Examining Effective Budget Communication for Citizens in Nigeria

A study by BudgIT with funding and support from Institute for Development Studies January 2017

budgIT

Contents

Executive Summary

As a pioneer in the field of social advocacy melded with technology in Nigeria, BudgIT uses an array of tech tools to simplify the budget and matters of public spending for citizens, with the primary aim of raising the standard of transparency and accountability in government. To break information asymmetry, from 2011 to 2015, BudgIT has been providing access to information to citizens, deepening their ability to understand the budget[1]. Based on web traffic, social media reach, grassroots engagement and radio listenership, BudgIT has reached over 1 million citizens in Nigeria and seeks to rethink the effectiveness of its engagement with citizens.

The purpose of this research is to test the BudgIT Theory of Change under certain environments to determine if access to information leads to empowerment and demands for accountability, and also if demands for accountability necessarily lead to responsiveness from public institutions.

This research focuses on two groups of citizens - those with access to digital information and those without access to digital tools. A total of 456 respondents were tested through a distributed survey to examine their self-induced incentive to act on provided budgetary information.

The goal of the research is to determine the effectiveness of BudgITs work in engaging two different sets of citizens. BudgIT created an online portal of government projects and provided budgetary information access to the digital citizens. After a four-week period, citizens were requested to answer a survey testing their self-awareness and incentive to demand service delivery and accountability. For the category of citizens "without access to digital tools", printed documents of related projects in their local communities were shared and interviews were taken to ascertain the level of individual action after a period of 6 weeks. These printed copies have a list of projects, names and contact details of constituency representatives, and channel of civic action.

We surveyed 116 digitals citizens for this research and observed the gender distribution of 76% male and 24% female. At the grassroots, we covered 10 communities in the five states, with 249 respondents. Of this number, 63.5% were male compared to the 36.5% female. 83.7% of the digital citizens surveyed were interested in the budget as a result of the analysis provided by BudgIT, and only 16.3% of the respondents engaged public officials. 98.6% of our respondents at the grassroots were encouraged to track projects in the budget as a result of the engagement by the field officers, and 39.8% of the respondents engaged the responsible government officials.

When asked if access to clear information stimulates interest in developmental projects, the overwhelming majority of the interviewees agreed with an aggregate of 98.6% of the digital and 96.4% for non-digital citizens. 68.3% of the non-digital citizens visited a project location as seen in the budget pamphlet distributed while only 25.9% of the digital citizens

Based on web traffic, social media reach, grassroots engagement and radio listenership, BudgIT has reached over 1 million citizens in Nigeria and seeks to rethink the effectiveness of its engagement with citizens.

visited a project site.

Findings revealed there are more coordination and enthusiasm for the implementation of developmental projects at the grassroots and a stronger yearn and demand for governments accountability. These findings suggest that access to clear information as provided by BudgIT incentivises citizens

[2]http://communitylifeproject.org/Empowering-citizens to hold government accountable

1.0 Introduction

Since the discovery of crude oil in the 1960s and its commercial exploration in 1970s, Nigerias economy and public finances have remained fastened to oil revenues, with every aspect of these affected by the vagaries of the local and global crude markets. The story of Nigerias economic challenges are driven by the rise and slump in oil prices; the commodity contributes 13% to Nigerias GDP at $520bn and is responsible for less than 1% of the workforce, yet it feeds Nigerias revenue bucket by up to 70%.

Since 1999, the advent of democracy in Nigeria still carries patches of the military regime, with poor levels of accessibility to (and comprehension of) public data, most especially the budget. Opening up the budgets of resource-driven economies such as Nigeria is a Herculean task. With the easy profits of oil and gas disproportionately shared across the society, closed budgets perpetuate an opaquely managed state, where citizens can easily remain in the dark. Most citizens do not know how the budget is formulated and executed.

Opening up resource-driven economies where oil and gas revenue accounts for 65% of the actual receipts is challenging in Nigeria. With the easy profits of oil and gas disproportionately shared across the society, closed budgets have become a symptom that perpetuates a dysfunctional society. Nigeria is perceived as one of the most corrupt countries with a score of 28 out of 100 in the 2016 Transparency International Index[3]. With widespread corruption, the opportunities to create services for the citizens are grossly shortened, thereby deepening poverty in Nigeria.

One of the challenges is a lack of citizen access to information about projects in their communities planned and executed in the budget, such as the construction of rural roads, schools, clinics and distribution of mosquito nets. With the budget stated in technical jargon, most Nigerians do not understand the role of the budget itself and are therefore unable to monitor projects or advocate for projects within their communities to be completed within the fiscal year as planned. Therefore, BudgIT provides budget data access to citizens in urban and underserved communities in Nigeria, raising their awareness of the right of access to budget information and promoting their willingness and action to monitor projects and demand better service delivery.

The Nigerian political class has lost the incentive to deliver efficient public services for the citizens and has perpetrated iron-cast opacity around public finances, severing all opportunities for citizen engagement on abuse and waste of public resources. The Nigerian budget - the critical vehicle for public fund allocation - is put in technical jargon, carved in sterile form and complicated for the average literate Nigerian. This entrenched system has created a single narrative of "performance" from the government, denying citizens their inalienable right to participate in the allocation of communal resources actively.

Despite huge oil revenues and rising non-oil component, Nigerians are yet

The story of Nigerias economic challenges are driven by the rise and slump in oil prices; the commodity contributes 13% to Nigerias GDP at $520bn and is responsible for less than 1% of the workforce, yet it feeds Nigerias revenue bucket by up to 70%.

[3]https://www.transparency.org/country/NGA

to see a corresponding leap in regarding social services and public infrastructure. This nonperformance of the budget continues to widen the gap in the society, escalating tensions and strife. Civil society organizations, such as for Centre for Social Justice[4], have been working to entrench budget transparency in Nigeria, and there have been calls for adequate impact measurement to boost their participation and enable engagement with state actors.

Founded in 2011, BudgIT is a civic organisation that applies technology to intersect citizen engagement with institutional improvement, to facilitate societal change. A pioneer in the field of social advocacy melded with technology, BudgIT uses an array of tech and visual tools - infographics, interactive applications, viral videos, social media, radio and SMS - to simplify and provide access to the budget and matters of public spending for citizens, with the primary aim of raising the standard of transparency and accountability in government. The organisation believes every citizen, irrespective of their literacy level, has a right to know how public funds are spent and it uses every means and available channel to simplify information and give access to citizens and other stakeholders. The current focus has delivered the following:

Over 1,112,000 Nigerians reached through newspapers, field visits and town hall meetings, as well as at least 100,000 followers on social media.

