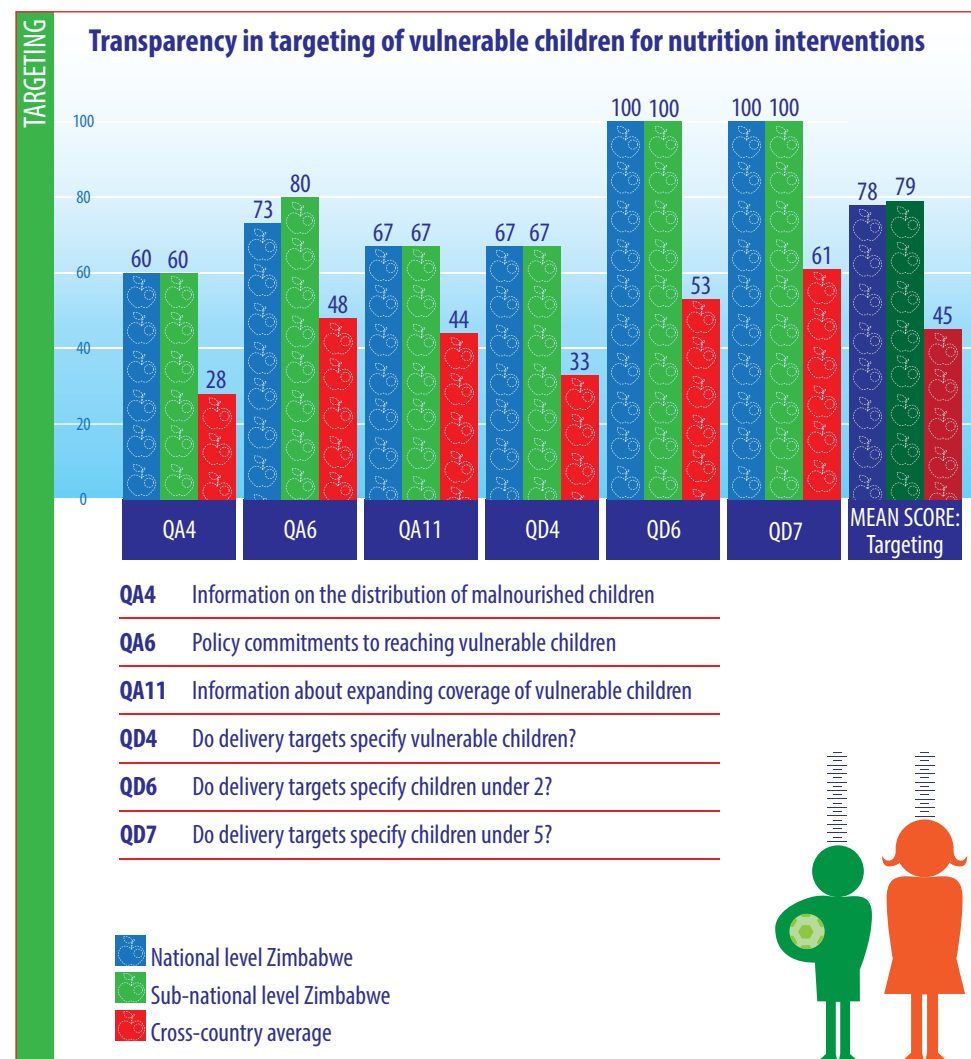
The findings also reflected a lack of variation in transparency across the three districts. In fact, the sub-national scores for all three districts were identical to each other for all but one question (QA10). The study therefore found that almost exactly the same kinds and amounts of information about the government's child nutrition interventions could be accessed whether you were in Bulawayo, Gweru or Marondera. This finding suggests that:

- A great deal of the information may be generated at the national level in a consistent format and then passed down to the district level; or
- Clear norms and standards have been established to regulate the kinds of information that should be generated at the district level and strong oversight is being exercised to ensure that districts comply.

