



# **Combating Maternal Mortality from the Budget Frontline: Civil Society Monitoring Public Resources for Maternal Health**

**Countdown to 2015: maternal, new-born and child survival  
conference**

**Cape Town, South Africa**

**April, 2008**

# Presentation Structure

- IBP Strategies & Rationale for Civil Society Budget Work
- Maternal Mortality Case Study
- Successes and Challenges to Civil Society Budget Work

# **IBP Strategies and Rationale for Civil Society Budget Work**

# Why should civil society care about budgets?

- **The budget:**
  - is the most important economic policy instrument for governments.
  - shows the true priorities and values of government.
  - affects the lives of every citizen, but citizens with modest means are often influenced the most.
- **The budget process and budget system:** critical in determining the openness, democratic, and participatory nature of governance.

# Arguments against civil society budget engagement?

*Despite its importance to every citizen and democratic process, budget processes are traditionally closed.*

*Why?*

- Budgets must be formulated in secret; open processes upset markets.
- Legislators and civil society advance the interests of their constituents, not national.
- The executive has a mandate to produce the budget in a closed process; the legislature should rubber-stamp the budget.

# Arguments for civil society engagement in the budget process

- Build budget literacy and improve understanding of monitoring governance and democracy
- Facilitate better policy choices
- Reduce leakages and waste in revenue collection and expenditure (monitoring and contact with programs)
- Strengthening accountability institutions (training)

# IBP Strategies

- Build core regional and issue partnerships – South-South mentoring and network building
- Institution focus – Long-term institutional support, technical assistance and mentoring
- Country focus – support to multiple initiatives within countries
- Enhancing impact through learning

