

Current trends of development and practices of the gender- responsive budgeting

at the global, European
and national levels

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This paper aims to increase knowledge and capacity of public servants, decision-makers, gender equality advocates and civil society activists on newest trends and developments of the gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). The paper based on webinars presentations of international and national experts in the field of public finance management, policy analysis and program evaluation, social integration, gender budgeting and gender audit.



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The paper issued within “Gender Budgeting in Ukraine” Project, financed by Sweden (2014–2020).

The project aims to increase economic efficiency and the budget expenditures effectiveness through consideration of needs and interests of women and men.

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Introduction

Currently in Ukraine gender-oriented budgeting has become a demand of the society due to its ability to ensure the targeted use of public funds, increase the budget efficiency, transparency and fairness. Ukraine is one of the many countries in the world that implements gender responsive budgeting (GRB). During 2014-2020, Sweden supported the Gender Budgeting in Ukraine Project aimed at increasing of economic effectiveness of budget expenditures through consideration of needs of women and men in their diversity.

An innovative character of GRB encourages experts and practitioners to constantly seek and implement new approaches, to develop GRB as an effective tool for ensuring social inclusion and gender equality. In order to enhance the stakeholders' capacity to

search new ways and directions of GRB development, the Gender Budgeting in Ukraine Project held a series of webinars on GRB legislative base, gender mainstreaming in budget programs, public services, financial audit, etc.

This paper is based on online presentations of international and national experts, who outlined the current trends and practices of GRB implementation at the global, European and national levels.

We hope that this paper will be useful for researchers and practitioners, public servants and civil society activists who are implementing reforms at the intersection of two areas – the public finance management and gender equality – at the national and local levels.

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Gender responsive budgeting in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The Gender Budgeting in Ukraine Project was implemented in Ukraine within 2014-2020 with the financial support of Sweden. Through expert and advisory support, training, development of methodological and educational materials by the Project, Ukraine has achieved significant success in applying and institutionalizing a gender responsive approach in the budget process.

KEY WORDS

Gender budgeting, gender responsive approach in the budget process, budget program, gender equality.

On the way to joining the European community, Ukraine needs to implement a series of important reforms and transformations, to which the reform of the public finance management system is central. During 2014-2020, the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, with the support of the Gender Budgeting in Ukraine Project, funded by Sweden, introduced a new budgeting method that helps ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the budget process.

The first initiatives to introduce gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in Ukraine were taken in the early 2000s, and they were implemented by non-governmental organizations with the support of donors and international projects. Today, Ukraine is considered one of the international leaders in the implementation of GRB. At a Conference hosted by the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF, said “I take my hat off to what Ukraine and Austria are doing when implementing the GRB!”

However, it should be noted that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine of 03.03.2017 (paragraph 23 b), recommended the Member State to ensure effective coordination and develop a gender mainstreaming strategy to include gender budgeting, which can be used in all strategies and programmes at all levels in order to ensure equal opportunities for women in all aspects of life.

Gender responsive budgeting means analyzing and restructuring budget revenues and expenditures so that all diverse needs of women and men, girls and boys are fairly represented in budget items. The gender budget analysis allows to take into account a wide range of issues, the addressing of which creates equal opportunities for all members of the society and ensures sustainable development of the country. This approach makes the budget efficient, fair and transparent. The gender budget contributes to improving the quality of services for the population, as they clearly target specific consumers; increasing economic growth and reducing poverty; and resource efficiency.

The GRB Project provided expert support to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on the introduction and application of gender approach in the budget process at both the state and local levels. This allowed Ukraine to rank higher among other states. The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine included gender responsive approach in regulations governing the budget process, in particular:

- The implementation of GRB is included in the objectives of the Public Finance Management System Reform Strategy for 2017-2020, through which the integration of the gender responsive approach into the budget process increased the efficiency and quality of public services provided taking into account the needs of socio-demographic groups, including by gender, strengthened the accountability of spending units and budget transparency;
- The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, by the Decree of 02.01.2019, approved the Guidelines for the application of the gender responsive approach in the budget process, which are used by the key spending units and other budget process participants in order to take into account gender in planning, implementing and reporting on budget programs¹;
- Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on Performance Indicators of the Budget Program No. 1536 of December 10, 2010 stipulates that quality indicators should highlight the benefits for society from the budget program implementation, including in terms of ensuring gender equality²;
- Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on Reviews of the State Budget Expenditures No. 446 of October 23, 2019 approved that the results of gender analysis of budget programs should be taken into account when analyzing the efficiency, effectiveness and economic feasibility of relevant state budget expenditures³;

1. On approval of Guidelines for the introduction and application of the gender responsive approach in the budget process. Order of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0001201-19>

2. On Performance Indicators of the Budget Program. Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine.
URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1353-10?find=1&text=%D2%91%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B9#Text>

3. On Reviews of State Budget Expenditures. Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine.
URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1277-19?find=1&text=%D2%91%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80#Text>

- Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on Approval of Guidelines for Preparation of the Medium-Term Local Budgets in 2019 No. 130 of March 29, 2019 envisages the use in the forecasting of information on gender mainstreaming aimed to reduce gender gaps, mitigate the negative and strengthen positive trends in the relevant field/sector in terms of meeting gender needs and gender interests⁴;
- Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine 'Procedure for Evaluation of the Budget Program Effectiveness by Key Spending Units' No. 223 of May 19, 2020 envisages the use of gender budget program analysis as one of the sources of information for performance evaluation; assessment of the effectiveness of public services, satisfaction of needs, interests of recipients/users and providers of public services, including by gender and other characteristics; as well as measures to improve the quality and efficiency of public services – study of needs and interests of recipients/users of public services, including the introduction of relevant surveys (questionnaires), conducting gender budget program analysis⁵;
- the Letter of Instruction of the Ministry of Finance to the key spending units on the preparation of budget requests for 2021-2023 includes provisions on gender mainstreaming;
- the information on the application of the gender responsive approach in the budget process is included in the Explanatory Note to the Draft Law of Ukraine on the State Budget of Ukraine for 2021.

The GRB Project provided expert and advisory support to spending units of the state and local budgets, as a result of which:

- spending units of the state budget conducted gender analysis of 100 budget programs on

4. Про затвердження Методичних рекомендацій щодо складання у 2019 році місцевих бюджетів на середньостроковий період : наказ Міністерства фінансів України від 29.03.2019 р. № 130. База даних «Законодавство України»/Верховна Рада України. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0130201-19?find=1&text=%D2%91%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80#Text>

5. Порядок здійснення оцінки ефективності бюджетних програм головними розпорядниками коштів державного бюджету : наказ Міністерства фінансів України від 19.05.2020 р. № 223. URL: <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/RE34929>.

agricultural policy, security and defense, education and science, health care, social protection and social security, youth policy, physical culture and sports, culture and arts etc.;

- 43 programs financed from the state budget in 2020 have become gender sensitive;
- during the preparation of budget requests for 2021-2023, the gender was mainstreamed by 29 (35%) of key spending units of the state budget (KSUs) under 41 budget programs;
- 75% of programs financed from local budgets were analyzed from the gender perspective, as a result of which 1,075 programs became gender sensitive in 2020;
- based on the results of gender budget program analysis, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and the State Statistics Service of Ukraine amended more than 30 regulations in order to take mainstream the gender.

During all the years of implementation, the GRB Project implemented training activities to enhance the capacity of civil servants and local government officials to apply the gender approach in the budget process. This resulted in the following:

- more than 1,000 civil servants (77% of women, 23% of men) acquired knowledge and practical skills in gender responsive budgeting;
- more than 2,000 local government officials are engaged in applying the gender approach in the budget process at the local level;
- more than 8,000 people (67.5% of women, 32.5% of men) took the online course 'Gender Responsive Budgeting for Community Development' on the Prometheus platform.

The GRB Project developed and published a series of instruction materials, including:

- Practical guide 'Gender Responsive Approach in the Budget Process' for spending units of the state and local budgets;

- reviews of gender equality issues and the results of gender budget program analysis in four sectors (education, health care, physical culture and sports, culture and arts);
- methodology of gender budget program analysis;
- study on the gender dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- two video courses on gender responsive budgeting challenges.

During the implementation period, the Project actively cooperated with all key spending units of the state budget, 24 Oblast State Administrations, cities of oblast significance, rayons and amalgamated territorial communities. The Project used all available channels of influence to ensure that decisions are made at the highest level on the institutionalization of GRB. The Project established partnerships with all actors responsible for the development and implementation of gender policy – the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy, the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, the Inter-Factional Deputy Association ‘Equal Opportunities’ – to combine the strategic goals of gender equality with the budget process. To harmonize and synergize the efforts, the Project successfully established partnerships with other international projects and donors in order to implement the gender responsive budgeting in Ukraine.

Despite its successes, the GRB Project faced certain challenges, the main ones being:

- **Low level of awareness** among the civil servants and local government officials of gender equality policy. Despite the fact that the gender equality policy has been implemented over the past 25 years and Ukraine has a strong legal framework, a critical mass of civil servants and local government officials have distorted perceptions and do not share the goals and values of gender equality;
- **Limited understanding** of GRB by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine as a financial tool to increase budget efficiency, rather than a tool to achieve the goals of gender equality and

empowerment of women. Such an approach leaves behind the strategic gender interests, namely, changing social norms that discriminate women and restrict their access to certain areas of activity and decision-making, as well as hinder their personal realization;

- **Lack of legislative support** for the use of GRB. The requirements for the use of gender approach in the budget process, which the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine included in regulations, are of a recommendatory rather than mandatory nature. Despite all the efforts and use of various channels of influence, the Project did not manage to enshrine the GRB in the Budget Code of Ukraine;
- **Formal use of performance based method** – the latter has not yet become a powerful tool for ensuring the link between the financing of the budget program and the final socially significant outcomes expected from its implementation. As before, budget programs are mostly focused on the maintenance of institutions rather than on the provision of public services; it is difficult to trace in them the focus on meeting the needs and interests of women, men and subgroups within these categories;
- **Non-acceptance of changes** by civil servants and local government officials who are very reluctant to change the established approaches, procedures and formats in the development of documents used in the budget process;
- **Staff turnover** leading to the loss of institutional memory, as well as decline of responsibility for previously made decisions;
- **Lack of gender-disaggregated data and gender statistics** is an obstacle to conducting a qualitative gender analysis of programs funded from the state and local budgets;
- **Weak coordination** between all stakeholders on the cross-cutting comprehensive integration of gender in strategies, policies, programs and projects leading to the fact that the application of GRB is not systemic, but remains at the discretion of individual spending units.

At the same time, the outcomes obtained by all numerous participants of the GRB Project show that the gender responsive budgeting has strongly entered to the public finance management at the state and local levels in Ukraine due to its orientation on improvement of the targeting, efficiency and transparency of budget spending.

The role of gender analysis in applying gender responsive budgeting in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

Gender responsive budgeting is analyzed as a tool to increase the efficiency of budget resources use and achieve gender equality in Ukraine. The essence of gender analysis – the basis of gender responsive budgeting is described through the outcomes of the Gender Budgeting in Ukraine Project, funded by Sweden.

