

Devolution and the Right to Budgetary Participation

Insights from Subnational Governments in Midlands Province, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This chapter examines the capacity of Zimbabwe's national devolution policy in promoting citizens' right to participation in budgetary programmes. It focuses on assessing the soundness, adequacy and impact of devolution policy in promoting citizens' right to participation. The policy was put in place to ensure democratic participation of all citizens in government programmes. Active and effective participation of citizens in budgetary planning is a tool for constructing human rights economies at the local, national and international levels that promote inclusive participation, address inequality, strengthen governance and build social cohesion, contributing to the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals. This is against the backdrop that public consultations for bills and policies are done in urban areas that are inaccessible to rural citizens, thereby disadvantaging them. The study for this chapter deployed a qualitative research approach, collecting data through in-depth interviews, questionnaires, desktop study and netnography. It reveals that major barriers to citizen participation are poor dissemination of information, inclusivity and transparency deficits, lack of residents' education and awareness and lack of incentives for boosting citizens' motivation to participate. Findings of this study can help policy makers in the formulation of economic or budget policies that are human rights sensitive at subnational level.