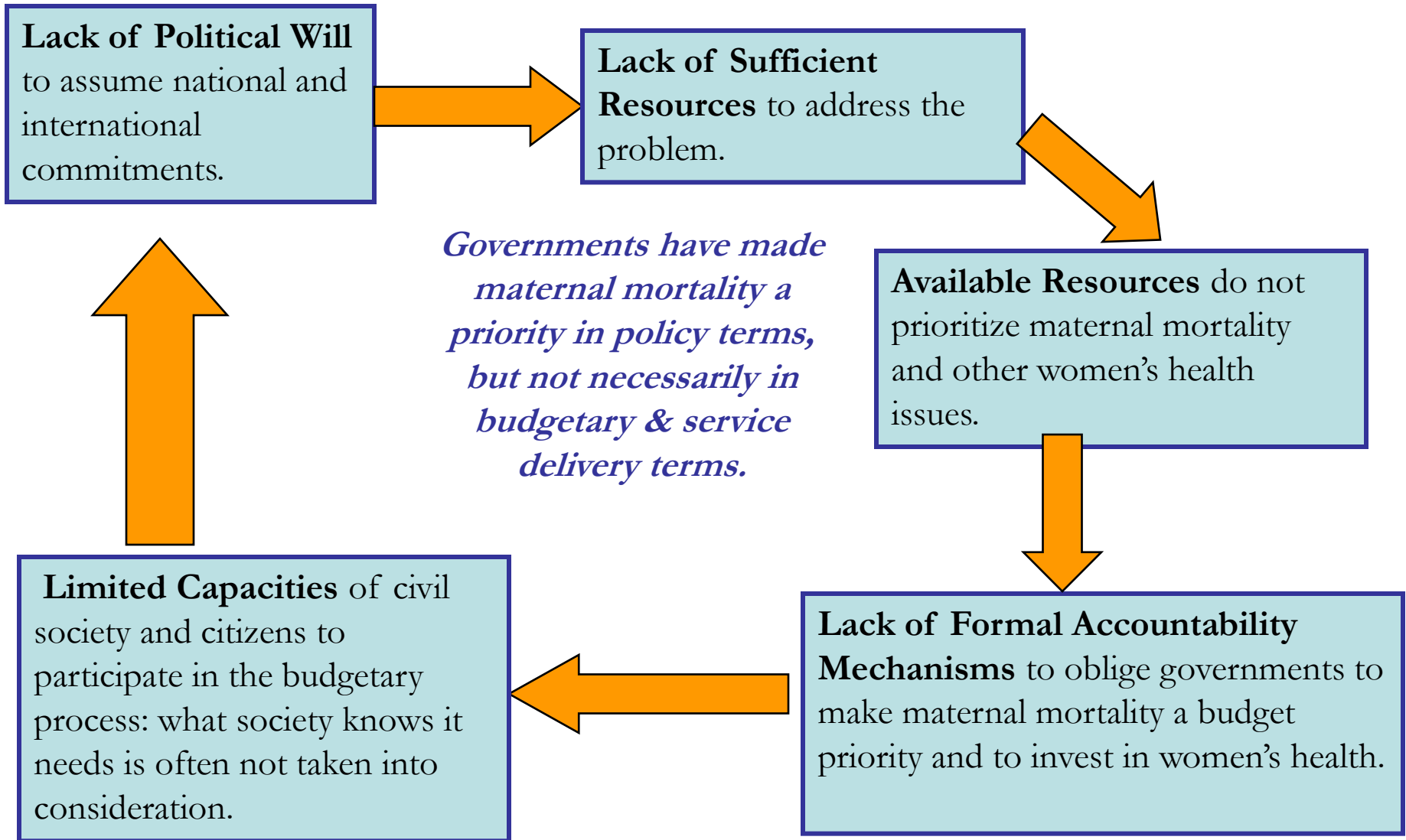
# IBP Activities

- Building analytic and advocacy skills
- Improving access to financial assistance
- Improving access to budget information
- Building peer networks
- Enhancing the international profile of civil society budget work

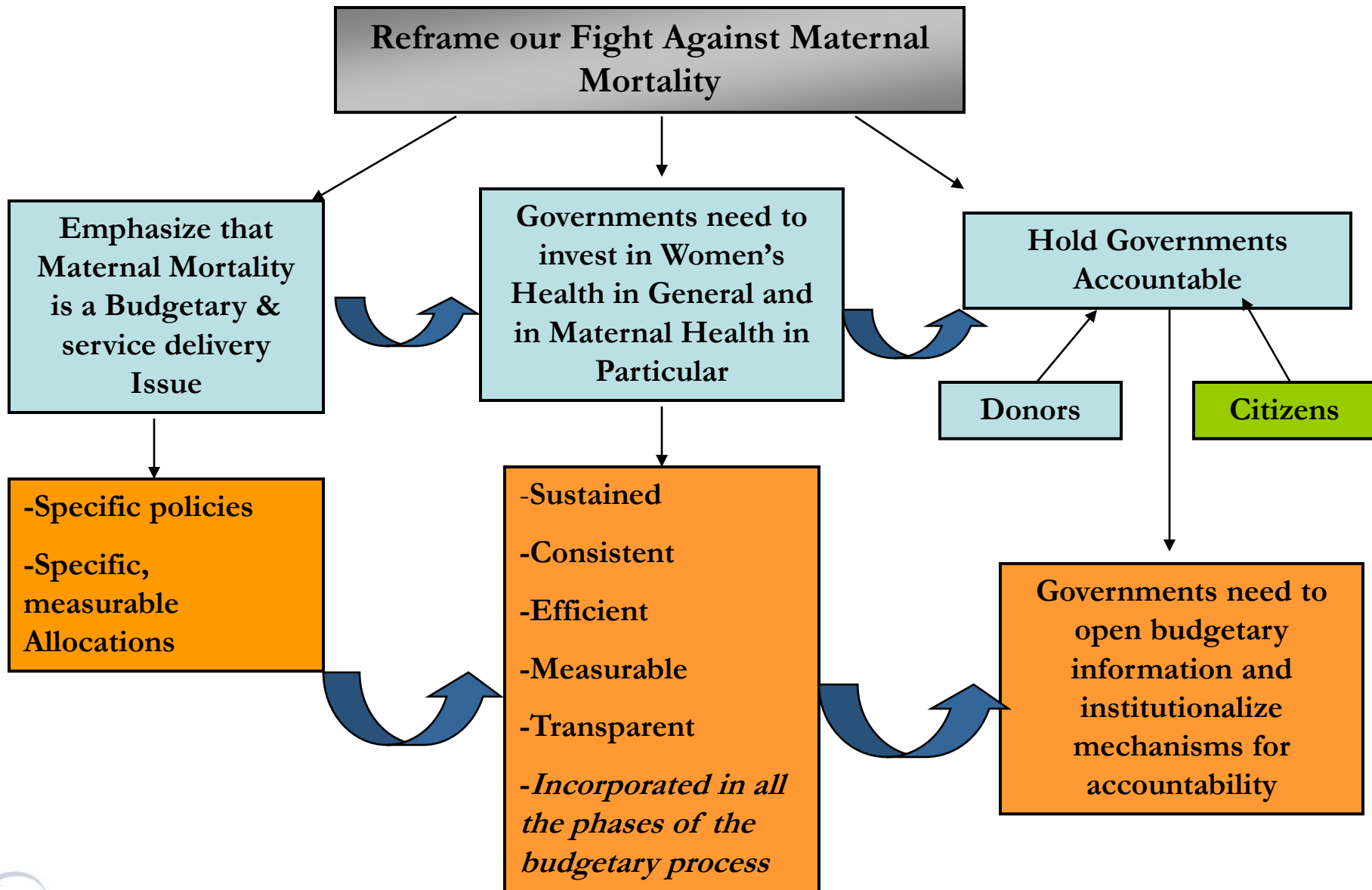
# Maternal Mortality Case Study: Illustrating the Impact of Civil Society Budget Work