KEY WORDS

Gender responsive budgeting, public administration, gender policy, gender analysis, budget, budget process, public service

In the current context, the development and implementation of gender policy, including in public administration, is an important foundation for implementation of democratic reforms aimed to form the image of Ukraine as an equal partner in the global community. The development of Ukraine's gender policy should be based on the introduction and application of a comprehensive gender approach in all areas of the public policy. One such tool is gender responsive budgeting (GRB), the essence of which is to integrate gender perspective to the budget process.

Gender responsive budgeting is a tool through which the realities of women and men, as well as the impact on these realities, positive or negative, are identified and analyzed. Gender responsive budgeting offers an approach to public finance management policy-making that aims to assess the impact of the budget on inequalities between women and men, as well as relevant changes in the budget policy.

GRB does not aim at the development of separate budgets for women, nor does it mean sharing the costs equally between women and men, as this does not necessarily reduce the inequalities.

The development of a gender-sensitive budget allows to see how budget revenues and expenditures affect the socio-economic situation and opportunities of men, women and/or groups of them, as well as the achievement of gender equality in the country.

The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine launched the reform aimed at the introduction of gender responsive budgeting in Ukraine in 2014 with the support of the Gender Budgeting in Ukraine Project (GRB Project). The purpose of introduction of gender responsive budgeting is to promote an effective public finance management system with a special focus on providing quality public services to women and men, girls and boys.

The main components of gender responsive budgeting are as follows:

1. gender analysis;

2. appropriate changes in programmes and budgets;
3. systemic integration of gender responsive budgeting into the budget process.

The basis of the GRB is the gender analysis of budget revenues and expenditures.

Gender analysis is primarily based on the study of gender-disaggregated statistics and better quality information on the situation of men and women. Gender analysis should also take into account, where appropriate, other characteristics, namely age, place of residence, health status, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, etc. Neither women nor men form a homogeneous group. Analyzing such data, the expert has an opportunity to determine, for example, the level of education of urban and rural residents, as well as men and women living in urban areas versus men and women living in rural areas.

The gender analysis of policies and legislation can be carried out in terms of gender outcomes or potential differential impacts on men and women. Gender analysis is also important when it focuses on institutions to determine how their services affect women and men, or how gender sensitive the institutions are in terms of recruitment, division of labour and decision-making practices.

Gender analysis provides information on the different roles of women and men in different areas and at different levels; their access to tangible and intangible benefits, their priorities, needs and responsibilities.

When all the data are collected and analyzed, an understanding which groups of women and men are most affected (negatively or positively) as a result of implementation of the policy, programme or event is formed. The next step is to analyze possible alternatives to the policy, programme or event, as well as the expected and unexpected effects on the target groups of women and men.

The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, which is responsible for the introduction and application of the GRB, facilitates systemic integration of gender responsive approach in the budget process of Ukraine at all levels. Thus, the Decree of the Ministry of Finance No. 1 of 02.01.2019 approved the Guidelines for Introduction and Application of Gender Responsive Approach for Key Spending Units and Other Participants of the Budget Process at the State and Local Levels.

According to this Decree, the purpose of gender analysis is to determine the level of meeting the needs and interests of women and men and/or groups of them in the framework of budget program implementation, as well as to identify gender gaps, gender discrimination and their causes in the relevant area/sector.

The main lever of the reform in Ukraine was the post-analysis of budget expenditure, which contributed to the success of the reform on the introduction and application of GRB in the budget process. The gender gaps and gender discrimination identified during gender analysis of budget programmes became an argument for convincing government officials of the appropriateness and effectiveness of gender budgeting as a tool for public finance management and achieving gender equality. They enabled the formation and strengthening of political will to implement and institutionalize the GRB. In addition, government officials involved in gender budget analysis in the GRB Working Groups had an opportunity to analyze the information they work with while performing their responsibilities and to see gender gaps clearly, which gave them an understanding of the GRB tool and the feasibility of its use.

The gender analysis, within the framework of the GRB Project, was carried out both at the state and local levels. Within 2015-2020, the GRB Working Groups in 24 Oblasts and the city of Kyiv analyzed 118 programmes financed from local budgets by 60 areas of use of funds.

The in-depth GRB Working Groups' reports highlight the main results of the gender budget analysis and the recommendations and suggestions for gender mainstreaming in the regulations

governing the relations in the relevant sectors, programmes, statistical and administrative reporting and documents used in the budget process. Taking into account these suggestions and recommendations will make it possible to visualize how budget program measures affect people differently, depending on their gender, age, place of residence, and also to measure the impact of these measures on reducing gender gaps. For example, in the **Education and Science sector** a significant predominance of women (60-80%) was identified. However, men predominate in management positions in the educational and research institutions. For example, in vocational education and training institutions (VET) – 65%, in general education institutions (GEI) of II-III levels with military and physical training – 75%.

The analysis results confirm the presence of gender stereotypes in the choice of areas of study and occupations for girls and boys – boys predominate in agriculture (from 94.2% in Lviv Oblast to 98.3% in Ternopil Oblast), transport (from 95.9% in Lviv Oblast to 99.8% in Khmelnytsky Oblast), construction (from 87.5% in Khmelnytsky Oblast to 98.5% in Lviv Oblast), girls predominate in housing and utilities (95.1% in Lviv Oblast), trade and catering (79.2% in Khmelnytsky Oblast, 72.1% in Ternopil Oblast, 63% in Lviv Oblast). Servicing, executive activity is considered traditional for women, and for men – instrumental, organizing or managing activity. Ultimately, this affects the wage levels, and subsequently the pension levels.

The results of analysis of students of non-school education institutions by gender and by areas of work of hobby groups indicate gender stereotypes in the choice of areas of extracurricular education for girls and boys. Thus, the results of gender budget analysis in the Khmelnytsky Oblast showed that 70.1% of girls and 29.9% of boys are enrolled in arts and aesthetic hobby groups; 2) girls predominate in ecological and naturalistic hobby groups (61.3%), research and experimental hobby groups (60.7%); 3) at the same time, more boys are engaged in tourist and local lore hobby groups (64.9%), physical culture, sports and health hobby groups (62.3%), scientific and technical hobby groups (58.8%). In order to reduce such disparities, it is necessary to establish new or reframe the existing hobby groups according to the girls' and boys' preferences.

The gender analysis of programmes in the **Culture and Arts sector**, funded from local budgets, showed that among the employees of cultural as well as education institutions, women predominate, namely in libraries there are 96.3% of women and 3.7% of men (Kirovohrad Oblast), in schools of aesthetic education (Kyiv) there are 74% of women and 26% of men. One of the factors influencing the feminization of the sector is the low level of wages. Men, on the other hand, choose high-paying jobs.

Women predominate among library users (Kirovohrad Oblast):

- users as a percentage of the total number of relevant population groups (women – 39.5%; men – 30.5%; (including rural areas – 23.6 %));
- number of library visits per one user: women – 17; men – 5;
- number of published copies per one user: women – 27; men – 20.

The results of analysis in Kyiv indicate gender stereotypes in the choice of areas of study (departments). Thus, boys more often choose classes on guitar (59%), wind instruments (64.9%), percussion instruments (76.3%), girls, instead, choose piano (70.2%), bowed instruments (66.7%), vocals (80.2%).

The analysis of programmes in the **Physical Culture and Sports** sector, in particular of the School of Higher Sportsmanship shows that men predominate among sportspersons: in the Cherkasy Oblast – 58.8%, and in the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast – 67%. The predominance of men among sportspersons further affects the coaching staff of these institutions. Thus, the coaching staff of these institutions is dominated by men – 92.3% in the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast and 76.9% – in the Cherkasy Oblast. Although the number of male sportspersons exceeds the number of female sportspersons, women's performance in sports competitions is better.

The results of gender budget analysis of programmes in **Health Care** emphasize the need to focus on improving health programmes in the light of significant gender gaps, as well as the lack of gender-disaggregated data.

For the first time, the GRB WG analyzed the programme On Provision of Patients with Diabetes Mellitus with Medicines and Medical Supplies in the Chernivtsi and Mykolaiv Oblasts. The results showed that:

- women predominate in the total number of people with diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus;
- number of people with diabetes mellitus increases in proportion to age;
- diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus are observed both in the urban and in the rural areas;
- complications associated with diabetes mellitus are more common among women than among men, etc.
- In order to reduce the incidence among women and men it is necessary to:
- introduce collection of information on at-risk groups of women and men for early detection of persons with diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus, ensuring dispensary observation and timely treatment;
- disseminate information on the causes of diabetes mellitus among women and men; causes of death; prevention of complications associated with diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus;
- inform the population about the early prevention of the disease – an essential factor in the fight against diabetes mellitus;
- ensure mandatory free examinations for both women and men at risk;

- introduce the positions of nutritionists at the hospitals, outpatient clinics in order to ensure prevention of diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus.

The gender budget analysis of programmes funded from the state and local budgets, conducted by the GRB Working Groups in Ministries, Oblasts and the city of Kyiv assessed the various impacts of existing policies, programmes and legislation in education and science, health care, physical culture and sports sectors, economic activities and others on women and men and/or groups of them.

Based on the results of the gender analysis, it is important to keep in mind that the analysis itself is not the gender responsive budgeting. It is necessary to go further and introduce appropriate changes to programmes and budgets.

The results of the gender budget analysis will help to make decisions on sectoral areas and budget policy in the future, taking into account the needs of men and women from different groups. This will make it possible to eliminate inequality in the access to public services funded from the state and local budgets in all sectors.

Gender responsive budgeting in the budget laws

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

Gender equality is a status that requires a long-term and effortless gender mainstreaming process in order to be achieved. But not only, gender budgeting is a novel way for any government to mainstream gender in the budgetary process and to promote gender equality using fiscal policy. Gender mainstreaming is essential since it enables the inclusion of a gender equality perspective into policy and/or programme priority of the Government. Gender budgeting is a tool to translate gender policy commitments into budgetary commitments. It is crucial as it applies a gender lens to the budget, so the Government understands better the different needs and priorities of citizens, and plans and executes public expenditures and revenues more effectively. Gender budgeting is one of the most important examples of applied gender mainstreaming. Both gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are complementary and imperative to achieve gender equality.

Most countries are committed to advance gender equality as part of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) on gender equality. Under the target 5c of this goal, countries are encouraged to “adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality” and report on the indicator 5.c.1, which measures the “percentage of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment.”

When policy decisions are taken to address different practical and strategic needs and priorities of women and men, also resources and budgets sustaining them are to be scrutinized to be able to understand how decisions affect women and men differently. Efforts to mainstream gender perspective in all public policies imply that it is also mainstreamed in the budgetary process. This is what gender budgeting is. Gender budgeting offers an approach to policy making and public finance management that supports the re-orientation of policy and budgetary outcomes more equally. The rationale for integrating a gender perspective into budgetary policy has two dimensions: the equality, and efficiency. Inequality is costly. Besides the basic principle of promoting equality among citizens, gender equality can benefit the economy through efficiency gains.

Gender budgeting requires a different approach to budgeting – a recognition of gender-sensitive elements of existing budgeting model. Therefore, gender budgeting, wherever is possible, must be properly embedded in fiscal/budgetary policy. Mainstreaming gender into Medium-term Expenditure Framework and macroeconomic models is highly relevant to planning and programming, therefore governments shall set the stage for development and adoption of legally binding measures for gender responsive budgeting.