In total we have published 35,000 tweets, curated and distributed over 25 publications, sent out over 500 budget-related infographics, processed more than 6,000 data requests, distributed over 70,000 copies of simplified budget documents to citizens across Nigeria and built a budget data repository.

BudgIT, through its platform, Tracka, works to ensure completion of projects in local communities. The organisation worked to ensure service delivery through fiscal transparency to the citizens and institutional engagement with the legislature. The Open Alliance Nigeria was convened by BudgIT to bring together several CSOs campaigning for various strands of the Open Government Partnership eligibility criteria, with a view to achieving a uniform lobbying of government to work towards membership of the OGP. The alliance developed a National Action Plan for Nigeria and continues to engage government constructively on the OGP process.

BudgIT has provided for government institutions in transparency, creative design and strategy development, which include National Assembly Budget and Research Office, Kaduna State Government, Ministry of Budget & Planning and others. The thesis of BudgITs challenge lies in the fact that most Nigerians do not know how the budget is formulated and executed. According to research by the University of Ilorin, BudgIT has been working to plug this gap using diverse approaches to reach out to Nigerians of different literacy brackets. However, the organisation, after working to deliver budgets to citizens in this research, tests the self-awareness and

Over 1,112,000 Nigerians reached through newspapers, field visits and town hall meetings, as well as at least 100,000 followers on social media.

[4] https://www.medicalworldnigeria.com/-budget-failed-transparency-participation-ndash-scorecard#. WPdHqlPytp8/2016/06

incentive for action.

The goal of this research is to test the BudgITs Theory of Change under certain environments to determine if access to information provision leads to empowerment and demands for accountability, and also if demands for accountability necessarily result in responsiveness from public institutions. Working with local communities as test environment, BudgIT applies its civic tool, Tracka, to track capital projects in rural communities and to mobilise the target citizens to reach out to elected representatives on the delivery of projects within their communities.

This research focuses on two groups of citizens: those with access to digital information in urban areas and those without access to digital tools in rural and semi-urban areas. The respondents were given a systematic survey to examine their self-induced incentive to act on provided budgetary information through infomediaries such as BudgIT. This research tests the impact of our work and also how to build a sustaining movement that citizens can use their initiative to demand accountability and service delivery.

This research work is also critical to the sustainability of BudgIT as an organisation as this report will provide new insights on how we can deliver information about budgets to more people effectively and ensure efficient service delivery.

2.0 Literature Review

The intersection between transparency and accountability in governance framing is not clearly linear. It is evident that certain factors are critical to ensuring that empowered citizens with access to data demand service delivery. According to Patrick Regoniel, "Transparency refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations, and decisions."[6] Oluseun Onigbinde stated that "transparency is in detail.

Transparency refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations, and decisions.

Transparency is revealing the underlying information or data behind a process in a simple and accessible format that can be understood by everyone in the society."[7] According to the Rick Stapenhurst of the World Bank, "Accountability ensures actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to oversight so as to guarantee that government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community they are meant to be benefiting, thereby contributing to better governance and poverty reduction."[8]

Economists have argued that a key feature of market failure is the information asymmetry, a scenario where one party possesses a better cache of information than others. Such unfair advantage in the marketplaces leads to dysfunction, setting a pace greed and final system collapse.[9]

It is not entirely new to see the same elements that destroy markets - gross information asymmetry, weak institutions and greed - happen to democratic disorders. As stated above, to ensure citizens are kept in the dark is to make information on use of public resources a privileged access to a few. Access to information on budgets, contracts and accrued revenues put in cast-iron opacity have the potential to create an uninformed electorate, destroying the social contract and allowing corruption to thrive on an industrial scale. This has been the story of Nigeria, where its citizens have not been able to match the scale of resources from oil and taxes to the poor socio-economic indicators that undermine it.

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy with a rebased GDP output at $520bn, an amount that doubled after the base year was changed from 1990 to 2000.

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy with a rebased GDP output at $520bn, an amount that doubled after the base year was changed from 1990 to 2000. With a population of N170m, Nigeria has over 100m poor people, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics[10]. Nigeria ranks 152nd out of 188 countries regarding Human Development Index[11]. According to the World Bank[12] "The under-five mortality ratio in Nigeria is 201 per 1000 live births, meaning that one in five Nigerian children never reach the age of 5". Nigeria should not be tagged with this gory Statistics, as it possess hydrocarbons and entrepreneurial workforce that thrive the odds despite being plagued by infrastructural challenges.

[5] Fox .J, Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25548267The Uncertain Relationship between Transparency and Accountability. Development in Practice 17(4/5), 663-671. 2007

[6] https://leadership-management.knoji.com/what-is-transparent-governance/published on Sep/3/2011

[7] https://www.theguardian.com/global-development//transparency-nigeria-oluseun-onigbinde 2013/jun/13

[8] https://siteresources.worldbank.org/PUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/Resources/AccountabilityGovernance.pdf

[9] http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.126.1707&rep=rep1&type=pdf
http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.126.1707&rep=rep1&type=pdf

[10] http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/

[11] http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files National–human–development–report–for–nigeria.pdf 2016

[12] http://www.who.int/pmnch/activities/countries/nigeria/en/index1.html

[13] http://www.yourbudgit.com/wp-content/uploadspdf FALLING-OIL-PRICE–BudgIT–Nigeria. 2014/12 zz

Nigeria has earned at least $700bn in oil revenues in the last 55 years, an amount expected to have uplifted her and aid its people.

According to research by BudgIT[13], Nigeria has earned at least $700bn in oil revenues in the last 55 years, an amount expected to have uplifted her and aid its people. While it earned bogus revenues from oil and taxes, Nigeria has not been able to combine visionary and honest leadership to deliver results for its people.

While Nigeria began another round of democracy in 1999, the shadow of the military regime which put a tight lid on the use of public resources did not disappear. Although the Nigerian central government publishes the budget in full details, it has always been silent on its contracting process and beneficial owners. This provided an opportunity for a tiny elite to corner state resources, lining their pockets, in the end delivering sub-par public services.

Revealing its vulnerability to oil that has evolved a rentier system and corrupt elite, the Nigerian economy tipped into recession, inflation and steep currency devaluation as oil prices hovered below $50 per barrel. Nigeria recorded a negative growth of 1.5% in 2016, exemplifying the challenge of running a mono-product economy.

Current grassroots engagements also show that most projects in the budgets are clearly disconnected with the needs of the people, setting the need for more participatory engagement in budget formulation.