Positive signs of budget transparency for child nutrition

The following strengths emerge from the Zimbabwe country study:

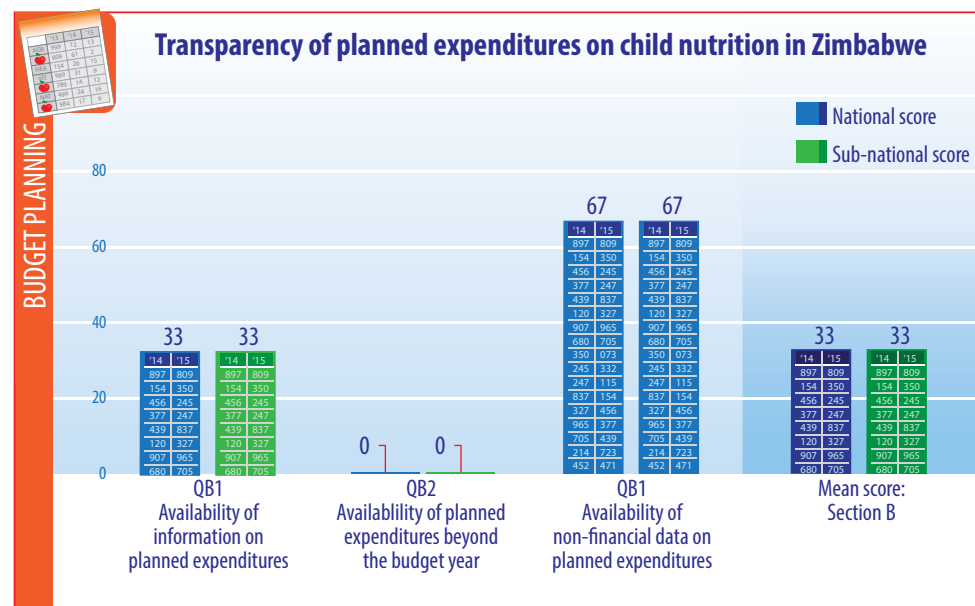
- The public can access some information that explains why the government's child nutrition interventions are designed the way they are. This includes information explaining how interventions are informed by policies, child rights obligations and the scale and distribution of child malnutrition in the country. While there is still much room for improvement, a foundation does exist for child rights monitors and interested citizens to find out about the government's intentions for advancing child nutrition.
- There is fair amount of transparency around the role of development aid in financing child rights interventions in Zimbabwe. With the addition of more detailed information, this can be further enhanced.
- Budget documents in Zimbabwe reveal attempts to cost child nutrition interventions. This means that citizens (and others) have a window on the assumptions being made by the government in budgeting for these interventions.
- Where Zimbabwe fares exceptionally well is in providing public information about the intended beneficiaries of its child nutrition interventions, including the targeting of vulnerable children. The following chart presents the transparency scores recorded in Zimbabwe for questions pertaining to targeting in child nutrition interventions. It shows clearly that Zimbabwe excels in this area compared to the average cross-country scores for the same questions.



- While the overall level of public participation around child nutrition was found to be low, mechanisms do exist for the government to engage with children during the budget process in Zimbabwe (QE10). Work may be needed to operationalise these mechanisms more effectively and to make them accessible to a broader spectrum of children.

Areas in need of improvement

- Too little information (and with too little detail) is being made publically available about the sources of revenue to finance the government's child nutrition interventions.
- Current information about government's policy and planning for child nutrition gives hardly any consideration of the obstacles children may encounter when they try to access planned interventions. Furthermore, the performance targets for monitoring the implementation of the interventions make very little reference to overcoming obstacles in children's access.
- It is not possible to identify and adequately track the government's planned expenditures on child nutrition. The following chart below sets out the scores recorded for Section B of the questionnaire in Zimbabwe. While a fair amount of non-financial data could be found, the planned expenditure data lacked detail and were not available at all beyond the budget year.