In the context of the Public Finance Management reform substantial changes are to be considered to formally embed a gender equality perspective in fiscal/budgetary policies and laws. The adoption of gender budgeting principle and practice in the organic budget law is well suited to the Performance Based Budgeting. It leads to improved quality and effectiveness of public revenues and expenditures, and increased transparency of public funds. Most governments rely on the Ministry of Finance to lead gender budgeting approach, but in close coordination with the ministry that covers gender equality issues.

KEY WORDS

gender responsive budgeting, gender budgeting, budgeting for equality, gender equality.

“Many disparities and inequalities between the sexes have become embedded, to a greater or lesser extent, in the baseline of public policies and the allocation of public resources”. (Source: OECD report on gender budgeting)

Back in 2001-2002, the progress of gender mainstreaming in the EU was recognized as a process that takes time and resources, still a long way to go. A variety of tools and approaches could be used to introduce a gender perspective into all activities. The approach of mainstreaming a gender perspective into government budgets was introduced and largely supported at that time in the EU, so that the ways the Government raises and spends money are organized and implemented to promote gender equality.

Despite the commitments made by many governments on the gender mainstreaming in all social-economic policies and programmes, certain policy fields are “resistant” from gender mainstreaming, in particular ones such as industry, transport, infrastructure, etc. Gender mainstreaming is more easily received in “soft” areas dealing with social services, education and employment, than in “hard” areas which receive most of the government budget. Hence, gender budgeting was seen as an effective approach to introduce gender equality on the agenda in some of these “hard” areas of development.

Most countries that are signatories to the CEDAW and the BPfA have a medium-term strategy on gender equality. The degree to which the measures outlined in these strategies are implemented is largely due to the availability of budgetary resources. Gender budgeting involves the planning of budgets in response to policy priorities and gender equality commitments by the government. It can bridge the gap between policymaking and the allocation of budgetary resources toward policy implementation.

The budget is the most important policy tool of any Government. Without budget, Government cannot implement any policy effectively. A gender-responsive budget is a budget that works for all, women and men by ensuring gender-equitable distribution of public resources and by offering equal opportunities for all. Gender budgeting is an important tool to improve transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure. Its application provides for a fair distribution of public resources between women and men, and that the needs and interests of both women and men are addressed properly.

The benefit of gender budgeting can be perceived as: first, increasing the responsiveness of fiscal policy to the national development priorities; second, supporting gender mainstreaming; third, enhancing public expenditure transparency; and fourth, strengthening the accountability of Government actions towards the achievement of gender equality.

Gender budgeting requires political will, adequate resources and technical capacity amongst government officials, civil society actors and other development partners. Beside political will, its success depends on the extent of institutionalization and whether political will is good enough to structurally embed gender budgeting in the core of fiscal policy. Yet, the challenge remains to influence and transform the traditional budget-making and fiscal policy processes by adopting a gender perspective in the way how revenues are generated and how expenditures are planned and executed.

Despite the progress noted in many countries that have adopted gender budgeting, yet there are gaps between ambitious policy priorities and resource allocation. Therefore, governments must put gender budgeting on another level – to guarantee that women do not fall behind men when it comes to representation in public life, participation in decision-making, equal social and economic opportunities, education attainment, access to employment and social and health care. Gender budgeting experience has to scale up, become more structured and sustainable.

The embedment of gender budgeting into the core of fiscal policy and legal framework is the most effective way to scaling up gender budgeting initiatives across countries.

The institutionalization of gender budgeting requires at least three conditions: 1) embedding the principle of gender responsive budgeting in fiscal policies, including the organic budget law; 2) empowering Parliament oversight on laws and budgets it approves; 3) supporting civil society and gender advocates to hold Government accountable.

Most OECD countries have a legal foundation for their gender budgeting practice, although the nature and intention of the legal provisions vary. (Source: Gender Budgeting in OECD Countries, OECD, 2017). According to the 2016 OECD Survey almost half of OECD countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden) have introduced gender budgeting in different legal provisions. The principles of equality are enshrined in Constitution in five out of 12 OECD countries (Austria, Belgium, Mexico, Norway and Spain) (Source: OECD). Other OECD countries have gender budgeting related provisions within their “organic budget law”, like in Austria, Iceland, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands and Spain.

Austria, a pioneer in gender budgeting, is one of the EU countries with a consolidated gender budgeting practice. The principle of achievement of gender equality through the budget management system is enshrined in Austrian Constitution since 2009. This change resulted in the development of a comprehensive gender-oriented budget and reporting framework, which has been integrated in the Government’s performance budgeting system.

The Federal Budget Law (2013) demands ministries and high-level institutions to define in their budget chapters a maximum of five outcome objectives, including one gender equality objective. Also, institutions must define concrete measures (outputs) and indicators in order to implement and monitor the respective gender equality outcome.

The gender equality outcomes and outputs are set out in the Annual Federal Budget Statement on budget chapter level as well as in the Explanatory Budget Documents on detailed budget level. In addition, the Parliament, during its discussions of the budget, reviews gender-related objectives and reports from the Chancellery, and gender impact assessments. A special Parliamentary Committee oversees gender equality issues.

In **Iceland**, since 2009, the new coalition Government adopted gender budgeting as a key element in the preparation of the budget and of economic policy. A rolling Plan for Gender Budgeting is endorsed by the Government since 2011.

Gender budgeting was a major element of the 2016 budget reform in Iceland. The new Organic Budget Law introduced in 2016 promotes the practice of gender budgeting – a co-ordination between a number of Government departments. The Finance Minister, in consultation with the minister responsible for gender equality, leads the formulation of a gender budgeting programme, while drafting the budget bill. The budget bill shall outline its effects on gender equality targets. Further, instructions on gender budgeting have been included in the Budget Circular since 2010.

In 2018, **Canada** passed the new “gender budgeting act” – that takes into consideration gender equality and diversity in the budget process. Since mid-1990s, the Government has committed to conduct gender-based analysis (GBA+) of legislation, policies, and programs of the Government to assess the potential impacts on women and men.

Since 2017, the federal budget is accompanied by a stand-alone “Gender Budget Statement” which provides an overview of gender challenges and the impact of budgetary policies from a gender perspective. A Gender Results Framework was introduced in the 2018 budget that set gender equality goals and related indicators to track progress. In 2018, Canada passed the “Gender Budgeting Act” (law), an important milestone for gender responsive budgeting. The

purpose of the Act is to advance gender equality as part of the annual federal budget, in the context of Canada's long-term economic growth and prosperity. Further, the Act proposes new budget measures, i.e. obligation of the Minister of Finance to submit to the Parliament a report on the impact in terms of gender and diversity of the proposed state budget measures, an analysis of gender impacts of the tax expenditures, and an analysis of gender impacts of the Government expenditure programs. As a result, the 2019 federal budget presented the most detailed gender analysis. It included an update on Canada's gender equality goals and a separate Gender Report that applied a gender analysis to every budget measure.

In **Morocco**, gender budgeting was initiated in 2002, making Morocco a leader in the region. The initiative is linked to the national development strategy and its focus was on education, health, and employment. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has the lead. Since 2014, the new organic budget law requires that gender equality-related performance objectives, results, and indicators are considered in the budget. In addition, the annual budget bill includes a "Gender Report", which has been published annually, since 2006. It provides gender profiles of each department, an analysis of sectoral gender-related issues by ministry, and includes key priorities, targets, and accomplishments on gender by ministry. (Source: OECD)

Since 2012, **Albania** has taken important legal and policy steps towards embracing a gender budgeting approach at central and local levels. In the context of the Public Finance Management reform, Albania shifted to a medium-term expenditure framework and to results-based/performance budgeting. The importance of gender-responsive budgeting in achieving gender equality in Albania is clearly outlined in the Public Finance Management Strategy.

Since 2016, gender equality is now a "core functioning principle" of the budgetary system, stated in the newly adopted "organic budget law" (article 4). The law has adopted for the first time the concept of gender budgeting in the management of the budgetary system. Subsequently,

the official “Standard Budget Preparation Guidelines” and “Guidelines on the monitoring of the medium-term budget program” issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economy define mandatory requirements for central and local governments to include gender budgeting elements in their medium-term budgets, as well as to monitor the achievement of gender-based goals and objectives.

In **Korea**, the gender budgeting initiative is applied to all levels of Government. The National Public Finance Act (2006) mandates submission of gender-responsive budgets and gender balance reports, effective from 2010. The Act requires the Government to draw up gender budget statement – an analysis of the budget impact on women and men, covering both expenditures and revenues. The Government is required to produce a “gender balance sheet”, which assesses whether the budget benefits women and men equally. The government has set up a network of “Women’s Focal Points” in key sectors ministries.

In addition, the Korean Women’s Development Institute (KWDI), a policy think tank, is providing the Government with research and methodology on gender budgeting. The KWDI feeds the Government with a framework of gender budgeting application in the medium-term expenditure framework, program budgeting formats, and performance budgeting.

In **Italy**, gender budgeting provisions were introduced in the Public Finance and Accounting Law (No. 196/2009). According to this Law, all public bodies should include a gender budget document in their yearly performance review.

Few countries have committed to produce a “gender budget statement”, considered an integral part of the budget bill, presented to the public and to the Parliament.

In **Spain**, since 2009, a Gender Impact Report is part of the annual Budget Bill.

In **France**, since 2010, the annual Budget Bill includes an annex about the contribution of fiscal policies to equality between men and women, as well as gender disaggregated allocations in the budget.

India is producing a gender budget statement. India has established a ‘Gender Budget Secretariat’ at the Ministry of Finance and has created ‘Gender Budgeting Cells’ in sectoral ministries.

To conclude, gender budgeting, wherever introduced, is mostly supported by legal measures, although the nature and the extent of gender budgeting legal provisions vary from country to country. Governments mostly rely on the Ministry of Finance to lead gender budgeting approach, but in close coordination with ministry that covers gender equality issues.

Worldwide experience confirms three effective ways to institutionalize gender budgeting:

1. Promoting gender budgeting through a framework of laws, rules and regulations. In this way, gender budgeting is embarked in a country’s Constitution (Austria, Rwanda), its organic budget law (Austria, Albania, Andalusia, Iceland, etc.), or administrative guidelines (Austria, Canada, Belgium, etc.)
2. Producing “gender budget statements” (Sweden, Australia, Canada, South Africa, etc.) providing an informative report of Government policies significant for women and men, the extent of budget support, and how gender inequalities between women and men are expressed in economic terms.
3. Issuing “budget circular” (Finland, Albania, Spain, Ukraine, etc.) with appropriate gender-responsive instructions for ministries and departments on how to plan their budget (requests) submissions and how to include gender-relevant measures, objectives, allocation and indicators.

If properly embedded in fiscal policy, the gender budgeting:

- contributes to strengthening equality between men and women;
- encourages a more effective and more targeted use of public resources;
- is well suited for the “performance-based budgeting;”
- improves the quality and effectiveness of public revenues and expenditures;
- increases the transparency of public revenues and expenditures;
- can also be a tool to comply with international standards and commitments to achieve gender equality.