The breakdown of democracies is linked to a disempowered citizenry who lack information to fairly appraise the system. Other reasons are lack of strong institutions and weak processes that allow greed[14]. BudgITs work, which has reached over 1.2m people and provided support to 35 civil societies in Nigeria, might still be small in the context of the challenges but replicating opportunities for citizens to access information is critical to enthroning stable and prosperous communities.

Current grassroots engagements also show that most projects in the budgets are clearly disconnected with the needs of the people, setting the need for more participatory engagement in budget formulation. Social media has also proven to deepen the strategy, providing opportunities to amplify the issues faced by these underserved communities. With elected officials interested in using the social media to improve their public posture, BudgIT has deployed it as an accountability platform.

This tracks together with the boundless opportunities offered with combining the online and offline worlds, emphasizing that tools are not the critical element in a democracy but the need to empower the citizen. This has been coined as the "Office of the Citizen", a recognition that Citizens continuous vigilance is necessary for a functional system.

[14]http://www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/17439 Contextual analysis of the theory of the greatest happiness to the greatest number: The Nigerian experience 1999 -2009

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Context

This research relies on extending the impact of BudgITs work to citizens to ensuring that citizen engagement and public accountability work together for efficient service delivery.

We embarked on the research to seek critical answers to the following questions:

1. What right tool is best to engage different citizens on public finance considering access of and understanding of governance?

2. Does information accessed via an array of tools about public finance spur

citizen engagement?

3. Does citizen pressure increase accountability and, ultimately, public project delivery?

It is reckoned that accountability is widely accepted as key to service delivery improvements. Research has shown that transparency and accountability depend on each other and they require other critical factors to enable impact.[15] The core approach is to evaluate the work of BudgIT by testing different users- digital and non-digital citizens - in terms of access to public finance and also determine the effectiveness in driving accountability and service delivery.
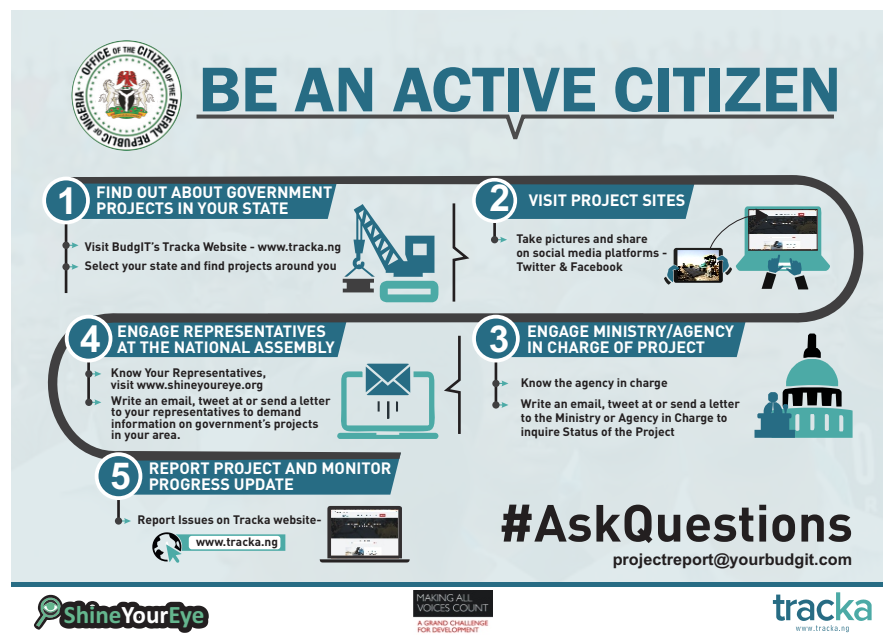
BudgIT embarked on a quantitative research with systematic analysis of data gathered from two classes of people; the digital citizens (urban and digital natives) and grassroots citizens (rural-based with limited access to technology). The sample will be classified along these groups of citizens:

a. Digital Citizens
The research covered the digitally literates - Nigerians who are technology savvy with active interest in governance access via digital tools. BudgIT engaged this set of people by using two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) to provide access to budgets, within the sample size. These citizens were provided information on budgets, line items and other fiscal information relevant to their environment. BudgIT, over a period of 6 weeks, studied their use of information, response and also if they took the follow-up action. After a period of 6 weeks, a survey was circulated that required 200 persons to sign up to its active online community to access budgetary information and receive guidelines for engaging government officials in charge of the implementation of these projects.

[15]http://www.transparency-initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/Movements-and-Accountability-Final.pdf 2015/05

b. Non Digital Citizens

This research also examined the most effective approach and also Citizen access to budgetary information in the grassroots in 10 communities in five different states. As regards the grassroots, the target areas of this project are 10 communities in 5 states: Edo, Ogun, Ondo, Cross River, and Niger. The choice of the states was based on a consideration of geographical spread, and also a diverse approach that balances governing political parties. Citizens in offline communities were provided access to budget in printed text and were placed under a study (over a six-week period) to determine their use of such information. BudgIT's results were geared to validate that if upon access to information via printed materials shared within their communities, citizens are incentivised to seek collective action.

3.2 Research Methodology

Summary of procedures
Our team, through extensive consultation with Making All Voices Count (MAVC) team, reviewed the data collection evaluation methodology and embarked on a quantitative data collection from October 2016. This involved determining the broad and narrow objectives of data collection, data values, underlying assumptions, margin of error, methodology of collections and also the polling output.

Sample

BudgIT distributed the survey via its social media platforms: Twitter and Facebook. A total of 206 respondents signed up to receive budgetary

As regards the grassroots, the target areas of this project are 10 communities in 5 states: Edo, Ogun, Ondo, Cross River, and Niger.

information and their use of the data was tested within a period of time. Also, a total of 249 non-digital users responded through offline engagement. BudgITs Project Tracking Officers returned six weeks after to the focus communities where budget pamphlets were shared and distributed questionnaires to the residents. The survey examined the Citizens personal information, the level of budget access and understanding, their application of the information and if they engaged the government officials in charge of project implementation.

Enumerators

In engaging with non-digital users, the enumerators adopted a "The Random Walk technique". Enumerators, who are project tracking officers of BudgIT, were given specific communities in selected states to engage with. BudgIT personnel selected relevant data from the budget and distributed this information to the two classes of citizens to test their application of the data and observe if it leads to public responsiveness. We engaged the digital citizens via an online survey where 206 respondents signed up to receive information on the budget and guidelines on how to engage the public officials in charge of the project.