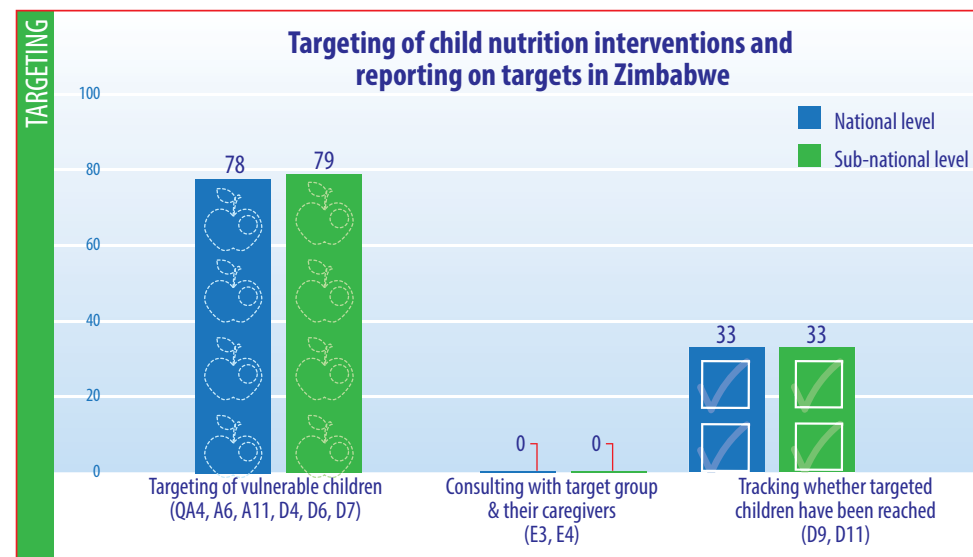


Unless transparency around planned spending on child nutrition interventions can be improved at both the national and sub-national levels, it remains simply impossible to monitor whether allocations to advance child nutrition are sufficient and whether they are distributed in an equitable way.

- Another key area where greater transparency is urgently required is in providing public access to more and better actual expenditure information on child nutrition. This includes the need for more detailed expenditure data over more years, for

comparisons between budgeted and actual expenditures, and for narrative explanations of actual expenditure figures.

- The time lapse between spending of public funds and the release of audit reports was found to be too long. No actual expenditure information on child nutrition could be found in the public domain that had been audited in any of the two years prior to the budget year.
- While the government excels at sharing its service delivery targets with the public, there is very little information available in the public domain about the actual results achieved through the child nutrition interventions. Transparency needs to improve in reporting on the actual numbers of beneficiaries reached through the government's child nutrition interventions, including explanations of differences between estimated beneficiary numbers and actual outcomes. The chart below compares Zimbabwe's scores for setting targets with the scores it achieved for reporting on whether targeted beneficiaries have been reached.



- The chart above also highlights, once again, the lack of adequate participation on the part of children, their care-givers or relevant civil society organisations in government decision-making about child nutrition. In Section E of the questionnaire, Zimbabwe achieved some of its weakest participation scores for those questions that had to do with consulting directly with children and producing budget summaries in a format appropriate for children to read (QE7).



ZIMBABWE

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study suggest that budget transparency around child nutrition in Zimbabwe can be enhanced in the following important ways:



POLICY & CO-ORDINATION

If the government is considering obstacles children might face in accessing nutrition interventions – and monitoring whether these obstacles are being overcome – this needs to be more transparent in its documents.



BUDGET PLANNING

- Greater transparency about sources of revenue to finance key programmes and interventions.
- More detailed information on the government's planned expenditures on child nutrition at the national and sub-national levels, including data beyond a single budget year.



ACTUAL SPENDING

- Public access to significantly more and more detailed actual expenditure information, both during the year and in year-end reports.
- Audited figures to be available within two years of actual spending.
- Government to provide comparisons between planned and actual expenditure and explanations of disparities.



IMPLEMENTATION

- The need for more detailed and timely reports on the actual implementation of child nutrition interventions showing whether and how targets have or have not been met.

- Government to provide comparisons between estimated beneficiaries and actual outcomes.



PARTICIPATION

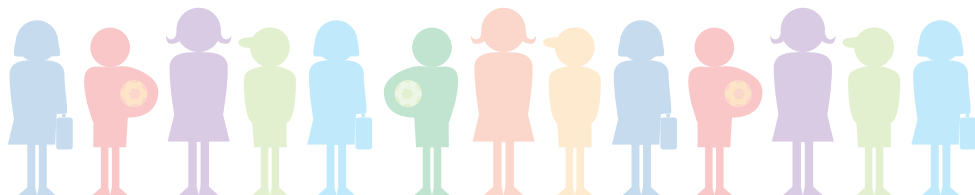
- More and better public participation (of children, their care-givers and civil society in general) in government's decision-making about key interventions that aim to realise children's rights.

Conclusion

This report opened with the question: whether a child lives or dies. Can there be any question more important? As governments around the world endeavour to reduce child mortality rates, what can we as citizens do? This report has argued that we can monitor our countries' progress in reducing child mortality if we have access to information about key government interventions that aim to keep children from dying. One such intervention is to boost children's intake of nutrition.

The objective of this study, then, has been to set out - in some degree of detail - what kinds of information are available (and not available) about governments' efforts to advance child nutrition in five African countries. The findings have highlighted some important categories of information to which the public already have access in the five countries- and also shown where greater transparency is required. The study has illustrated that countries have different patterns of transparency. Each of the countries displayed its own mix of strengths and weaknesses in the way it generated and shared information with the public.