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Gender budget analysis for revenues and tax policy

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

Gender equality remains unfinished business in the economic and fiscal policy of all countries. Gender budget analysis is a tool and process to promote gender equality through analysis to understand the gender impact of revenues and expenditures and redirect policy to support gender equality. This is important because the budget is the central process for implementing and accounting for Government policy. Gender analysis of revenues, and of taxes, is less widely understood than gender analysis of expenditures, but is also important.

KEY WORDS

Gender Budget Analysis for Revenues, Fiscal policy, Tax policy, Tax expenditures, excises

Often, good gender policy is good tax policy. It is also important to examine how tax policy intersects with other Government policy systems, especially the social security (welfare, or transfer) system, social policies of child care, parental leave, education, work and retirement, and employment and industrial policies. These policies can interact to reproduce inequalities, and can also be designed to promote gender equality, and improve economic and social wellbeing for society as a whole.

Gender Budget Analysis for Revenues

The annual budget should identify and report all revenues of the Government from all sources. The principle of universality implies that total revenues should fund total expenditures (any deficit is funded by debt). Governments should report in the budget revenue estimates for the previous year (actuals); current year (estimate) and future two to three years (projections). Revenue estimates and projections depend in part on economic assumptions in the budget: for example, what is the interest rate, level of foreign investment, commodity prices, or employment – these can all affect the estimated revenue. The Consolidated revenue fund usually reports all general revenue. Governments also have many specific purpose funds (e.g. social security or pension funds), which may receive certain types of ‘earmarked’ revenues, such as social security contributions. These should also be identified and reported each year. State-owned enterprises should report profits every year. It is also useful to understand what proportion of revenue is comprised of taxes; state-owned enterprises’ profits; royalties, mineral resource revenues; fees, penalties and, fines. A gender analysis could be done of each of these different sources of revenue.

A second important element of budgeting for revenues is to consider ‘tax expenditures’. Tax expenditure is concessions, exemptions, reduced tax rates or other benefit provided through the tax system. The concession is identified and measured compared to the ‘benchmark’ tax system, such as a broad-based income tax or VAT. Often, it is used to subsidize or encourage particular activities, such as saving or investment, or particular investment activities, or it can provide support, e.g. for families. It is good budget practice for the Government to report annually on the ‘revenue foregone’ (or not collected) as a result of tax expenditures. A gender impact analysis can also be done of particular tax expenditures, to identify who benefits from the concession, or low rate; who claims the benefit, or who does the activity that benefits from it.

A third element to consider in budgeting for revenues is the ‘tax gap’. What revenues are not collected by Government? Is this due to poor tax administration; tax evasion; the informal economy; or is there a lot of uncollectable tax debt. The ‘tax gap’ is not reported in the budget, but it may also have different gender consequences, as this will depend on where women and men are situated in the economy.

A final element of good budgeting is budget transparency. In the most recent Open Budget Index, Ukraine performs well in budget transparency performance, and has been on an improving trend in terms of making budget documents generally available and comprehensive, and published, and reasonably audited, and so on. Budget transparency also implies publication of gender analysis for the public.

Analyzing gender impact of revenues in the budget

Revenue laws are often ‘gender-neutral’ that is, there is formal legal equality. However, there are often different effects of these laws in substance because women and men are differently situated in the monetary economy, which is affected by taxes. UN Women (2015) explained that:

“The concept of substantive equality arose out of the recognition that because of the legacy of historical inequalities, structural disadvantages, biological differences and biases in how laws and policies are implemented in practice, formal equality is not enough to ensure that women are able to enjoy the same rights as men. To achieve substantive equality, therefore, requires both direct and indirect discrimination to be addressed. It also requires specific measures to be adopted that redress women’s disadvantages and, in the longer term, the transformation of the institutions and structures that reinforce and reproduce unequal power relations between women and men.”

One useful approach is to apply a capabilities approach to gender equality over the life course of individuals: What are the long term incentive or disincentive effects of taxes, e.g. for economic security or saving for retirement? A capabilities approach advocated by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum requires us to:

- Focus on the individual: Her individual capabilities, equally with others in society, should be developed and respected (not her family or spouse);
- Over the lifecycle: Dynamic, long term wellbeing for each individual over her or his life course;
- Support for specific capabilities relating to material wellbeing of women including security of shelter and food, equal right to and rewards for work, ability to own and control assets equally;
- Equal distribution of the cost and burden of care. To respect and deliver women's capabilities will require fairness in distributing the cost of care across society.

Gender impact analysis of revenues calls for assessment of the effects of policies by gender in all sectors including paid (market) work, unpaid (household, volunteer) sectors and public and private sectors. We also should consider the effects or outcomes on income, time and wellbeing of women and men, including using "time use" surveys that reveal the double shift of work in the market and the home. If possible, we need to identify the distributional effects for income and wealth within households as well as between households; other differences, such as rural/urban location may also be relevant.

Women are often situated more in the household or the informal economy than men. The general tax: GDP ratio (tax level) only recognizes the formal economy in GDP, and so it does not give us all the information about the economy and impact of taxes. Monetary policy, including inflation and full employment policies, may also have different effects on women and men, who are differently situated as consumers in the market, and as employees. Trade and investment policy may also

have a different effect on women and men who may work in different sectors of the economy – for example, manufacturing and construction (mostly men) compared to services and care (mostly women).

Fiscal policy and gender

A gender analysis of all policies channelled through the budget would examine revenue-raising and resource mobilisation through taxation, fees, levies and other revenue sources. This includes policies for revenues from mining and use of non-renewable resources such as oil and gas. Analysis should include examination of gender impacts of tax incentives and concessions ('tax expenditures'). Analysis should also examine both current or annual and capital expenditures, and consider the distribution of profits from state-owned enterprises.

Market policies for the private sector have gendered effects including investment incentives, wage regulation (minimum wage), employment conditions, banking and financial regulation and energy policy, pricing and subsidies. Public investment in physical capital infrastructure compared to human capital investments (e.g education and care) may have different effects on women and men.

As a matter of overall tax policy, in general, taxation must be adequate for the Government to deliver sufficient infrastructure, public goods and services, and redistribution. Lower taxes can be harmful to economy and wellbeing. It is important to distinguish the tax level from tax rates. At a minimum, the state should aim to raise revenues to provide a basic level of income and social provision. Usually, expenditures on support for care are positive for women and economy.

The concept of 'fiscal space' and 'fiscal squeeze' refers to the space that Government has to deliver for needed public expenditure – funded by taxes, debt and other revenues. During the Covid-19 pandemic, governments have had to borrow large amounts in order to fund needed supports and

expenditures. It would be a mistake to move too quickly to reduce taxes in order to pay down debt, in an attempt to stimulate the economy. Policies that would lower taxes, or deliver tax incentives, are likely to undermine revenue collection and have different impacts on women and men in different sectors of the economy. If the tax administration has been delaying tax payment and reducing enforcement, who benefits in the short and medium term? How should the tax administration proceed to 'restart' collecting taxes? Again, gender impact could be analyzed.

We could also consider the idea of 'care space' and 'care squeeze'. The economy depends on unpaid care in the household, and women are often the "safety net of last resort". The need for care by women is a factor of the total dependency ratio in a country: what is the proportion of children and the elderly who depend on the working-age population? If the state cannot provide adequate public support for care, the burden falls on women, but as a result of the aging population, there may be a 'care squeeze' where even taking a double burden, women cannot do all the care work that is needed. Therefore, public investment in care is crucial to ensure that women can continue to work in the market and there is not a decline in human capital in terms of health, education and work capacity.

A final matter to consider is inter-governmental relations (fiscal federalism). Gender analysis is also required and it can be difficult to identify which level of Government is accountable for revenues, expenditures, and the gender impact. An analysis should be done of how revenues, expenditures and responsibilities for gender analysis are distributed between national, provincial and local governments, to ensure coherence and avoid contradictions in policy, tax and expenditures.

The importance of sex-disaggregated data

A fundamental input to gender budget analysis of revenues is that data should be sex-disaggregated as far as possible. This should be easy in the income tax, as Ukraine has an

individual tax unit. The administrative data from tax returns can be collected and reported identifying whether the tax filer is male or female. Social security contributions can also be disaggregated by gender. These are contributed by the employer, but the economic burden of social security is likely to be borne by the employee (in lower wages) – at least, partly. The data as to contributions for male and female employees can be collected from the employer.

It is more difficult to disaggregate data for other taxes such as property tax; this requires collecting data about the gender of the property owner, and connecting it with the tax data. It is not directly possible to collect sex-disaggregated data for other taxes such as VAT, corporate income tax and other consumption taxes. Instead, it may be possible to apply indirect methods to work out gender incidence. For example, what proportion of men and women smoke, and purchase cigarettes? This should give indirect information about what proportion of men and women bear the economic impact of the tobacco excise.

Examples of sex-disaggregated data from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The ATO collects and publishes detailed tax statistics every year, for example about wages and deductions. The data show that of those earning high incomes, there are many more men earning top wages than women, and men claim a lot more in work-related deductions than women. The data informs policy-makers about the income distribution and gender; amount and use of tax deductions; and tax planning. It could assist the Government with policy development and reform, tax administration and enforcement – which may benefit from a gender focus.

Another approach is to collect longitudinal revenue data over time of a random portion of taxpayer population, to support econometric research into effect of taxes over time, and by gender. This has recently begun in Australia, using the A-life system. It collects individual tax return data (anonymised), sex-disaggregated, for a random 10% sample of tax filers, and includes retirement savings data and university fees data.

Government institutions in gender analysis of revenues

The Treasury or Ministry of Finance is the central and most important agency, responsible for policy on taxes. The revenue agency which administers the tax system is also important. For other forms of revenues, such as royalties, customs, or fees, other Government departments may be responsible. The Ministry of Finance is also responsible for expenditure policy and constraint and can include requirements for gender analysis in the budget call circular, relating to departmental appropriations each year. It could also require the revenue agency and other departments to collect data disaggregated by sex and to carry out a gender analysis of some policies every year, also indicating potential administrative or reform directions.

The Parliament can play a large role through its role in legislation on revenues and taxes; Appropriations Acts for expenditures; and work on policy costing. Parliamentary committees can supervise and review tax laws. Parliamentary researchers may support Committees and members of Parliament and can provide assistance with gender analysis of data. It also plays a role in supervising the execution of budget. The supreme auditor can also review Government policy and implementation through a gender lens.

Finally, the tax authority itself should carry out internal gender analysis and should consider the relevance of gender in designing administrative approaches. Government expenditure on improving tax administration will usually pay a big dividend in tax collection, and can have a gender positive impact. Internally, how many female and male employees are there? What are the gender career paths? etc.

Gender and tax policy

Good tax policy usually is applied on the basis of the following tax principles:

- Adequacy – the tax system raises adequate revenue for public finance;
- Equity or distributive fairness: There should be “horizontal” equity between individuals in the same position and “vertical” equity so that individuals with more income pay more tax. A tax with vertical equity is progressive;
- Efficiency: Taxes should not distort the market; create disincentives to work, save or invest. This should be determined on the basis of empirical evidence, of how responsive men and women are to tax rates;
- Simplicity and ease of administration.