Selection of Respondents

To follow up on the data distributed to the two classes of citizens, BudgIT staff set up an online survey and distributed it via email to the 206 respondents to test their application of the information. We also sent two subsequent emails as reminders for the respondents to fill out the survey; a total of 116 of the first 206 respondents reacted, providing feedback through the platform.

The research started with segmentation of users of the budget and provided access to 249 grassroots citizens in 10 communities within Edo, Ogun, Ondo, Cross Rivers and Niger States via printed document. BudgIT classified the content of the budget in similar formats to both classes and defined their engagement with the data and follow-up action. Within a certain waiting period" of 6 weeks, BudgIT examined if citizens can effectively organise and demand service delivery and also if they stress concerns for transparency.

Questionnaire

For the non-digital citizens, we printed 1000 copies of the 2016 zonal intervention projects with names and contacts of their representatives at the National Assembly. Two hundred copies of the budget pamphlet were distributed to residents of the five focus states to create awareness about these projects and encourage them to actively monitor their implementation by visiting the project sites and engaging their senators. The set of data provided to the citizens will establish if, upon access to information through simple infographics and via printed materials, citizens are incentivized take action and if it brings about government accountability.

BudgITs desk officers ascertained the accuracy of data, to ensure that there

Two hundred copies of the budget pamphlet were distributed to residents of the five focus states to create awareness about these projects and encourage them to actively monitor their implementation by visiting the project sites and engaging their senators

are no errors therein, and data is in formats which can be seamlessly shared with the clients. The questionnaire was sectioned around the following points:

- Personal Information
- Gender
- Current Profession
- Education Level
- Test of Access to the Simplified Budget
- Understanding of the Budget
- Follow-up actions on the Budget
- Awareness to the BudgIT
- Engagement with Public Institutions
- Project Tracking
- Role of Media (Social/Traditional Media) in accountability

3.3 Sampling Method

BudgIT embarked on a quantitative research compiling a statistical analysis of data gathered from two classes of people; the digital citizens (urban and digital natives) and grassroots citizens (rural-based with limited access to technology).

The Digital Citizens
The research covered digital literate Nigerians who are technology savvy; BudgIT provided access to budget documents by engaging this set of people by using two social media platforms; Facebook and Twitter. BudgIT set up a survey online to encourage a group of active citizens, individuals who are ready to make a change in their community; it required a total of 200 respondents and collected 206 responses.

The respondents were provided information on budgets, budget line items in their environment and contact details of elected officials relevant to their environment. Through intense civic discussions on their rights in a democracy, we also encouraged them to monitor projects as provided to them and reach out to responsible public officials; with clear directions on how to embark on it. The respondents were placed on a review over a period of 4 weeks; we observed their use of information, response and also tried to determine if there was self-induced interest to demand service delivery for elected officials and public institutions.

The Non-Digital Citizens
This research examined the most practical approach and also citizens reaction to budget access in the grassroots in 10 communities in Four different states and 7 communities in 1 State. We ensured that the study covered communities with pressing needs for public projects. The target areas of this project were 10 communities in 4 States and 7 communities in 1 State: Ogun, Ondo, Cross River, Niger and Edo. The choice of the states was based on a consideration of geographical spread and also a diverse approach that balances governing political parties.

The research covered digital literate Nigerians who are technology savvy; BudgIT provided access to budget documents by engaging this set of people by using two social media platforms; Facebook and Twitter.

Here, we adopted an approach to examine if budget access and citizen engagement can strengthen social accountability and service delivery within the Nigerian context. BudgIT produced 1000 copies of the related budget documents in printed text with details of the elected representatives at the National Assembly and distributed them during advocacy meetings with the residents of the 10 focus communities within the 5 States. The meetings were spread across communities in Niger, Ondo, Cross River, Ogun and Edo states with an average of 30 residents in attendance.

The non-digital respondents were placed under a study (over a six-week period) to determine how they reacted to the budget documents distributed if they were induced to visit the project site or engage the government institutions or officials in charge of the projects. This exercise is crucial to the research as it helped review what ensues with this class of citizens upon access to information via printed text, to establish if access to information incentivises citizen action to demand service delivery.

3.4 Data collection

BudgIT obtained data for this research through a survey from the two groups of citizens. Questionnaires were administered electronically to respondents with access to technology (the digital citizens). The study was divided into three categories; the first part gathered the respondents personal information, ranging from their ages, gender, profession and level of education. The second section focused on budget access; their level of understanding and ability to apply the information to follow up on public projects around them. The third segment provided an overview of BudgITs work to provide access to budgetary information and understand the public perception of the shared visualisation/simplified contents and lastly if it incentivise citizens demand for government accountability.

The questionnaire outlined for the grassroots citizens followed a similar pattern, with the same series of questions printed and distributed in the focus communities. These questions were designed to provide candid responses to the key objectives of this research. They were sent out after the review period of 4 weeks to test how the respondents reacted to increased budget access.

4.0 Data Analysis

Our findings revealed that 72.2% of digital citizens most interested in the budget were below age 40

The data analysis involved the review of results based on field research on the budget with a focus on the Federal Governments zonal intervention projects as well as discussions on the projects via social media platforms to drive conversations around public finance. The data mined from the 2016 budget were creatively simplified into visualisations to provide access and aid understanding of the budget to the digital citizens. For the grassroots citizens, BudgIT mined and extracted data from the 2016 budget to reflect the Federal Governments zonal intervention projects of the five focus states with names and details of their representatives at the National Assembly.

The result of the survey was analysed by BudgIT personnel using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to define the data across the two classes of citizens examined for the research.
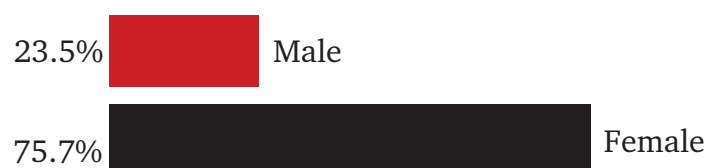
4.1 Digital Citizens

This set of respondents is urban and has access to technology. BudgIT personnel set up an online survey and tagged it "Active Citizens Network", driving citizens to go beyond complaining about underdevelopment in the country but be involved in ensuring the implementation of public projects around them. Of the 206 respondents who signed up to receive budget analysis, guidelines to engage public officials and hold them accountable, only 116 citizens responded to the subsequent survey.