This enquiry was guided by a premise that citizens and child rights monitors have an essential role to play in keeping oversight of what their governments are doing to improve the livelihoods of children. Clearly in order to exercise oversight, you need access to government information. This is not only so in Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. It is not only so in relation to child nutrition. We need greater access to more and better budget information about what all the governments around the world are doing to realise all the rights of children. The challenge, then, remains with us - and you.



CONCLUSION

Final recommendations for advocacy and future research

- Child rights organisations in the five countries are invited to use the evidence flowing from this research to advocate for the specific kinds of information they need in order to monitor child nutrition (and progress in reducing child mortality) more effectively.
- The cross-country findings that have emerged from the BTCN research can be shared in regional forums with a view to undertaking collective advocacy where appropriate. For example, the call for more information on the distribution of children at risk of malnutrition is relevant across country borders. It may be worth raising recurring themes, such as the need for much more detailed and timely expenditure information on child nutrition, through regional governance mechanisms as well as national ones.



FLAGGED FOR THE FUTURE

- The purpose of this study was to uncover and record the present situation pertaining to budget transparency and child nutrition in five countries. Further research is required to understand the root causes of poor transparency practices and to gather case studies and examples of good practice where it exists. In seeking to address some of the problems highlighted in this study, it would help to take an in-depth look at concrete examples of the budget information actually provided by governments and find out why information is limited or unavailable.
- This research may also be useful as a springboard for transparency activism within the broader child rights movement. It serves as an example of one way to begin defining a desirable level of budget transparency to support the speedier delivery of interventions to improve children's lives. With the BTCN study as a reference point, it may be feasible to start a conversation about developing minimum norms and standards for public access to information with a bearing on children's rights.

Appendix A:

Strategies to advance child nutrition

Interventions to address child malnutrition have been found to work differently in different contexts (World Bank 2010). Therefore it is vital that the design and combination of interventions in a country is soundly informed by the particular nature of the child malnutrition problem in that country. The institutional capacity to deliver interventions is also an important consideration. There is no 'one size fits all' approach that a government can adopt wholesale from another country. As a general trend, an appropriate 'package' of government interventions to promote child nutrition could be expected to display most or all of the following characteristics:

- Interventions involving different parts of government: Given the broad range of factors affecting child nutrition, action is typically required across multiple sectors, including health, welfare/social development, education, agriculture, trade and industry, water and sanitation, community development and public works.
- Focus on prevention and cure: More than one strategy is required to deal with the causes and effects of child malnutrition. Governments typically need to implement both preventive and curative interventions.
- Interventions targeting poverty relief or vulnerable households more broadly: At least some interventions that could have substantial impact on child nutrition may not be defined in nutritional terms or targeted directly to children. For example, in some countries, social transfers (in cash or in kind) are distributed to poor households, families or communities. The exact extent to which such interventions specifically benefit children's nutritional status is not easy to determine. However, research suggests that they do have an impact and that resources transferred to women are more likely to be spent on child nutrition than those transferred to men.
- Prioritisation of very young children: Very young children (those under 2 years of age) are the most vulnerable to malnutrition. The negative effects of malnutrition are also amplified when it occurs at a young age and more likely to lead to permanent damage.
- Interventions to support mothers (ante and post natal): The health of very young children is intertwined with the health of their mothers. Thus a key element in promoting child nutrition is providing basic health care and social support to pregnant women and new mothers who, due to poverty and other factors, are at risk of having malnourished children.

Appendix B:

Questions in the Budget Transparency & Child Nutrition (BTCN) Questionnaire

A. POLICY AND STRATEGIC COORDINATION IN CHILD NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

- A1. Do current budget documents explain which laws and/or policies guide the design of interventions for child nutrition?
- A2. Do current budget documents explain how the interventions for child nutrition are intended to meet the child rights obligations of the government?
- A3. Do current budget documents explain whether the design of child nutrition interventions have been informed by evidence on the scale of the child nutrition problem in the country?
- A4. Do current budget documents explain whether the design of child nutrition interventions have been informed by evidence on the geographical distribution of the child nutrition problem in the country?
- A5. Do current budget documents, in presenting the selected child nutrition interventions, provide information on obstacles children may face in accessing these interventions?
- A6. Do current budget documents, in their description of interventions for addressing child malnutrition, make statements about reaching the most vulnerable children?
- A7. Do current budget documents explain how the government intends to promote coordinated planning, budgeting and service delivery to advance child nutrition?
- A8. Do current budget documents provide details on the sources of revenue for child nutrition interventions?
- A9. Do current budget documents provide information about the role of development aid in financing child nutrition interventions?
- A10. Do current budget documents provide information on steps taken to enhance delivery capacity in the child nutrition interventions?
- A11. Do current budget documents provide information on steps taken to expand vulnerable child coverage in the child nutrition interventions?
- A12. Do current budget documents provide information on attempts to cost the child nutrition interventions?