In general, women benefit from an effective tax system. Public finance for public provision often benefits women more than men; more women work in public sector; more women rely on Government income support; and women benefit from public support for child and aged care.

It is important to understand the economic incidence of taxes on women and men. This means, who bears the economic burden of taxes? For a direct tax, such as the individual income tax, it will be the individual who bears the burden. For an indirect tax, such as social security contributions made by the employer, the economic burden of social security is borne at least partly by the employee (in lower wages) and partly by the employer. It is important to determine the burden of individuals not the couple or household, and this requires individual sex-segregated data where possible. A “household” is not a person and cannot bear taxes; the household approach ignores bargaining and power inside the household. Surveys may be needed to investigate what control over income women and men have inside the family or household.

As explained above, women and men are differently situated in the economy and so, taxes may have a differential effect. In general, women have less income than men; women have less savings or capital invested than men; and this affects the analysis of fairness of taxes. The labour market is sex-segregated, with women and men working in different industries or types of jobs; therefore, taxes and subsidies affect sectors differently. Women and men are differently situated in the informal and formal economy and so taxes reach them in different ways. Finally, women have more care giving responsibilities in the family; but home production is not taxed. Government benefits such as family payments and child care directly affect women's choices to work at home, in a paid job or in the formal or informal economy. If Government family payments or benefits are means tested on household or joint income, this can have gender unequal effects, discouraging work of women.

Tax rates, individual and joint tax unit

In analyzing fairness and efficiency (work incentives) and tax rates, we usually consider the marginal tax rate (tax rate on next \$1 of income). We may also consider the average tax rate (total tax paid as a share of taxable income). High effective tax rates can result from the interaction of tax rates and means testing of welfare payments.

The individual tax unit and progressive individual tax rates are good for gender equality. A low flat income tax rate on individual income will benefit high earners more; and they are mostly men. Many women are in low-paid sectors and jobs and they should pay a lower rate of income tax. Ukraine has a flat income tax rate of 18% on wages, plus 1.5% defense tax, and no tax-free threshold. It also has a 22% social security contribution paid by the employer. This produces a high effective tax rate of 41.5% on low wage workers. There is an allowance for low-wage workers but is this enough to offset the inequality?

For high income workers, the top tax rate is important for progressivity and the higher marginal income tax rates are the main way to tax the rich. There are more men than women in the top of the

income distribution. However, the tax authority needs to enforce the progressive tax rates and prevent evasion and avoidance.

From an efficiency perspective, it is often argued that higher marginal tax rates discourage work. However, it is important to consider all taxes on labour income. Whether people really respond to tax rates by not working (or working in the informal economy) depends on the “elasticity” of the individual labour supply decision and this is an empirical question. The means testing of income support payments has similar effects to a tax rate.

There are two main effects for work incentives and taxes. The substitution effect is a consequence of the marginal tax rate which reduces after-tax return of next \$1 from activity; the taxpayer may choose to substitute another activity for work. A high tax burden on labour leads to more work in informal economy. The income effect asks how much after-tax income remains after paying taxes? It is a consequence of the average tax rate.

Empirical studies comparing across countries show that women may be more responsive to taxes (higher elasticity) than men. The response depends mainly on care responsibilities of women. In Ukraine, there are more women than men (54% women, 46% men) but paid employment of women is lower than men: 52.9% women; 62.4% men. How much of this is due to caring responsibilities?

Interaction of taxes, welfare or family payments, child care

Tax policy interacts with welfare and social policy. Tax law is usually gender-neutral; it may be hard to see its gendered effects. Social payments may be gender-neutral; payments for families with children, sole parents, etc. have gendered effects. Child care policies are gender-neutral but overwhelmingly have economic effects and benefits for women’s market work. Parental leave policies are often focused on the mother, not father. Pension policy may be gender-neutral but both contributions and payments may have gender biased effect.

These policies interact and may generate unequal outcomes between women and men that are not visible in any one policy space. In particular, child care and elder care policy can help women's economic equality. In Ukraine, fertility rates are low (about 1.5), below replacement. To prevent women's poverty and support economic independence, the need to ensure burden and cost of child care is shared. This calls for universal child care provision at suitable hours, provided in rural and urban areas to support women's work. If there is a fee or it is income tested, this should be based on the individual wage of the mother: no means test on family income as this creates high effective marginal tax rates and disincentives for women to work.

Tax expenditures

'Tax expenditure' is a tax concession, low tax rate or exemption, compared to the "benchmark" income or consumption tax system. It is similar to a subsidy or grant. The Government should report every year to identify tax concessions or exemptions and estimate the tax revenue foregone from concessions, and to discuss the policy of the concession or exemption. This is done in many OECD countries every year.

A gender impact analysis can be done of tax expenditures. Do men and women benefit equally from the concession? Does it promote equality? This will depend on the position of women and men in the economy in terms of work, saving, assets. Individual tax data is needed to identify who claims exemption or deductions. For example, in Ukraine, capital gains are exempt from tax up to a threshold and capital gains from sale of shares in privatization are exempt; while gains from one-time sale of houses, including summer houses are exempt. Who benefits from these concessions? How many women derive capital gains? How many women own summer houses to sell?

Tax incentives, subsidies or grants for industry may also have differential gender impact. Do women or men work in that industry or sector?

Gender impact of consumption taxes: VAT, excises

The Value Added Tax (VAT) is a broad-based consumption tax that can be a good revenue-raiser. The standard VAT rate of 20% in Ukraine is high, and its effectiveness depends on tax administration. The VAT “gap” may be caused by large informal economy, poor administration.

The VAT is regressive with respect to income: low income taxpayers bear more VAT with respect to their income and high income taxpayers save more and so bear less VAT with respect to their income. Women have less income, and less saving, so effective burden of VAT is larger. Consider the fairness of the VAT – are female-headed households especially burdened? Elderly women? Inside the household, is consumption and saving equally shared between women and men? Exemptions from VAT may also have differential effect and may be good, or bad, for gender equality; e.g. for basic food, health. The VAT also may have different effects for small businesses, depending on the turnover for registration of the business. Many women may own micro-businesses; how does VAT apply to them?

For specific excises, e.g. tobacco or alcohol, the gender impact can be identified using health data about consumption. Statistics for Ukraine indicate that “over 80% of heavy or binge drinkers are men” (about one third of men) and 42% of men smoke, compared to only 9% of women. This means that alcohol and tobacco excise fall more heavily on men than women. The point of these taxes is to increase the price to change behaviour so as to reduce smoking and drinking, and especially for young people, to prevent young men and women from taking up smoking, excessive drinking.

The excises on tobacco and alcohol are beneficial for gender equity. The health gains are much greater for men as a result of changes of behavior responding to higher prices: this will help to equalize life expectancy between women and men. At the same time, these excises raise more revenue from men who have more income than women (in general), and the revenues can be targeted towards gender-equal health spending.

Pensions, social insurance contributions

It is very important to conduct gender analysis of pensions and retirement savings policy. The fiscal sustainability of the contributory pension system is extremely important for women, as they live longer and have much more reliance on pensions in old age – women are at high risk of poverty in old age. Pensions out of general tax revenue based on need may be fairer, more fiscally sustainable than a contributory system. Reforms to produce a more uniform policy will improve the system and gender impact.

As noted, it is important to analyze sex-disaggregated data to identify revenue to pay pensions (contributory system) and recipients of pensions; who gets what and why? In payment of pensions, formal gender differences should be phased out (e.g. retirement age for women and men), but the transition must be carefully managed or some older women will be at risk of poverty.

In terms of contributions, women have lower earnings; lower insurance contributions during working life; and this leads to a gender gap in earnings affecting poverty in old age. The social insurance contribution of 22% adds to tax burden on low wage workers. Women also have shorter length of pensionable service and this affects eligibility and amount of pension benefits. It is necessary to standardize, reduce work eligibility, e.g. to 25 years for men and women. For pension payments: women live longer; have less income; rely more heavily on subsistence benefits. Women are capable of working longer, but, face risks of unemployment before eligibility for pension

Conclusions: Gender and tax

It is important to have an effective tax system to raise revenue benefits for women. The individual should be the unit of taxation, benefits and analysis; progressive taxation benefits women; flat tax rate over-taxes women. Women respond to high tax rates on labour income and social norms,

and may choose to work “in the home/caregiving”. Choice in women’s working lives will affect lifecycle economic security, e.g. pensions. Economy, social norms and tax policy combine to affect gender inequality, so you must consider the interaction of tax policy and other social policy, pension policy.

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Integration of gender policy into the budget process

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

Most countries have adopted a policy of gender equality, and gender budgeting recognizes that the annual budget is a principal tool used to implement policy priorities. Too often, however, the budget process is little more than accounting exercise, with resources more than absorbed by urgent needs in existing programs. Even where resources are available, few will be directly targeted at improving gender equality. However, many of the activities funded by the annual budget do have an impact on gender equality, meaning gender-responsive budgeting must focus on aligning efforts in existing programs around this goal. A common approach is to inform policy through the disaggregation of performance data by gender but, although such information is essential for determining need and assessing impact, performance information does not implement policy in and of itself – that requires actions. An effective approach for translating policy into action is to embed explicit gender-related strategies in every relevant program, with accountability for actual results.

KEY WORDS

Gender-responsive budgeting, gender policy, key strategies

Most nations have adopted a policy of gender equality in Constitution or in law. However, actions to implement this policy are often sporadic or ineffective. This is not necessarily due to a lack of commitment, but more due to an inability to translate policy goals into concrete action. The annual budget is a principal means for policy implementation, ideally through funding specific actions linked to policy goals. In practice, budgeting is too often little more than an accounting exercise, with allocations based on history and little fiscal space for new initiatives. Furthermore, the sheer number of programs that affect gender equality – positively and negatively – compounds the difficulty in advancing that goal.

The nature of the goal of gender equality and the ubiquity of program outcomes that affect it means that it cannot be an add-on to the budget process, a few forms to fill out or a couple of initiatives to incorporate in the annual budget. Rather, it must be directly incorporated or embedded in the budget process. This is not a peripheral effort, however: by so doing, gender-responsive budgeting acts not only to improve the implementation of that policy but also to improve the budget process in general. If, as the adage states, gender budgeting is just good budgeting, then better gender budgeting is better budgeting.

This paper is written to discuss the implementation of gender budgeting through its integration in the budget process. Thus, the budget cycle is briefly discussed, along with the integration of gender budgeting in that cycle. The final section explores the limitations of traditional gender budgeting as a means to implement gender equality and offers an additional approach to address these goals.

The budget as a key policy tool.

Budgeting begins with public policy, which is defined in a leading textbook as “whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (Dye, 2011, p.1). A useful corollary is that this action is usually in response to a problem (and sometimes an opportunity), meaning that a policy can be seen as

actions a Government takes in response to a perceived problem. This effectively constructs a testable hypothesis, an “if...then...and” structure: if these actions are taken then this problem is addressed and other significant problems are not created, i.e. unintended consequences. Much of budgeting, and especially gender-responsive budgeting, involves testing this hypothesis – especially for unintended consequences - and consequently adjusting policy.