Maternal Mortality is one of the largest social injustice concerns because it is a *poor women's issue!*

# Why: The Circle of Contradiction



# What needs to be done differently?



# Fundar holds government accountable for maternal deaths in Mexico

- **Fundar: monitoring maternal health funds and programs since 2000, documenting government's changing strategies**
- **Fundar and its province-based partners (in Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas) discovered that:**
  - Government data around maternal mortality rates is inconsistent
  - Maternal health policies focused on pregnancy follow-up services — not on childbirth & postpartum attention. Emergency Obstetric Care was not provided to high risk groups.
  - The budget for maternal health did not adequately prioritize highest risk groups, i.e. indigenous, rural women from Southern States.
  - More recent health schemes (Arranque Parejo and the Popular Insurance) present the following problems:
    - Lack of investment in health infrastructure
    - Lack of transparency: the Popular Insurance scheme has “swallowed up” specific programs. Hence, no public information on how much the government is spending on maternal health is available. This is aggravated at sub-national level, where provisions for transparency are much weaker.

# Fundar's Major Accomplishments

- Through its budget work, Fundar provides findings and information to other CSOs for their own evidence-based advocacy.
- Maternal mortality has been demystified as an issue discussed only by medical doctors and public officials; its political profile has been risen, making MM an issue of social justice, gender, class, and race.
- Resources for the reduction of MM are an unavoidable topic when the budget is tabled in Congress.
- Fundar's costing and advocacy efforts led to the incorporation of Emergency Obstetric Care into the Popular Insurance's main service package. This approach was replicated by UNFPA in Paraguay.
- Constant monitoring illustrated that health schemes such as the Popular Insurance erase specific policies from public health policy schemes (and the budget); this makes them less transparent and opens the risk of certain policies not prioritized as needed.

# Successes and Challenges to Civil Society Budget Work

# Success Factors

1. Access to budget information and the budget process.
2. Dedicated domestic organizational capacity in year-round effort.
3. Combination of analytical and advocacy skills.
4. Accuracy, accessibility, timeliness of information and dissemination.
5. Relationships within CSO sector, and other oversight institutions.
6. Relationships with government.

# Obstacles

- Political environment
- Access to information
- Opportunities for participation
- Analytical and advocacy skills
- Access to sustainable funding

# Lessons from Success Stories

1. Adaptable, flexible tool with potential to improve governance and poverty.
2. Political and budget systems limit possible impact, at least in short-term.
3. Success requires domestic organizational capacity in dedicated year-round effort.
4. Accuracy, accessibility, timeliness are key to building credibility & audience.
5. But, flexible strategic relationships create impact.
  - Relations within civil society
  - Partnerships with oversight institutions
  - Relations with the executive branch

**“It only took me about five years to figure out the budget allocation process for LGAs. There are parallel streams of funding: there is no proper streamlined reporting by sector, and there is no sectoral ownership over local sectoral monies, so nobody to lobby for more sector-specific resources at the local level.**

**The short answer is: there is no way to figure out spending on maternal health, because things are not reported that way at the local level or central level.”**



501 Loop Street Studios, 4 Loop Street, Cape Town, 8001, South Africa

Tel/ Fax: +27 21 418 0034

&

820 First St. NE Suite 510, Washington, DC 20002 USA

Tel: 1-202 408 1080 | Fax: 1-202 408 8173

&

Xicotencatl 370-601, Del Carmen, Coyoacan, DF 04100, Mexico

Tel: +52 55 5658 3165 and +5255 5282 0036

[info@internationalbudget.org](mailto:info@internationalbudget.org)

[www.internationalbudget.org](http://www.internationalbudget.org); [www.openbudgetindex.org](http://www.openbudgetindex.org)