B. PLANNED (BUDGETED) EXPENDITURES FOR CHILD NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

- B1. Do current budget documents provide information on planned expenditures in relation to the selected child nutrition interventions?
- B2. Do current budget documents provide information about planned expenditures for the child nutrition interventions for at least one year beyond the budget year?
- B3. Do current budget documents provide non-financial data in relation to the planned expenditures on the child nutrition interventions?

C. ACTUAL EXPENDITURES ON CHILD NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

- C1. Do current budget documents provide information on actual expenditures in relation to the selected child nutrition interventions?
- C2. Do current budget documents provide comparison between actual and budgeted expenditures in relation to the selected child nutrition interventions?
- C3. Do current budget documents provide information about past actual expenditures on the child nutrition interventions for at least one year prior to the budget year?
- C4. Do current budget documents provide non-financial data in relation to the actual expenditures on the child nutrition interventions?
- C5. Do current budget documents provide actual expenditure information more often than on a yearly basis in relation to the child nutrition interventions?
- C6. Do current budget documents provide comparison between actual and budgeted expenditures (based on the enacted budget) more often than on a yearly basis in relation to the child nutrition interventions?
- C7. Do year-end reports explain differences between the approved expenditures on the child nutrition interventions (including supplementary budgets) and actual expenditures?
- C8. Have the data on the actual expenditures related to the intervention been audited in any of the two years prior to the budget year?

D. BUDGET PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO CHILD NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

- D1. Do current budget documents present performance indicators for monitoring the service delivery of the child nutrition interventions?
- D2. Do current budget documents present service delivery targets for the child nutrition interventions for the current budget year?
- D3. Do current budget documents present service delivery targets for the child nutrition interventions for at least two years beyond the current budget year?
- D4. Do the service delivery targets attached to the child nutrition interventions make reference to reaching the most vulnerable children?
- D5. Do the performance targets for monitoring the delivery of the child nutrition interventions make reference to overcoming obstacles in children's access to such interventions?
- D6. Do the performance targets for monitoring the delivery of these child nutrition interventions make reference to reaching children in their very early years (from birth to two years)?
- D7. Do the performance targets for monitoring the delivery of these child nutrition interventions make reference to reaching children in their first five years?
- D8. Are the performance indicators for the child nutrition interventions well-designed to enable monitoring of whether service delivery targets have been met?
- D9. Are the performance indicators for the child nutrition interventions well-designed to enable monitoring of whether the most vulnerable children have been reached?
- D10. Do current budget documents compare the results achieved through the child nutrition interventions against the service delivery targets that were set for the corresponding year?
- D11. Do year-end reports show the differences between the original estimates of number of beneficiaries for the interventions and the actual outcome?

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING DECISIONS AROUND CHILD NUTRITION

- E1. In developing its expenditure plans, did the government consult with the public about priorities to focus on in the design and implementation of interventions for child nutrition?
- E2. In developing its expenditure plans, did the government consult with children about priorities to focus on in the design and implementation of interventions for child nutrition?
- E3. In developing its expenditure plans, did the government consult with vulnerable children about priorities to focus on in the design and implementation of interventions for child nutrition?
- E4. In developing its expenditure plans, did the government consult with primary caregivers of vulnerable children about priorities to focus on in the design and implementation of child nutrition interventions?
- E5. Has the government created accessible mechanisms to gather the public's perspectives on the implementation of child nutrition interventions?
- E6. Does the government provide detailed feedback to the public on how its budget inputs have been used to deliver child nutrition interventions?
- E7. Between 2007 and 2012, has the government produced any summaries of its budget documents in a format that is designed for children?
- E8. Between 2007 and 2012, has the government produced any summaries of its budget documents focusing on interventions that directly and/or indirectly target children?
- E9. Do the laws of this country allow children to access budget information?
- E10. Are there mechanisms in place for government to engage with children during the budget process?
- E11. Has the government created accessible mechanisms to gather children's perspectives on the implementation of child nutrition interventions?

Appendix C:

Country scores per section of the questionnaire

The results presented in this appendix are the mean scores each country achieved for each section of the questionnaire. The mean scores were calculated by dividing the total score for each section by the number of questions in that section.