The disconnect between the importance of the annual budget and the tediousness of the process itself speaks to the methods used and the absence of true policy discussion. At its best, budgeting is conflict resolution, with policy demands in competition with one another and the highest priority, most effective and efficient options chosen (with fiscal space created by jettisoning the lowest priority, least effective and efficient programs). But in practice budgeting is an exercise in bounded rationality, that time and information limitations (as well as political pressure) force choices that often are less than optimal.

Not all budgets are amenable to explicit policy implementation. The most common type of budget is a line item budget, where expenditures are organized by administrative agency by economic classification – personnel, office supplies, utilities, etc. While such an organization is essential for expenditure control and planning, it is useless for policy making and oversight, leading policymakers to ask the wrong questions: “Why is this cost increasing?” instead of “Should this even be done?”

Program budgeting was developed as an extension of line-item budgeting to organize expenditures by purpose, called a program, and defined as a set of activities to achieve an intended outcome. A focus of program budgeting is therefore on what is bought, the results to be achieved, instead of inputs, or what is spent by detailed category. By so organizing expenditures, a program budget allows for measures of effectiveness, or whether intended results are achieved, and efficiency, whether the costs of producing outputs are reasonable.

One limitation of program budgets is that spending is often confused with results. A program budget, by itself, tells you little about whether the program is effective or efficient; for that, you need performance information. OECD (2008, p.2) defines three types of performance budgets, which roughly parallel the stages of gender budgeting:

1. **Presentation:** Performance information is included in budget documents but does not directly affect allocations. This is equivalent to the awareness stage of gender budgeting.
2. **Performance-informed:** Performance information is included and used along with other information in the decision-making process. This is somewhat equivalent to the accountability stage of gender budgeting.
3. **Direct:** Allocations are based directly on performance, e.g. school funding based on number of graduates the prior year (used sparingly in a few countries). This is somewhat similar to the mainstreaming phase of gender budgeting.

Embedding gender-equality goals into the budget process

Gender-responsive budgeting “...is an approach that uses fiscal policy and public financial management instruments to promote gender equality and girls’ and women’s development” (Stotsky, 2016). Gender-responsive budgeting cannot be a simple add-on to the budget process, a form filled out after the budget is adopted, a set of performance measures developed just to include in the estimates document, or a high-level policy statement that is never implemented, a line in the budget speech. It is intrinsic to every stage of the budget process.

Setting aside budget preparation for now and considering the full budget cycle, the legal framework that underpins the budget process should assure data collection and reporting requirements that extend beyond budgetary central government. The fiscal framework must allow for information

capture, and budget execution should allow for collection of that data in real time, e.g. number of program beneficiaries by gender, enrollments, and so forth. These data need be reported in budget execution reports and in final reports. Finally, audits should extend to performance audits to ascertain the degree to which gender-related objectives were met.

Budget preparation has three stages: the first a top-down strategic direction from the executive, the second a bottom-up operational plan from the line agencies, and the third negotiation and final budget development. Much of the effort to promote gender equality is concentrated on the first phase, strategic direction. This is of course critical, as in the absence of gender equality goals it is unlikely significant progress can be made, and the better the strategic directives, the better the overall response. It is helpful for the executive to broadly define the problem(s) to address but should not be overly narrow, e.g. “improve child safeguarding by hiring 20 social workers”, nor should they be excessively broad, e.g. “improve children’s health”, but rather “develop a program to reduce the incidence of childhood communicable diseases.”

The second stage is the bottom-up operational planning response from the various line agencies to the fiscal and policy directives from the executive. Not only must these agencies align their budget requests to fit the overall fiscal constraints, they ideally will align their budget and management strategies with the policy set by the executive. As noted, few new expenditures will have gender equality as a primary objective, meaning that the task of aligning existing policies with that goal as well as those new policies falls on the ministries.

It is in this and the third stage that there is often unrecognized opportunity for advancement of gender equality goals. Most of the focus in this stage is on new spending or often finding savings, and of course ex ante evaluation of new or expanded programs is important in addressing gender equality goals, but this part of the process also provides the opportunity for line agencies to respond to policy goals in a manner that does not involve new expenditures. If the budget call circular from

the finance agency contains a requirement that line agencies address gender equality goals, then a menu of actions to do so can be constructed along with the budget documentation. These actions can take the form of what is called key strategies, although they have different names in different systems.

The system used in Austria is an excellent example of this approach applied to gender equality goals. Every chapter (service area) is required to include at least one impact objective relating to equity, with accompanying output statements as to actions to be taken and performance measures (Steger, 2010). For example, the Social and Consumer Protection chapter lists, in their 2020 budget documentation, an equality objective to improve the opportunities of women with disabilities in the labour market and they propose to do so by redesigning support measures (Austrian MoF, 2020).

A key strategy statement must show proposed actions in the coming year(s), including those to advance gender equality. They should be specific enough so that it is possible to determine if they are accomplished, i.e. not the same statement year after year, and express a goal that is important, that links directly to the policy agenda set by the executive. What will be done new, differently, or better, what key actions should be taken. All new spending should be linked to a key strategy, but it is appropriate to require that key strategies relating to gender equality be included with every relevant program or set of activities.

For example, the executive has committed to addressing the wage gap between men and women and has identified an underrepresentation of women in technical fields as a problem. The education department could then develop a key strategy to undertake a program to increase the percentage of girls in mathematics courses. The labour department could undertake a strategy to inform women of job openings in these areas, the social services department to offer expanded child care near major employers, and so on. Collectively all advance this goal, and progress can be measured with a simple performance indicator.

Once these statements have been prepared, they can be reviewed along with budget submissions, the third stage of the budget preparation process. This stage is also dominated by expenditure decisions, but it is relatively easy to expand to consideration of other policy goals. Budget analysts do not necessarily have the subject matter expertise needed to review policy objectives in other areas meaning coordination with outside agencies, e.g. gender agencies, is important. The goal of these sessions is to refine key strategy statements to assure their alignment with overall policy goals as well as their likely effectiveness.

Finally, these key strategies are aggregated and provided the executive to demonstrate actions to implement their agenda. Taken together, they can become the core of a gender budget statement or the executive's budget speech, aggregating all actions a government proposes to take in the coming year to advance gender equality as well as a report on success of measures in the current budget year.

Conclusion

Given the ubiquity of budgetary expenditures that affect gender equality, gender budgeting cannot be a simple add-on to the budget process but must be embedded in that process. Much of the focus of gender budgeting is on new spending or on performance measures; although the former is important in specific initiatives and the latter in assessing issues and measuring progress, new funding is very limited and performance measures in and of themselves cannot drive policy. An approach that has proven effective is to require line agencies to state what they intend to do in the coming year to advance gender equality, review these statements along with the budget submission, and compile them for the executive to introduce with the budget as a form of a gender statement. The circle is then closed the following year, when the actual results from these statements are made available while new statements are created.

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Gender sensitive services: structure, content, principles

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338.465:305](045)

ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

Public service is a service intended to serve all members of a community. It is usually provided by Government to people living within its jurisdiction, either directly (through the public sector) or by financing provision of services. (Wikipedia)

Gender responsive public services take into account practical and strategic gender needs and interests. A gender-responsive public service acknowledges that women and men often have different – practical and strategic – needs and priorities, for what services are provided, as well as how these services are designed, budgeted and delivered.

Women face practical and cultural obstacles to access and benefit from public services. The delivery of basic services is especially important for women and girls because of biological differences and traditional gender roles. Quality basic services can greatly reduce women's time burden, whereas gender responsive public services respond to immediate needs and rights, usually related to social and economic inequalities. (UKAid, 2017) Delivering equitable public services requires that the needs and interests of women and girls, men and boys from all backgrounds are considered and reflected in the design, budgeting, delivery and monitoring & evaluation of public services! Being gender responsive means going beyond acknowledging the existing gender gaps and really doing something to close the gaps.

Women tend to be more dependent on public services, which have the capacity to ease women's unpaid care burden that falls unfairly on their shoulders. When countries embrace austerity

measures, budget cuts – which in practice have a direct impact on public services – impact women and girls the most. A human rights-based approach is much needed in delivering public services. Gender-responsive public services and application of gender-responsive budgeting can guarantee that women are not left behind. Government has a primary role to guarantee human rights in service delivery, either by the Government or by private companies, in particular basic public services and infrastructure, such as water and sanitation, or health and education facilities, social welfare, urban transport, housing, etc. There can be no gender equality without quality public services. (Panavelli R, 2019)

KEY WORDS

gender; gender equality; gender mainstreaming; gender responsive public services; public services.

Governments have a social responsibility towards every citizen, to provide services according to their needs and concerns which often differ according to socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Population is diverse in terms of social status, gender, religion, age, disability or non-disability, sexuality, national or ethnic origin. Because governments are obligated to provide services equally to all citizens, a gender-sensitive approach to service delivery is essential. Citizens often experience government services that are not gender-responsive, but neither are they gender-neutral. A reason for this is partly because the government services are mostly designed and managed by men, who are the main decision makers. Therefore, women's priorities and perspectives are lagging behind.

Fewer women are represented in high-level management in the public sector. Although women

have different needs and unlike access to services, they have limited involvement in the decision-making process that determines which services will be provided, to whom, and how. As a result, women and girls often miss the benefit!

Women and girls (mostly) face practical and cultural obstacles to access the services they most need. Women need basic services such as health care, water supply and sanitation more than men because of biological differences and traditional gender roles, as mothers and caregivers. Lack of gender responsive public services affects women & girls in terms of their rights to a livelihood, employment, education, income, health and other socio-economic rights.

The delivery of basic services is especially important for women and girls. Quality basic services can greatly reduce women's time burden. For example, eased access to clean water and sanitation impact mostly women – because of biological differences and traditional gender roles; improved transportation increases access to services, employment and education; and ICT enables use of machinery – to substitute for hand labour – and reduces the household workload on women mostly.

Lack of gender responsive public services is: a cause of inequality, and a major obstacle to poor and excluded women from enjoying their human rights.

The growing impact gender equality has on the country's economic growth is linked to increased access of the less represented gender (mostly women and girls) in education, labour market, social services, health care, affordable housing, etc. Governments can play a crucial role in achieving gender equality through providing quality services. For example, improved, quality and affordable childcare services can increase the opportunity for women and families to seek employment and education, rather than taking care of their children. Accomplishing these goals does not always require extensive resources.

Under CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, state parties and their governments have an obligation to render gender-sensitive governance. Gender-sensitive governance leads to gender-sensitive delivery of public services. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require gender responsive public service as a means of implementation. "...all of the Goals (17 SDGs, 169 targets and 231 indicators) require the provision of public goods or the implementation of a public-sector policy and, therefore, depend on public service to coordinate, mediate or directly provide." (GCPSE, 2017)

Women tend to make more use of public services because of their greater responsibilities for unpaid care and lower incomes. (Women's Budget Group, UK)

The delivery of public services must take into consideration the different dimensions of quality of public services – including a human-rights dimension of quality from a gender equality perspective. The quality standards applied to public services are defined into four criteria: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. (ActionAid, 2016) These criteria are adapted from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Yet, safety is a major concern for women in relation to public services; therefore it constitutes another important standard criterion in public service delivery.