Demographic Distribution of Digital Citizen (%)

Age	%
18-30	49.11%
31-40	23.3%
41-50	3.4%
Above 50	2.6%
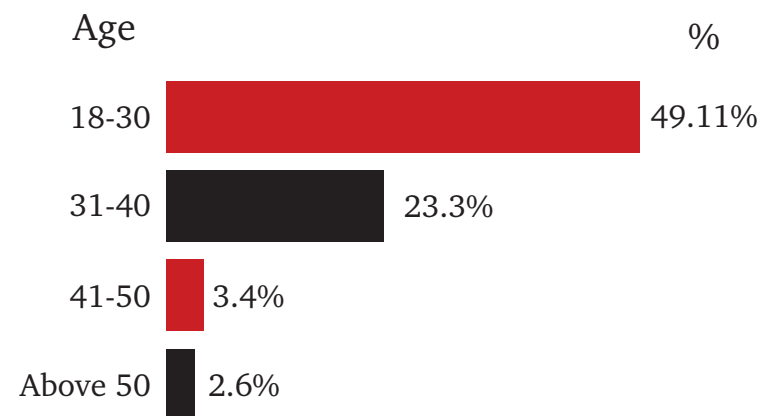
Observation: Survey documents were given to people without pre-knowledge about age group. We observed that 72.2% of digital citizens most interested in the budget were below age 40.

Gender Distribution of Digital Citizens (%)
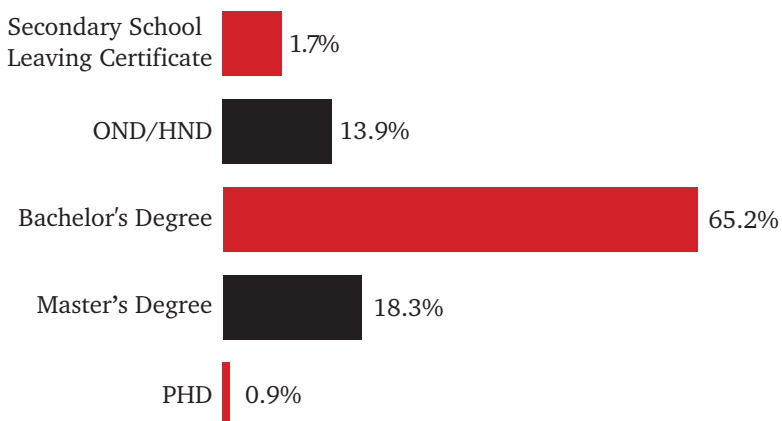
23.5%	Male
75.7%	Female

The survey was shared via online platforms and there was no special consideration for respondents gender. Our findings revealed more male than female were more willing to actively track projects and engage elected officials to ensure service delivery.

Employment Category of Digital Citizens (%)

Student	16.5%
Entrepreneur	18.4%
Professional	60.5%
Partly Skilled	6.1%
Unskilled	0%

It revealed most of the digital citizens (60.5%) interested in public finance are professionals, (65.2%) are university degree holders.
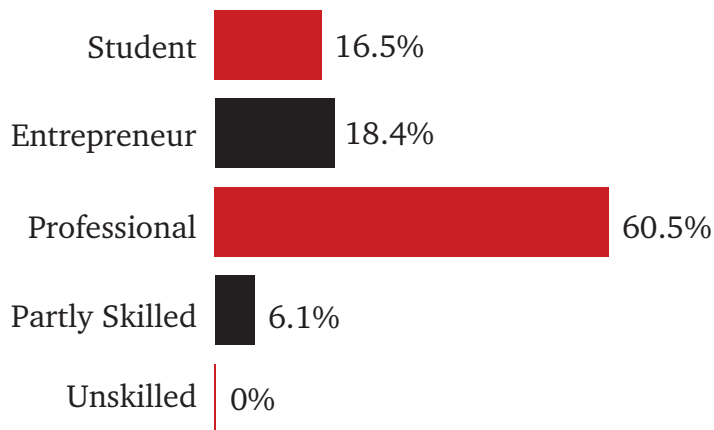
Observation: Data from the survey affirms the digital citizens level of interest based on their current profession, it revealed most of the digital citizens (60.5%) interested in public finance are professionals.

Education Level of Digital Citizens (%)

|	
Secondary School Leaving Certificate	1.7%
OND/HND	13.9%
Bachelor's Degree	65.2%
Master's Degree	18.3%
PHD	0.9%

Observation: The majority of the survey participants (65.2%) are university degree holders. The respondents were engaged via digital platforms. The data above reveals the educational background of BudgIT's audience, and the set of citizens who are most interested in a simplified analysis of the budget based on their literacy level. We understand that this is due to the understanding of our infographics and influence of education on the conceptualisation of accountability in a democracy.
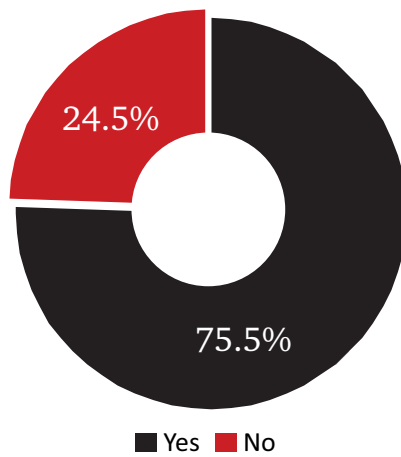
Have you seen the 2016 Budget document and the creative analysis visualizations by BUDGIT?
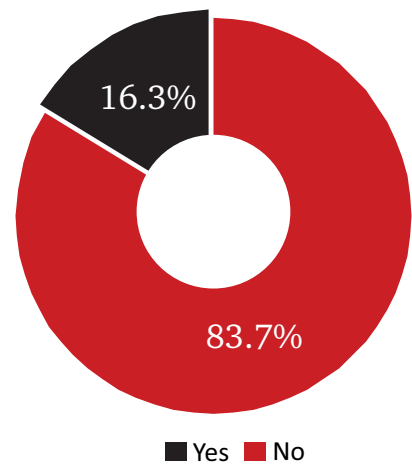
36.2%

63.8%

■ Yes ■ No
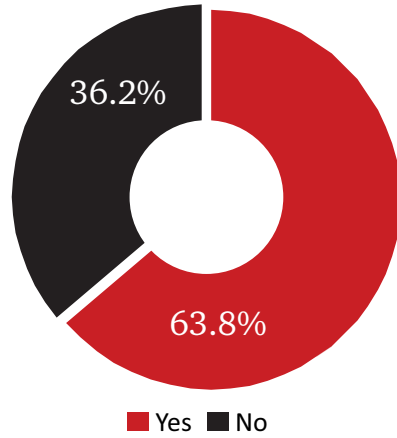
Have you seen your state's the 2016 Budget

48.2%

51.8%

■ Yes ■ No
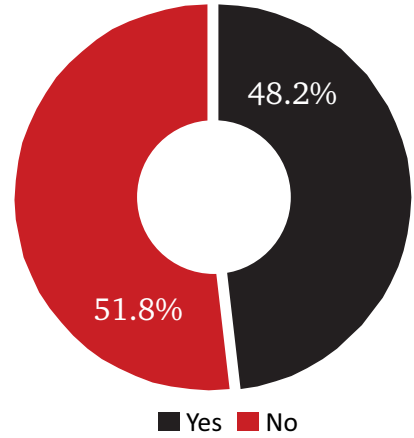
Have do understand the budget when you read it

24.5%

75.5%

■ Yes ■ No

Were you interested in the budget as a result of BudgIT's simplified analysis

16.3%

83.7%

■ Yes ■ No

Were you able to locate project(s) for your community in the budget?

