

TRANSPARENT FOR WHOM? DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON GHANA'S PETROLEUM AND MINING REVENUE MANAGEMENT

This policy brief reports the findings from a large-scale survey of Ghanaians' level and sources of information on resource revenue management.

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Summary

The Government of Ghana puts strong emphasis on making natural resource revenue-related information public, particularly when it comes to petroleum revenues. Have the policies been successful? An analysis of a national survey of over 3500 participants finds that Ghanaians overwhelmingly feel that they have the right to receive information about and to benefit from natural resource revenues. However, they lack access to this information. Moreover, the available information about natural resource revenues is most likely to reach those who are already in a better socio-economic position. In other words, transparency exists, but only nominally, because most people are not actually getting information on natural resource revenue management.

Key results

- » Inform the wider citizenry through a mass media campaign on radio and/or TV, aimed at raising awareness of and stimulating interest in natural resource revenue management.
- » Keep information short and easily understandable for all citizens.
- » Focus on both national *and* local level revenue information.
- » Use community-based channels such as information centres and meetings for local dissemination and discussion.
- » Target DA members as gatekeepers for information dissemination.

Box 1: The survey

Kumasi Institute of Technology, Energy and Environment (KITE), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), University of East Anglia (UEA), University of Oulu and Wageningen University have conducted a three-year research project to analyze transparency and accountability in petroleum revenue management and to raise awareness of these issues among policy makers, practitioners and scholars in Ghana and elsewhere. This is the first of three policy briefs on the project. It draws upon findings from a survey conducted in Ghana in June-August 2016 to study Ghanaians' level of knowledge of and perceptions and attitudes towards a number of petroleum and mining revenue management-related issues, and how people get information on such issues. 3526 adult respondents were interviewed face-to-face by enumerators in 120 of Ghana's (then) 216 districts. The survey results were analyzed using descriptive and multivariate analysis methods. The survey was jointly funded by the 3ie, Research Council of Norway and NTNU. For more information, contact KITE or visit the project webpage (see below).

Few people know how revenues from extractive industries are managed in Ghana

The government of Ghana has engaged in several transparency processes in the context of high-value natural resource management. The most prominent ones are the participation in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and establishment of its Ghanaian organization (GHEITI); and the establishment of the independent Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC, for petroleum revenues) under the Petroleum Revenue Management Act (PRMA, Act 815). Through these, information about national resource revenue management is publicly available via the Internet and newspapers. Information about petroleum revenues is also directly available to the members of parliament, who should convey the information to the District Assembly (DA) in their local constituency.

Despite these transparency efforts, fewer than 10% of respondents had heard in the previous year how natural

resource revenues are managed locally, even in areas close to mining activities or petroleum production; and less than one-third had heard about how revenues are managed at the national level. Most did not know the PRMA (63%), the ABFA (87%), GHEITI (95%), or PIAC (77%). Two-thirds of respondents admitted to having no knowledge at all about resource revenue management; the other third had some knowledge; and a mere 1.3% claimed to have good knowledge. Women are more likely than men to say they know less about the issue. Perhaps partly due to limited knowledge, almost 80% of Ghanaians are dissatisfied with the handling of resource revenues.

These results contrast with the fact that over 90% of respondents strongly agree with the statement that they have a right to benefit from the revenues from petroleum extraction and mining. Similarly, over 90% completely agree with that the

government of Ghana has an obligation to publish information about these revenues; at the same time over 80% report that lack of access to information is the main reason why they have limited knowledge of resource revenue management.

Ghanaians have few reliable information sources on revenue management

Radio and TV for national matters, and radio and local information centres for local matters, are the most important media information sources for Ghanaians. Internet webpages are a distant third for national affairs, with a quarter of the DA members listing the Internet as one of two main information sources for national affairs. Newspapers, the other main channel used by GHEITI and PIAC to publish information, are a main source of information for only 5% of respondents. People gave fewer sources of information for local than for national issues. Respondents trust radio and TV the most and trust social media, Internet, and the information they get via mobile phones the least – though they still have trust in these new media sources.

Overall, local leaders, and family or friends, are the main personal information sources for national and local news, and for information on local and national resource revenue use. Young people more often use the Internet and social media for information, while women are more likely to rely on family and other villagers.

Local leaders such as traditional authorities and Unit Committee members state that DA members are the most important personal information source for them when it comes to resource revenue management. Importantly, trust in local decision makers, especially in DAs, is generally high, though lowest among common citizens.

People receive local information on other issues through information centres, so these could be used for information dissemination on local resource revenue management. Alternatively, community information meetings or radio could be considered, as 55% and 70% of respondents, respectively, chose these as one of their preferred sources for information on resource revenue management.

Currently, there is limited evidence of information trickle-down from local leaders to common citizens: less than a quarter of common citizens reported relying on a local leader as an important information source, even though they generally trust information from local leaders. DA members are a main information source for other local leaders; they could be targeted as gatekeepers for information dissemination to a wider audience. However, it is important to keep in mind that reliance on local leaders as sources of information may exclude the young and women, who would need to be targeted through a different channel.

The most privileged are the most likely to receive information on natural resource revenues

There is unequal access to information in general, and to information on resource revenue management in particular. Thus, increased information disclosure may disproportionately

benefit those in more powerful positions, and reinforce existing socio-economic power structures.

Information about natural resource revenue management is most likely to reach those who are already in a better position in their community. Common citizens are less likely to be informed about these issues compared to elected duty bearers, traditional authorities, and other opinion leaders such as teachers, youth club or religious leaders. Further, there is a combined effect of education and language barriers: those who cannot read English or have little formal education are much less likely to be informed about resource revenue management. Women are also less informed, although this may be partially explained by their lack of leadership status and lower education.

Respondents who report better living conditions are more likely to have heard about natural resource revenue management; as are those who have a high general interest in politics; and those who either themselves engage in mining, have a family member who engages in mining, or live in an area with a mining company. People in more remote areas are less likely to have heard about resource revenue management.

Looking forward: Tailor your message and your information source to your desired audience

- » The main information channels for PIAC and GHEITI (i.e., Internet, newspapers, and meetings in regional capitals) are probably not the most effective ways to reach citizens.
- » ICT technologies and social media are not currently among the most important information sources, and there is less trust in them: although they are cost-effective, emphasis will need to be put on reliability when choosing these channels.
- » There are few information sources for local natural resource revenue management, especially for common citizens, and access is unequal across socio-economic status: carefully consider these points when launching an information campaign.

Key resources

Lujala, P., Brunnschweiler, C., Edjekumhene, I. (2018). Transparent for whom? Dissemination of information on Ghana's petroleum and mining revenue management, MPRA Paper No. 84788.

Edjekumhene, I., Voors, M., Lujala, P., Brunnschweiler, C., Owusu, C.K., Nyamekye, A. (2019). Impacts of key provisions in Ghana's Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 3ie Impact Evaluation Report 94.

For more details on the project, please visit the KITE website at <https://kiteonline.net/examining-transparency-and-accountability-in-the-oil-and-gas-sector-impact-evaluation-of-key-provisions-in-ghanas-petroleum-revenue-management-act/>