Availability. Gender-responsive public services should be available to all people, women and men regardless of their social and economic status. Quantitative aspects of service supply are important e.g. whether there are enough health clinics, schools, day care, public busses, social housing, etc. Affordability is another important aspect of service availability – whether services are economically affordable by the whole population. If a service is not affordable it is de facto not available to people. (ActionAid, 2016)

Accessibility. In order to be gender-responsive public services should meet the different needs of women and men, including their physical and social accessibility. Physical access may pose

different barriers for women and girls, whether women have to travel long distance to access the service, whether public transport is good enough to reach the service, or whether service location is hard to reach. Social access tells whether a service is gender-responsive, by analyzing social barriers to access a service by both women and men. The question here is whether service is free from social bias, social stereotypes, and whether women and men from different social backgrounds feel comfortable to access the service.

Acceptability. Acceptable services mean quality and inclusive to different cultural norms and traditions. Some service features may not be culturally acceptable for a given community of women and men. E.g. the health care service should respect medical protocol and should be culturally acceptable to female and male service-seekers.

Adaptability. Gender-responsive public services should be adapted to changing social, economic and political trends and developments. Public services should be updated to meet the new changing needs and priorities of women and men. E.g. health care service in rural setting may be provided by having a number of “check-up mobile units” to target rural population.

Safety. The lack of safety in the provision of public services puts women in a situation of vulnerability, and limits their rights both within cities and elsewhere. (ActionAid, 2016) The provision of gender-responsive public services means the accessibility of services without the risk of physical threats and/or other safety concerns. Women and girls mostly face the risk of threats or harassment in public spaces. E.g. women and girls in public transport often face intimidation, verbal and physical violence, and therefore are reluctant to use it. In addition, poor street lighting, unsuitable bus stops, bus frequency, etc., make women and girls limit their ability to access education, employment and social services.

Gender responsive services are those in which gender positions, roles and inequalities have been acknowledged, monitored and considered to be addressed in the design of services. Gender

responsive services are indented to serve all people, but also aim to address gender inequalities. The variety of services and approaches has a different impact on women and men, as well as on society. The extent of gender responsiveness of a public service can be explained in terms of three categories:

1. services focused on basic needs;
2. empowerment services;
3. transformation services. (Cities Alliance, 2017)

Basic public services address practical needs and vulnerabilities of marginalized groups. These services first, acknowledge that certain barriers exist. Second, a gender analysis of services is required to understand roles and status of women and men, their access to and control over resources, economic and social limitations. E.g. basic services ensure all citizens' basic needs such as: housing, energy, food, water and sanitation are met.

Empowering public services involves addressing strategic gender needs through building assets and capabilities and increasing opportunities for marginalized groups. The feature of these services is that marginalized groups of women and men are firstly trained and qualified and secondly, included in planning and delivery of the services, e.g. services that aim at empowering women and men by providing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Transformative change public services address unequal power relations and structures and seek legal, institutional and societal level change, especially for women & excluded groups. Transformative change is difficult to achieve and takes a long-term and skilled approach. It requires a change in attitude and perception within the wider community. (Cities Alliance, 2017) Such services intend to provide substantive support to gender advocate groups and other marginalized groups to act and contribute to governance related issues including the public service delivery. The overall purpose is to enable local capacities towards a participatory

approach of public service decision-making. Involving marginalized and excluded groups in participatory processes of governance can lead to transformation.

Sex disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators are essential in the delivery of services. Public service providers should recognize the importance of disaggregated data, including by sex. The responsibility remains mainly with government institutions to set up systems that enable for collection, exchange, standardization, analyzing and reporting disaggregated data, in particular sex-disaggregated data.

At the level “input and output” of public service delivery disaggregated data and indicators provide quantitative and comparative information. At the “outcome” level data and indicators offer qualitative information – evidence of the service quality, issues, effects or limitations. Sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators can prove “the real” inequality in public service delivery. Also, findings of data analysis can lead to advocacy initiatives to alter public services in response to identified needs and priorities of women and men.

Improving public service delivery is a long journey – which requires alignment of a number of factors – ranging from acknowledging the gaps, taking affirmative measures and to adapting services as economic and social circumstances change.

Women (less represented gender) should not be identified as passive victims, but rather as key actors in transforming public services to be gender responsive and inclusive! Empowering women in public life and public service delivery can lead to improved decision-making at the central and local government levels. This may also allow for enhanced public service outcomes over time.

Providing gender responsive public service is a human right, which should be protected, respected and fulfilled! Improved access and quality of public services can change the way government foster economic growth and improve citizens’ social well-being by increasing the opportunities available to them.

Delivering equitable public services requires that the needs and interests of women and girls, men and boys from all backgrounds are considered and reflected in the design, budgeting, delivery and monitoring & evaluation of public services! Being gender responsive means going beyond acknowledging the existing gender gaps and really doing something to close these gaps, such as:

- Strengthening oversight mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming across and within government bodies;
- Aiming at gender balanced representation in decision-making positions in public life – encouraging participation of women in all levels of government, in parliament, judiciary and other public institutions;
- Taking affirmative measures to improve the gender equality in public service delivery;
- Strengthening international co-operation through continuously sharing good practices on mainstreaming in public service delivery.

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Gender responsive budgeting in Austria: the role of the Austrian court of audit, its audit experiences and audit approaches in the area of gender equality

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The aspect of gender equality is the only aspect in the Austrian federal administration that must be taken into account by all federal ministries. This means that when the budget is adopted, the members of the National Council are informed about the equality goals that the federal ministries are pursuing, what measures they intend to take, and what indicators they use to measure their success.

Gender equality and gender budgeting are very important issues for the Austrian Court of Audit (ACA). The ACA wants to promote these aspects and tries to raise awareness of gender equality within the organization to ensure that gender aspects are covered in as many audits as possible. The aim of the ACA is to create transparency about gender equality and diversity through its audits. As a result of these gender audits, it can be stated that there is still a great need for action in Austria with regard to gender equality, but that awareness of this issue is constantly growing.

KEY WORDS

Gender budgeting, gender equality, diversity, gender specific data, awareness

Austria is one of 12 of 24 OECD countries that have introduced gender budgeting. There is no legal compulsion for gender budgeting but for gender equality.

The legal basis for performance information and gender equality is the Austrian Federal Constitution. In Austria there has been a strong commitment by the Member of Parliaments to gender equality and gender budgeting in accordance with the provisions of the Austrian Constitution and the new federal budget law.

The gender equality aspect is the only aspect in the Austrian federal administration that must be taken into consideration by all federal ministries throughout the entire budget cycle, from budget planning to subsequent evaluation. This means that when the budget is passed, the members of the National Council are informed about the equality goals that the federal ministries are pursuing, what measures they intend to take, and what indicators they use to measure their success. This information is decided together with the budget, but is not normative. Despite the transparent, comprehensible presentation of the gender equality data in the budget, there is no direct link to the budget funds; the budget is not divided between women and men.

Although the gender gap in Austria has narrowed in recent years and amounted to 19.9 percent in 2017, it is still well above the European average of 16 percent. The initial situation in Austria shows that women have a high level of gainful employment, but often work part-time. This naturally results in the high gender gap and, as a consequence, the high gender pension gap (women's old-age pensions are around 40 - 50% lower than those of men). Part-time work is based in particular on the fact that many women traditionally look after children or relatives in need of care. In addition, women are often employed in professions with lower incomes. All of this despite the fact that women have caught up considerably in the area of education - in the tertiary sector as well as in school-leaving exams, women are ahead of men.

Although there is no legal compulsion for gender budgeting, for the Austrian Court of Audit (ACA) gender equality as well as gender budgeting are very important issues. The ACA wants to expedite these topics. The high importance of gender budgeting to foster gender equality and gender budgeting can be used as a lever for gender equality.

Unfortunately, valid and meaningful gender specific data is often lacking in Austria. It is therefore difficult to identify, confirm and reduce gender gaps in these areas. In addition, there is also no comprehensive overview of the areas in which data are missing. It is therefore surprising that data collection as a defined measure is rare.

From the ACA's point of view there is too little focus on gender budgeting regarding some ministries' targets and measures. Therefore, the aim of the ACA is to establish transparency on gender equality and on diversity.

To be effective and in line with requirements of the citizens and to reach our target, a genuine policy for equality and diversity needs valid and meaningful data and information on the impact of political decisions on women and men, different generations, people with special needs and people with a migration background.

In order to achieve our target, the ACA has defined several measures which are consistently implemented. The auditors identify improvement potentials in the area of gender equality and provide a transparent view of the use of public funds with regard to men and women. They take into consideration diversity aspects in the framework of audits, in particular by pointing to the impact for women and men and for different generations, people with disabilities and special needs and people with a migration background. The auditors also identify areas with a lack of meaningful, valid and management-relevant data on equality and address the position of women compared to men in the public sector (e.g. appointments to supervisory boards, executive boards, and other bodies).

In the ACA's strategy paper, it is defined to pay attention to different needs and obligations as a result of social diversity. Gender equality, gender parity and the reduction of discrimination at all levels are of great concern to the ACA. It assumes social responsibility with the auditing activities. The ACA attaches great importance to equal opportunities and unhindered access to public services.

The ACA also wants to be a role model in the equality of women and men within its organization. It takes into consideration the compatibility of work and family life, e.g. through telework or part time trainings. Considering the challenging situation of the auditors which is connected with longer business trips, it is really a very good success that almost 48 percent of the employees are female. There are 40 percent of women in management positions and we pay the same salary for women and men. This is mandatory in the public sector.

The ACA tries to raise awareness of gender equality within the organization to ensure that gender aspects are covered in as many audits as possible. Therefore, the ACA has established a competence center for knowledge sharing. These topics are also mandatory contents in the training. In addition, an internal guideline for auditing gender and diversity issues was drawn up. This guideline aims to ensure that the auditors know how to examine the topic methodically and hope that this will lead to uniformity in the auditing and presentation of gender and diversity issues in the reports - comprehensive coverage of the relevant subject areas. The guide highlights in particular what the Court of Audit focuses on during an audit, what to look for, what is important and where possible gaps exist.

The Court of Audit has of course already carried out a number of audits in which gender equality was already a component. The audits cover gender issues from a wide range of areas. For example, there were gender issues in health and education, but also in military service and transport.

In these performance audits the auditors check for example whether the targets, measures and indicators presented by the ministries are suitable and meaningful, relevant, ambitious and target-oriented. They also audit whether the information on gender equality is being checked within the scope of control instruments and whether the management, especially the ministers, are dealing with the issue.

It is also worth mentioning that the content of gender targets is not reviewed because they are political targets. They are only checked, for example, to establish whether they cover the relevant tasks of a ministry and whether they are ambitious.

Examples of ACA's audits on gender equality:

The ACA audited the implementation of Gender Equality in the Framework of Outcome Orientation in the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (Cf. Austrian Court of Audit 2017, Umsetzung der Gleichstellung im Rahmen der Wirkungsorientierung im BKA, BMLFUW und BMVIT).

The goal of the audit was to assess compliance with quality requirements regarding the equality indications in the area of outcome orientation (e.g. relevance, verifiability), and to ascertain how ambitiously the audited federal ministries pursued their equality objectives and measures in order to contribute to the goal of actual gender equality. The ACA also audited the effectiveness of controlling and the existence of targeted internal management. Furthermore, it focused on quality assurance and the evaluation of the equality indications.

