



Evaluating how Ghana's Petroleum Revenue Management Act has improved transparency and accountability

In 2011, the Ghanaian Parliament passed the Petroleum Revenue Management Act to manage the country's newfound oil wealth and catalyze socio-economic development. The act created a framework to collect, allocate and manage petroleum revenue in a responsible, transparent and accountable manner. Two notable provisions are the Annual Budget Funding Amount mechanism and the Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC). The Annual Budget Funding Amount represents the percentage of annual petroleum revenues required to support the annual budget. PIAC, an independent citizen oversight body, ensures strict compliance with implementation of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act.

A 3ie-supported evaluation assessed the impact of these two provisions in enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of petroleum revenues in Ghana.

Highlights

- Meetings attended by district and local political representatives had a positive effect on their knowledge and awareness levels. No such effects were observed amongst citizens who did not attend these meetings.
- Disseminating information through a mobile-based engagement platform had a positive effect on knowledge and awareness amongst district officials, local representatives and citizens.
- A combination of the mobile-based engagement platform and district-level meetings did not have any effect on information retention, or on the willingness to demand transparency from district officials, local political representatives and citizens.

Evaluating the information and deliberation campaign

The randomised study evaluated the effectiveness of PIAC's information dissemination and engagement efforts in engendering citizen activism and behavioural change in 120 districts throughout Ghana.

PIAC implemented three types of interventions:

- *District-level meetings, attended by district assembly members and representatives of the unit committees and other local stakeholders.* These meetings were organised by PIAC to provide information about its mandate, oil and gas revenue management, citizens' rights regarding natural resource governance, and transparency and accountability as instrumental in good governance

in oil and gas revenue management. The participants were informed that their feedback will be shared with the relevant authorities and within the local government.

- *District-level citizen engagement using mobile phones.* The mobile platform provided information to local political leaders, traditional authorities and ordinary citizens about the amount of oil revenue and how it was being used, and about its management, through SMS and interactive voice response messages. This engagement platform provided the same information that was disseminated at the PIAC district-level meetings. It also provided the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

- *A combination of both interventions.* PIAC representatives visited the targeted districts for meetings with district officials. Additionally, local government officials and citizens received more information and interacted with the PIAC for a longer duration by receiving information through the mobile platform. This joint treatment was expected to reinforce the messages of both engagement platforms and increase the effects observed at different levels of local governance and amongst citizens.

Districts in the control groups did not host any of the PIAC meetings or receive any information via SMS messages.



Main findings

The PIAC district meetings were the most efficient and effective in increasing knowledge about natural resources revenue management for district assembly members. This intervention did not have a similar effect on ordinary citizens. The SMS messages had a positive effect on all of the targeted audiences.

There does not seem to be any effect of the treatments on district assembly members', unit committee members' or ordinary citizens' feelings of entitlement towards natural resources revenues. The treatments had no impact on encouraging members of the district assembly and the unit committee to create more transparency.

The combined intervention showed some positive effect on district assembly members' and ordinary citizens' willingness to demand transparency, although this was not the case for unit committee members. However, the results showed no indication of positive reinforcement of the effects of the combined intervention package on the willingness to demand transparency.

Implications

Policy and programming

The study results underscore the need for increased government allocation of financial and human resources to scale up PIAC's initiatives. The research team recommends that civil society organisations help ensure that public engagements mandated by the Petroleum Revenue Management Act take place at the district level. District assemblies should ensure the information their members receive is disseminated to unit committees and ordinary citizens to empower them for activism and to demand transparency and accountability. PIAC could seek to be more cost-effective by integrating SMS messaging in its information campaigns.

Research

Future research could explore the positive reinforcement of knowledge and awareness creation facilitated by the combined intervention. It would be worth exploring why individual treatments had a positive impact, whereas the combined treatment did not. Similar experiments could be implemented over a longer period to observe long-term impacts of these interventions.





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About this brief

This brief is based on an impact evaluation report by Ishmael Edjekumhene, Maarten Voors, Päivi

Lujala, Christa Brunnschweiler, Charles Kofi Owusu and Andy Nyamekye, *Impacts of key provisions*

in Ghana's Petroleum Revenue Management Act, published in 2019.



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