Tax and Gender:
Working Nationally and Subnationally

Presented by:

Fariya Mohiuddin

Senior Program Officer – Tax and Policy (Global)

International Budget Partnership

Addis Tax Initiative Annual General Meeting - 18 June 2024 (Online)

Who are we?

The International Budget Partnership (IBP) believes in a world where **people claim the right to influence how public money – their money - is raised and spent.**

Four in-country offices in Africa and Asia, with partners in more than 120 countries. Many we have engaged with for decades (CSOs, social movements, governments, SAIs)

What we do

4 major areas of work:

- Peer-learning
- Grant making
- Collaborative research
- Training and Technical Assistance

Our major initiatives: OBS, SPARK, COAB, Tax Equity, Budget Credibility

Who we work with

- **Expenditure side**: In Africa & Asia, IBP partners with grassroots organizations and social movements (that represent historically excluded groups) to build successful reform campaigns for improved services.

- **Revenue side**: IBP also supports domestic civil society tax campaigns and has focused on deep country-level work with grassroots movements and coalitions.

Selected Activities

SENEGAL

- Tax Equity's partner organisations have set up a working group on taxation and gender (Reseau Siggil Jiguenn , Federation senegalaise des handicapes Senegalese(CF/FSAPH)Federation Senegalaise des habitants, ONG 3D, Legs africa, Forum civil, Women in Mining (WIM), Conseil Senegalais des Femmes (COSEF), etc.).
- 271 women from mining communities, including local elected officials, leaders of grassroots community organizations, community leaders and presidents of women's movements, were trained to develop their knowledge of taxation and promote better compliance with tax rules.
- A module on gender and taxation has been developed as part of the training leading to the fair tax certification for civil society organisations (with ISF). This module looks at the main themes of the gender dimension in taxation, including the issue of income taxation and gender equality, the coverage of unpaid care, the taxation of the informal sector and women, the financing of social services for women through tax revenues, and women's economic empowerment.
- Case study on financing women's social protection: The case of women in the informal sector in the Dakar suburbs. Recommendations were made to finance social protection through taxes, such as excise duties on tobacco and taxes on cosmetics. Recommendations also focused on the effective management of social protection for rural women through the development of endogenous local initiatives to finance health insurance and membership costs through in-kind financing, which is more appropriate to rural economic systems. The case study will be published as part of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice's Framing Feminist Taxation Guide Volume 3 (October 2024)

NIGERIA

- 1-week comprehensive intensive certificate course on gender and taxation held for partners in March 2024 and provided partners the opportunity to deepen their appreciation of the interactions between gender and taxation and approaches for advocating for gender-responsive tax system. The module for this course is to be used by partners for continuous capacity building on taxation and gender.
- IBP supports women groups to facilitate dialogues on gender and taxation. For instance, in March 2024, SWIT in collaboration with other tax partners held her first national tax summit with the theme: "Beyond Numbers: Unveiling the Gender Dynamics of Taxation for Inclusive Economic Growth ". The Summit had in attendance 249 participants (in-person and virtually) including policymakers, experts, and stakeholders from government, the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria and other professional bodies, private sector, think tanks, civil society, and media. Participants examined the gender biases in the tax system and their impact on women particularly those in the informal economy and made recommendations.
- Subnationally, partners are advocating for the integration of gender perspectives into revenue mobilization and implementation processes to ensure the inclusion of women's needs and priorities. Also, research to identify gender gaps within the tax system, explore strategies to improve tax compliance among women, and promote equitable tax policies by addressing disparities and ensuring fairness and equality. Also continued to provide capacity-building initiatives through the tax clinic to enhance women's tax literacy and financial management skills, empowering them to navigate the tax system effectively.

What have we learned?

Challenges:

- Limited awareness and understanding of how gender equity connects to economic development.
- Lack of primary gender disaggregated data (lack of baseline, lack of evidence)
- Narrative that the tax system is equitable simply because tax provisions are couched in gender-neutral terms is a major challenge that entrench the bias in the system.

Lessons:

- There is need to understand the kind of roles that women in tax administration can play in making the tax system to be more responsive and how to best leverage that role
- Decision makers in the tax system believe that all taxpayers are treated equally since the system does not explicitly discriminate against any group → investment in intensive capacity building especially of government actors and tax policy makers as well as sustained sensitization, awareness creation, and conscientization
- Training is also needed at the community level for communities to understand the gendered impact of fiscal policies including and especially earmarking for gender projects
- Once the capacity of women on tax and accountability issues are enhanced, they are motivated to engage and challenge inequity in the system leading to reforms. For instance in Nigeria, government has had to re-organise its grievance redress mechanism to respond to the needs of women tax payers while more women are beginning to register their businesses with tax authorities.