



Encouraging transparency of public expenditures through citizen engagement

(Resource ID: 267)

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This teaching resource is allocated to following University:

UC - Universum College

Institution:

Universum College

<http://www.sustainicum.at/en/modules/view/267.Encouraging-transparency-of-public-expenditures-through-citizen-engagement>



Work in pairs
Group work



5 to 10 students



up to 1 semester



English, Shqip

Please note: module with excess length - more than 7 lecture units required!



Transparency of public expenditures and the state budget is very important and is in the public's interest. By using open data for providing citizens access to public finances and funds, where indicators are easily accessed, shared, and used in a cost effective way. By controlling the expenditures, irregularities and fraud, the possibility of corruption could be avoided. This teaching resource

aims to engage students in the process of public expenditures and allows them to understand the irregularities and abuses that occur during the process of budget disbursement. The teaching resource includes new methods (interviews, mini-survey, and field research) as well as data processing.

An important element of the government and for which the public is concerned is the transparency of the expenditure of the state institutions and the state budget. Taking into account the positive experiences of other countries in relation to transparency of public finances and especially in the context of growing challenges in relation to the integration process of Kosovo into the European Union and sustainable development, the best way to promote accountability is through increasing the transparency of the public finances, quality of the information produced and delivered, accountability and participation by local communities, and also by increasing the positive pressure on elected officials to improve services offered to citizens. Transparency on how the tax payers money is spent on government grants, administrative services and infrastructure investment is weak, or absent for the vast majority of stakeholders in Kosovo. Freedom of information to the citizens, and other groups of interest such as media still remains a big issue to be addressed thoroughly.

There are many NGOs in Kosovo that address transparency and government expenditures, however, many of them are focused in other fields as well, thus, seldom do they produce reports on public finances. Therefore, students are asked to undertake a field trip to the local or central governmental offices to analyze whether there were irregularities during budget dispersion or whether expenses were incurred.

According to the Institute for Advanced Studies "GAP", during 2013 the Office of General Auditor has found a lot of mismanagement of public funds. More than €115,000,000 were mismanaged in 2013, while in 2014 the public funds mismanaged increased to around €119,000,000. The ministry with most mismanaged cases was the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (€18,982,113), while the Municipality of Skenderaj, Municipality of Rahovec and Municipality of Lipjan had the most irregularities on executing their respective budgets.

You will be engaged in the evaluation of data and research, as well as in the process of interviewing key officials. You have the opportunity of investigating a topic of your choosing (i.e. local public expenditures, central public expenditures, tender/selection, governmental officials' travel costs, etc.). The topic along with the research will be agreed in collaboration with

the lecturer. A constitutive part of this teaching resource is to teach you how to conduct interviews (structured, semi-structured, etc.), especially with key policymaking actors, how to analyze data and how to interpret data in order to determine potential irregularities with the public expenditures. Part of the learning material will also include presentations by guest-speakers and international organizations operating in the field of public finances.

Teaching Tools & Methods



Mini-project

Integration of Social Stakeholders

Public Administration officials are part of the seminar as active partners – students have the possibility to get in direct contact with those employees that are involved in managing public finances and learn more about the challenges faced in delivering reports for the transparency issues. International actors will also play a substantial part – they will all benefit from the collaboration and from new and creative perspectives of exploring public expenditures as an indispensable part of sustainable development.

Strength

- Active learning experience for students through field work
- Transparency experience of public finances for students
- Understand how they can collect data for research methods
- Learn to work in groups
- Experience and a better understand the importance of financial expenditures
- Students learn to develop tools of influencing governmental actors and be part of civil society
- Stakeholders benefit from understanding public perceptions and their view on how to change things
- Students think about their responsibility in the context of public affairs.

Weakness

- Issues with eventual lack of collaboration by public officials

- Lack of published information about public finances

Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn about the process of budget dispersion in Kosovo
- Students will be able to critically analyze the decision making process of governmental officials in regard to budgeting.
- Students will be able to conduct independent/group field research.

Relevance for Sustainability

- Raise public awareness to public spending
- An informed public and media will continuously exert positive pressure on elected officials to improve public services, which is an on-going process.

Related Teaching Resources

No specific previous knowledge / related resources required

Preparation Efforts

Medium

Preparation Efforts Description

- Preparation for the lecturer: 6 hours; - Identification of suitable government units that are seeking to develop standard analysis of public funds. - Preparation of site visits (3 hours): to be scheduled for a) discussions b) interviews c) presentation of results and recommendations.
- Preparation of mini-survey: 5 hours - Field research: 10 hours

Access

Free

Assessment

25% of the total grade.

Sources and Links

www.atk-ks.org

www.kuvendikosoves.org

www.mf.rks-gov.net

<http://www.institutigap.org/lajme/771>

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