50%

50%

■ Yes ■ No
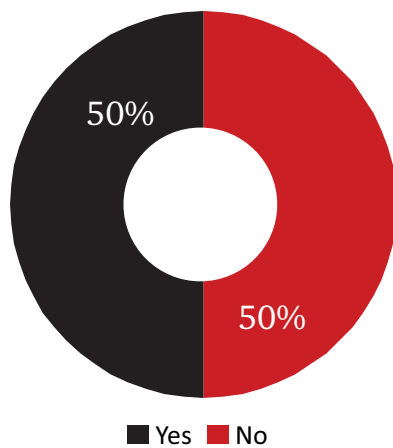
Did the infographics recieved encourage you to follow up on the development projects stated in the budget?

24.5%

75.5%

■ Yes ■ No
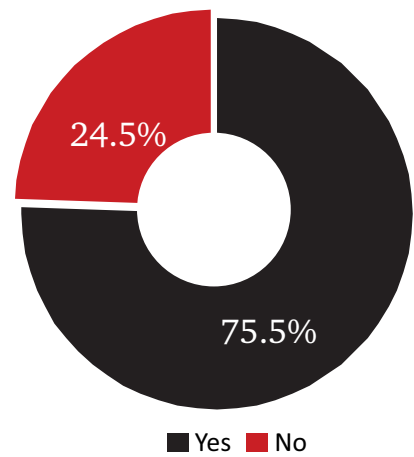
Observation: Our findings revealed only 63.2% has come across simplified budget information from BudgIT. 83.4% of the digital citizens were interested in the budget as a result of the analysis provided by BudgIT and only 11.4% of the digital citizens engaged public officials.

4.2 Non-Digital Citizens

This class comprises rural-based people are rural based with limited or no access to technology. We applied a systematic random sampling for non-digital citizen of the communities engaged in the five states where BudgIT shared budget documents of 1000 copies (200 per state): Niger, Ondo, Ogun, Edo and Cross River states which contained clear line items of the Federal Government's zonal intervention projects around them with names and contact details of their senators at the National Assembly.

Six weeks after the documents were shared, we returned to the communities with questionnaires to test their usage of the information. We gathered a total of 249 responses from the 5 states: Edo (50 respondents) Ogun (50 respondents) Niger (50 respondents) Cross River (45) and Ondo (54 respondents)

Demographic Distribution of Non-Digital Citizens (%)

Below 18 — 4.4%
18-30 — 20.1%
31-40 — 28.5%
41-50 — 29.7%
Above 50 — 17.3%
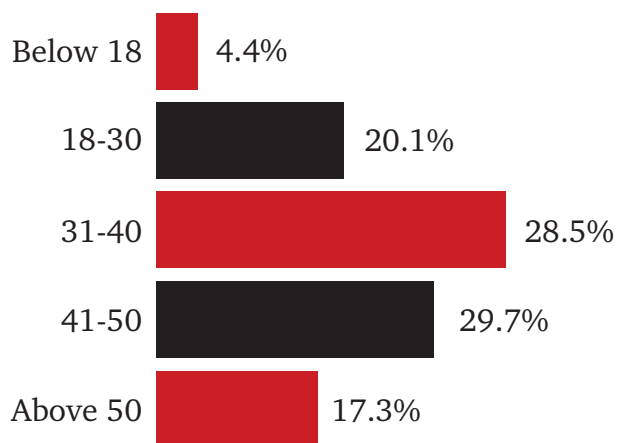
Observation: Survey was thrown open to people without pre-knowledge of age group. We observed that 78.3% of non-digital citizens who showed interest in the budget and project tracking were below the age of 50.

Gender Distribution of Non-Digital Citizens (%)

Male — 63.5%
Female — 36.5%

Observation: The questionnaires were shared at community town hall meetings with no special consideration for respondents' gender. More male than female were willing to be actively involved in governance issues.

Profession of Non-Digital Citizens (%)

Profession	Percentage
Farmer	30.1%
Civil Servant	25.3%
Artisan	12.9%
Trader	28.5%
Fisherman	3.2%
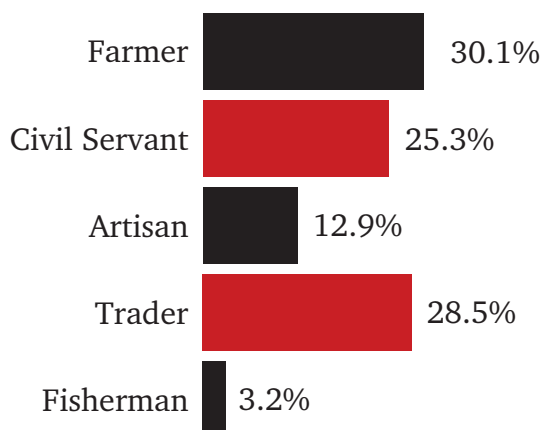
Observation: Most of the non-digital citizens (74.7%) in this category are unskilled workers with only 25.3% of the group who are government workers.

5.0 Survey Findings

The target population of this survey are a mix of digital and non-digital citizens. The digital citizens are urban with access to technology and savvy in the use of social media while the non-digital citizens are mostly Rural-based with limited or no access to technology

The target population of this survey are a mix of digital and non-digital citizens. The digital citizens are urban with access to technology and savvy in the use of social media while the non-digital citizens are mostly Rural-based with limited or no access to technology.

Of the 206 digital respondents who signed up to access budgetary information and guidelines to approach the public officials in charge, only 116 of them responded to the subsequent survey to test their application of the data and if it led to an institutional reaction. The results revealed that youths, mostly between ages 18-30, were more interested in the budget.

While we observed more enthusiasm at the non-digital, nearly all the respondents in this category were into an income-generating activity, with the most response coming from citizens within ages 31-50.

Q1: Does access to simplified information on public finance spur citizen engagement and demand for accountability?

Digital Citizens: This set of respondents are technology savvy and although 71.7% of them agreed simplified information stimulates interest in public projects and 97.3% of them agree it motivates to track these projects, only 49.1% of the respondents actually tracked the projects in the budget documents sent to them during the review period of 4 weeks.

Non-Digital Citizens: When we asked this set of respondents if they believed that access to simplified information stimulates interest in developmental projects, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (98%) agreed. 96.4% of the interviewees agree it motivates to track public projects, while 68.3% of the respondents visited a project location in the budget pamphlet.

Q2: Does citizen pressure increase accountability and, ultimately, project delivery?

Digital Citizens: Although 99% of these respondents agreed that tracking developmental projects increases accountability, only 12.1% of the interviewees contacted their representatives at the National Assembly or the public agency in charge of the project via letter or phone call to inquire the status of projects, and a little over 9.5% of them received a response. Overall, 100% of the online respondents, however, agreed that constant demand for information from representatives/public agencies leads to accountability.

Non-Digital Citizens: Only 39.8% of the respondents contacted their representatives at the National Assembly via letter or phone call to inquire about the status of projects, and no more than 7.6% of the survey respondents received a response from the House of Representatives. Overall, 83.1% of the grassroots agreed that constant demand for information from representatives/public agencies leads to accountability.

We observed one-on-one engagements works best at the grassroots as 98% of the respondents affirmed they understood the explanation that followed the shared budget documents

Q3: What tool is best to engage different citizens on public finance considering their literacy set and understanding of governance?

Digital Citizens: 97% of these respondents accede access to simplified budget information (infographics) motivates citizens to monitor projects. When asked if intense social media advocacy increases the likelihood of project implementation, 93% of them agree it aids service delivery while only 7% of the respondents disagreed. 99% of this surveyed group agreed tracking public projects increases government accountability. 83.7% of the respondents affirmed they were interested in the budget as a result of infographics shared by BudgIT and it encouraged them to follow up on public projects.

Non-Digital Citizens: BudgIT engaged this class of people through community advocacy meetings and printed copies of related budget line items after which questionnaires were administered six weeks after to review their reaction. Here, we observed one-on-one engagements works best at the grassroots as 98% of the respondents affirmed they understood the explanation that followed the shared documents and 96.8% of them were encouraged to follow up on the capital projects in the budget. As seen in Edo State, 96% of the 48 respondents surveyed became aware of the budget as a result of the documents and the verbal engagement which followed. While 96% of the 48 respondents surveyed in Ogun State affirmed they were encouraged to follow up on projects based on the same factors.

In all, the 10 communities in the focus states, 96.4% of the surveyed respondents agreed access to simplified budgetary information motivates citizens to monitor projects, while 91.6% of the respondents agreed tracking public projects increases government accountability.

6.0 Conclusion: Understanding budget access and examining citizens reaction

BudgIT works to make the opaque Nigerian budget more accessible, simple and understandable for citizens to raise awareness of the right of access to budget information and to promote their willingness and action to monitor projects and demand for better service delivery.

To test the BudgIT theory of change, we placed the two classes of citizens under a survey for six weeks to test the most effective means of engaging them, how they react to clear information on the budget and if Citizen demand for government accountability results in service delivery. Our key research questions are defined below:

What tool is best to engage different citizens on public finance considering their literacy set and understanding of governance?

The Nigerian budget is usually written in a thick document and technical jargon, which makes it complicated for citizens to understand. When we put the question forward to the two classes of citizens (digital and grassroots), 83.7% of the digital respondents agreed that simplified analysis of the budget and infographics shared by BudgIT stimulated their interests and incentivised them to monitor public projects, while 98.4% of the non-digital respondents were encouraged to follow up on public projects around them as a result of the budget documents distributed and engagements at the meetings held by BudgIT field officers. This affirms the analysis by the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) that Performance information should be routinely presented in a way which informs, and provides useful context for, the financial allocations in the budget report. It is essential that such information should clarify, and not obscure or impede, accountability and oversight.[16]

Does information accessed via an array of tools about public finance spur citizen engagement?

There was a weak response from the online respondents, Of the 205 people who signed receive the simplified budget information and guidelines to be involved in following up on project implementation, only 116 of them responded to the final survey following three email reminders and a waiting period of six weeks. The non-digital citizens are more harmonized, with a strong sense of ownership as they are more involved in project monitoring upon access to budget information.

Our analysis showed that there is more enthusiasm for accountability at the grassroots level, as all indicators showed that while 68.3% visited the project site at the grassroots, 49.1% tracked the projects among the digital citizens. The community engagement meetings demonstrate more coordination in the rural areas, as most residents who attended the advocacy meetings were part of a unit or group, i.e., trade unions, market

The Nigerian budget is usually written in a thick document and technical jargon, which makes it complicated for citizens to understand.

---

[16]http://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Draft-Principles-Budgetary-Governance.pdf

leaders association and traditional leaders. Also, 39.8% of the citizens at the grassroots reached out to their representatives and 12.2% among surveyed digital citizens. This is mainly attributed to the sense of ownership exhibited towards public projects at the rural communities as they are primary beneficiaries of the services.

Our findings show citizens demand for updates on public projects and information on government funds induces an institutional response. While 83.1% of the grassroots respondents agreed so, an overwhelming 100% of the digital respondents agreed government would become accountable under intense and persistent pressure from the citizens. 99% and 91.6% of the digital and grassroots interviewees respectively confirmed that tracking public projects increases government accountability.

Does citizen pressure increase accountability and, ultimately, project delivery?

While 39.8% of the surveyed persons at the grassroots contacted their representatives in the legislature via phone calls and 47.8% sent letters to the public agency in charge of the project, response was really poor, as no more than 7.6% of the surveyed group received response on efforts regarding tracked projects in their communities. The figures were worse among digital citizens components, as only 9.6% of the letters sent was responded to. We agree that the process of transparency and data access to citizens does not automatically lead to accountability as there has to be incentivised systems that push public officials to prioritise funding for public projects and also respond to queries in a timely manner.

According to research by the National Democratic Institute Technology can be used to readily create spaces and opportunities for citizens to express their voices, but making these voices politically stronger and the spaces more meaningful is a harder challenge that is political and not technological in nature.[17] Based on the findings, clear information of the budget stimulates citizens interest, incentivises to monitor public projects, while increasing demands for information from government officials increases accountability. However, we observed a considerable level of distrust in the government as only a few of the respondents made demands of or attempted to engage the responsible public officials.

[17]https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Citizen-Participation-and-Technology-an-NDI-Study.pdf

7.0 Plan of Action

Based on our engagement with our respondents, we understand how to pivot our work for more support for the grassroots, deepening our engagement. This fits into our recent funding approach with support from Omidyar Network and Gates Foundation. We are also building cross-sectional engagement with government agencies such as NEITI and other organisations for support.

We will also be improving visualisations by applying a multimedia approach to our work to enhance visibility and citizen engagement. This includes the use of audiovisual for the engagement with citizens and our Lead Partner, Oluseun Onigbinde. We will evaluate the project within the next two years. BudgIT will also be expanding financial resources and talent to ensure results. This will include a two-year plan to double digital citizens access to over 250,000 and also give access to over 400,000 citizens in 20 of the 36 states by 2018.

8.0 Survey Design

Survey Team

Oluseun Onigbinde, Lead Partner, BudgIT
Abiola Sosami, Program Manager
Ilevbaoje Uadamen, Senior Project Officer
Kehinde Babatunde, Project Officer
Segun Adeniyi, Creative Lead
Fisayo Soyombo, Editor

Survey Enumerators

Obono Abel, State Officer, Cross River
Osiyemi Omotola, State Officer, Ogun
Tosin Osula, State Officer, Niger
Damilola Agunloye, State Officer, Ondo
Oje Moses, State Officer, Edo

About the Authors

Oluseun Onigbinde is the Lead Partner at BudgIT. He is a recipient of the Ashoka Fellowship, Future Africa Awards, Quartz Africa 30 Innovators Award, Aspen New Voices Fellowship and also an Open Knowledge Foundation ambassador for Nigeria. He sits on the ONE Africa Policy Advisory Board and also worked with International Center for Journalists/Gates Foundation on rethinking health journalism in Nigeria. He was a Knight Innovation Fellow with the International Center for Journalists. He also had Executive Education at Stanford University Graduate School of Business on Social Entrepreneurship.

Abiola Afolabi-Sosami is a Program Manager at BudgIT. She manages projects around creative communication, fund watch and budget tracking. She has led the Creative Communication Project for CSOs financed by the MacArthur Foundation and the Ebola Fund Watch Project for West Africa financed by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). She currently leads various projects funded by Making All Voices Count (MAVC), the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) for tracking of budget implementation using Tracka. She has a degree in International Law & Diplomacy from Babcock University, Nigeria.

Acknowledgments

Appendix
Survey Completion
The survey was carried out among the grassroots citizens in five states.

State	Communities Visited	No of Respondents
Cross-River	Udigie Urban - Obudu LGA	45
	Ipong Begiaka - Obudu LGA	
	Sankwala -Obanliku LGA	
	Ishibori-Ogoja LGA	
	Abouchiche - Bekwara LGA	
	Kaduna-ochegbe - Bekwara	
	Okuku - Yala LGA	
	Olachor - Yala LGA	
	Ugaga - Yala LGA	
	Ogoja	
Ogun	Agbele-Sagamu LGA	50
	Abobi -Ago Iwoye Ijebu North LGA	
	Jaguna-Ewekoro LGA	
	Ijebu Mushin -Ijebu East LGA	
	Iworo-Ijebu North East LGA.	
	Ayetoro-Yewa North LGA	
	Itele-Ijebu East LGA	
	Atikori,Ijebu Igbo -Ijebu North	
	Ogijo in Sagamu LGA.	
	Ijebu Ode in Ijebu Ode LGA	
Niger	Tunga Mallam	50
	Beji	
	Bosso c1	

State	Communities Visited	No of Respondents
	Bosso c2	
	Miakunkala	
	Pago	
	Kampani	
	Kadna	
	Bida	
	Doko	
Ondo	Ase Akoko	54
	Ikaram Akoko	
	Okeagbe Akoko	
	Lujomu	
	Oloruntedo	
	Idepe	
	Ulede	
	Ikota	
	Akure South	
	Owo	
Edo	Okpokhumi Emai	50
	Uzebba Iueleha	
	Imoukpe	
	Ikao	
	Ivbiodohen	
	Ihievbe	

State	Communities Visited	No of Respondents

Survey

Survey questions for the Non-Digital citizens

To test the most efficient approach for non digital citizen engagement and to consider their reaction to access to budget information, the respondents were asked:

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Age: below 18( ) 18-30( ) 31-40( ) 41-50( ) above 50( )

Gender: Male( )   Female( )

Current profession: Farmer ( )
                             Civil Servant ( )
                             Fisherman ( )
                             Artisan ( )
                             Trader ( )

B. BUDGET ACCESS

Have you ever seen a budget document? Yes ( ) No ( )

Have you seen your State government's budget? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you understand the simplified budget document by BudgIT?
Yes ( ) No ( )

Was it clear and concise? Yes ( ) No ( )

Were you encouraged to follow up on capital projects stated in the budget? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you identify any project within your community in the document?
Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you visit the project location? Yes ( ) or No( )

Did you call your Representatives at the National Assembly? (Yes or No)

Did you write a letter to the responsible body? Yes ( ) or No( )

Did you organise community engagement meetings to discuss the projects assigned to your area. Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you request for more information? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you have to send letters more than once? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you receive any response from your Representatives? Yes ( ) No ( )

C. About BudgIT

Have you ever seen an infographic(s) on the budget by BudgIT?
Yes ( ) No ( )

Were the infographics useful in tracking your community projects?
Yes ( ) No ( )

Were they easy to understand?   Yes ( ) No ( )

 Were you able to locate your community project(s) in the information shared on Tracka website?   Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you visit the project location?   Yes ( ) No ( )

Have you contacted the representatives at the National Assembly/ public agency in charge of the project(s)?   Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you contact the agency responsible for the project(s)?   Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you wish to track particular projects and report issues on the Tracka website? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you track or amplify any issue on social media?   Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you request for more information about the project(s)? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you have to send letters/emails to the representative/agency more than once? Yes ( ) No ( )

Did you receive any response from your representative(s)/agency?
Yes ( ) No ( )

D. UNDERSTANDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

1. Access to budget document creates interest in capital projects. Strongly Agree( ) Agree( ) Disagree( ) Strongly Disagree( )

2.   Access to simplified information encourages project tracking. Strongly Agree( ) Agree( ) Disagree( ) Strongly Disagree( )

3. Constant demand for answers/information from public official/responsible body leads to eventual response from responsible body/official? Strongly Agree( ) Agree( ) Disagree( ) Strongly Disagree( )

4. Tracking capital projects increases accountability (Government response to citizens) ?
    Strongly Agree( ) Agree( ) Disagree( ) Strongly Disagree( )