Besides the fact that gender equality was the only goal that all federal ministries were bound to actively pursue, it also was a typical cross-cutting issue. Nevertheless, the audited federal

ministries failed to take a coordinated interministerial approach, which would have enhanced the impact and supported the attainment of goals.

Within the period under review, the Federal Chancellery identified three different equality goals, the target group of which was constantly shrinking: while the Federal Chancellery initially aimed to achieve an external effect for citizens with its 2013 goal, in the years 2014/2015 - after the women's agendas had been handed over to another ministry - it formulated an internal federal goal and in 2016 an internal Federal Chancellery goal. According to the only equality indicator ("increase in the proportion of women in the highest pay grades":), the 2016 equality target (equal opportunities for women and men in the Federal Chancellery) concerned a target group of only about 14% of female employees in the highest pay grades. The fact that the target was changed three times within four years did not allow for a continuous pursuit of the goal, and the most recent small number of addressees of the indicator did not allow for any conclusions regarding the achievement of the goal. In principle, the presentation of the women's quota was a meaningful indicator for demonstrating equal opportunities in the Federal Chancellery. The actual values of the equal opportunity indicator ("Increase in the women's quota") showed that women were already overrepresented in three of the four salary classifications shown. In addition, some of the target values aimed to reduce the proportion of women or to increase the existing gender gap (observable difference between the sexes) in one grade at the expense of men.

Since the equality measures of the departments under review consistently covered only a small aspect of equality, they were not suitable for steering impact-oriented budget management. In the view of the ACA, there was considerable potential for improvement in linking results-oriented and impact-oriented management. This should ensure the effective use of funds in a comprehensible manner.

The ACA also audited the Federal Sports Promotion Scheme (Cf. Austrian Court of Audit 2019, System der Bundessportförderung). Representative bodies of the Bundes-Sport GmbH were filled exclusively with men. Women were extremely under-represented in the decision-making bodies in the area of sports. In the course of the reappointment of the bodies as stipulated by the 2017 Federal Sports Promotion Act, two positions at the management board, six positions at the supervisory board and all twelve positions of the commissions of the Bundes-Sport GmbH have been filled exclusively with men. As regards the divisions and groups, the share of women in leading positions in the ministry is at 0%; only one department is currently headed by a woman. With regard to the extent to which federal sports promotion funds are allocated to women and men, the data available was incomplete. 67% of the funding provided by the ministry for 2016 was not allocated according to gender. As regards the funding on which gender-related data was available, the female to male ratio was at 37% to 63%. The Federal Sports Promotion Fund did not have any valid data broken down by gender. Consequently, no gender-related information existed with regard to 90% of the funds allocated in 2016.

Another gender audit was Gender Health in Austria (Cf. Austrian Court of Audit 2015, Gendergesundheit in Österreich). In Austria several central entities of the Federation were tasked with and responsible for gender health. The administrative separation of women's, children's and young people's health (Federal Ministry of Health) and men's health (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection) did not prove to be efficient due to the related organizational, conceptual and financial implications. This separation of tasks also resulted in the lack of an all-encompassing reporting system on gender health in Austria.

In general, gender health was only secondary in Austria. Only 3% of the funds granted by the Federal Ministry of Health were related to gender equality. The stakeholders failed to conduct an overall evaluation of the cost-efficiency of these funds. As observed in several reports and studies, gender aspects received only little attention.

The ACA also prepares annual income reports. In the 2017 and 2018 income reports (Cf. Austrian Court of Audit 2019, Durchschnittliche Einkommen und zusätzliche Leistungen für Pensionen der öffentlichen Wirtschaft des Bundes 2017 und 2018), the ACA noted that there were few women in executive boards and their income was lower than that of men.

The share of women in executive boards was at 21.6% in 2018 and remained relatively constant over the last years (20.5% in 2017 and 2016). As regards the supervisory boards, the share of women was at 31.4% in 2018, representing an increase compared to 2017 (30.6%) and 2016 (28.2%). The income of female board members and/or executive directors averaged EUR 180,285 in all lines of business in 2018: this equaled only 79.4% of the average income of their male colleagues (EUR 227,179).

In summary, it can be said that Austria still has a great need for action regarding gender equality, but that awareness of this is constantly growing.

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Gender and public participation in the budget process

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The paper is aimed at building an understanding of possibilities of participation in the budget process. It is based on the complementarity of Participatory Budgeting and Gender Budgeting and the close linkages between these two concepts. Based on the public finance management system in Ukraine and strong, albeit separate efforts to develop Gender Budgeting and Participatory Budgeting in Ukraine, the paper explores possibilities of linking it to reap the benefits of both and sets out proposals on how to strengthen gender responsive participatory budgeting in Ukraine.

KEY WORDS

Participatory Budgeting, Gender Budgeting, Ukraine, Public Finance Management, Public Expenditure, Public Revenue.

In Ukraine, both Gender Budgeting and Participatory Budgeting became popular and increasingly implemented at the state and local levels. However, both approaches remain largely separate efforts. While ambitions are similar, participatory budgeting is often failing to include gender equality and gender budgeting as they are not automatically participatory. Gender Budgeting and Participatory Budgeting are still often implemented separately and connections are made rarely. However, opportunities to interlink these two important approaches do exist.

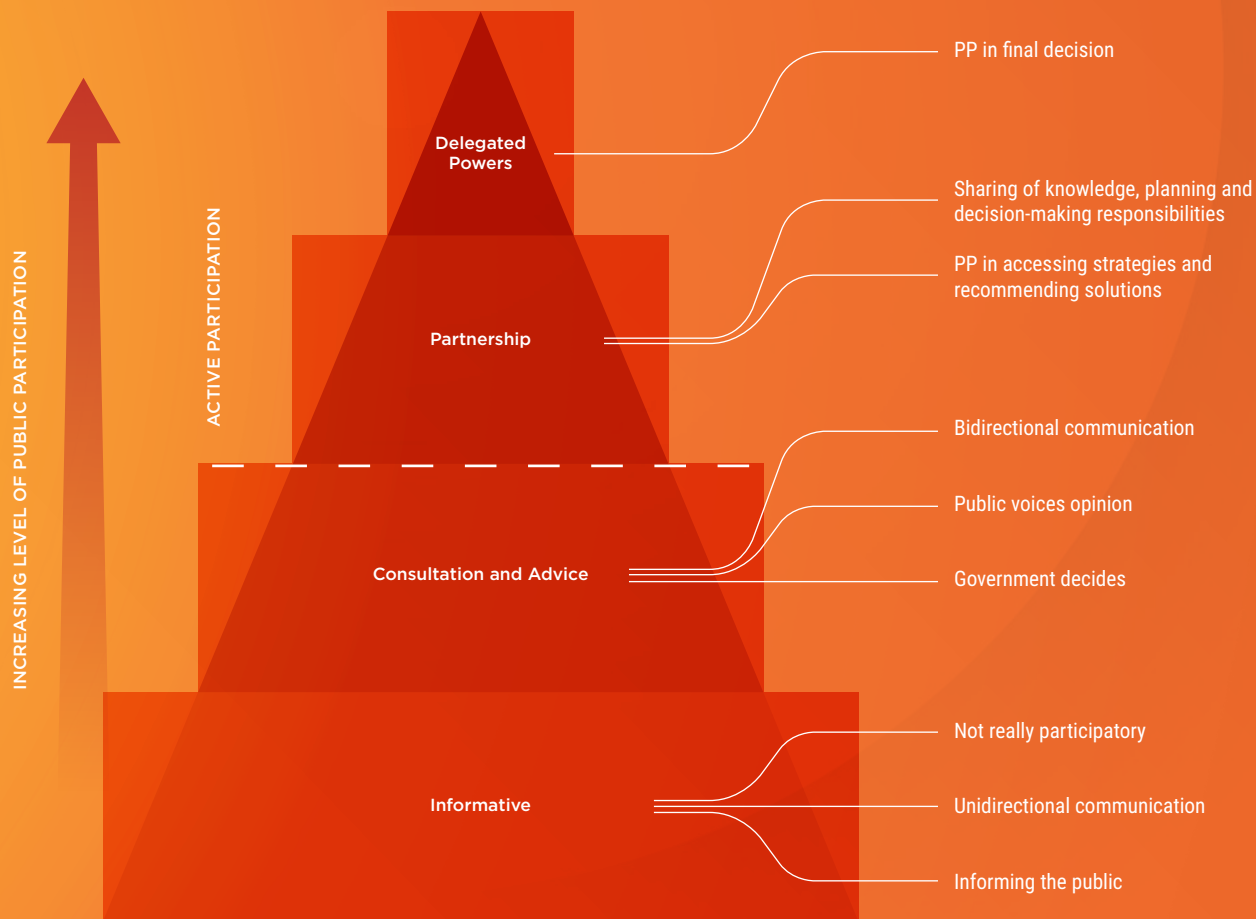
Participatory budgeting in practice can have many different forms. To live up to its ambitions, participatory budgeting shall be related to the multi-annual and annual budget process at all stages, including in the development of budget strategy, priorities and investment plans. Also public participation in shaping public revenue and tax reforms are crucial components of enhanced participatory budgeting.

Various degrees of influence in participatory processes

A crucial question is related to the degree of influence that is possible in participatory practice. Figure 1 shows different levels of participatory involvement. At the bottom of the pyramid is information sharing, which actually is not really a form of participation, but rather contributing to mere transparency. Consultation and partnership are both forms of engaging with citizens to hear their opinion and include their priorities in budgeting, while leaving formal decision making to elected bodies. At its most developed stage, participatory budgeting leaves decision making to participatory mechanisms, including the public. Often this is practiced in a form that a certain share of the budget (for example, municipal investment budget) is dedicated to be decided in participatory processes.

FIGURE 1

Participation in Budgeting – What is the degree of influence?



Gender perspectives in participatory budgeting - benefits and practice

Participatory budgeting has the ambition to involve citizens in budgeting. Gender perspectives are crucial because we know from many experiences that participatory budgeting which doesn't include sensitivity regarding gender leads to several biases. Especially, gender blind participatory budgeting initiatives lead to a biased participation regarding different social groups, favoring male participation. Also gender issues and priorities of specific groups usually are not fully taken into account. Women's socio-economic position on average can be quite different from men's, and this is amplified in different social groups, according to age, income group, migration status and others. Often, different roles, experience, priorities and needs lead to different needs and use of services and public spaces in different ways. Also, possibilities and practice of participation and involvement are often different for different social groups, not only related to gender but also other characteristics. Thus, it is essential that any participatory budgeting process explicitly focuses on gender equality, i.e. ensures equality in participation and equal representation of priorities and interests of different social groups based on their lived experience. This leads to important innovations, and more transparent, gender-responsive participatory, as well as more effective and efficient budgeting.

Some elements of ensuring gender responsive participation are among others, building knowledge and information as basis for informed participation, ensuring equal access to information, ensuring that gender issues are included in information as a basis for participation in the budget process, providing for a special focus on including considerations of the socio-economic situation of women and men in their diversity, taking into account gender gaps in access to services and infrastructure. The body of knowledge built in Gender Budgeting efforts and gender impact assessments, such as in the case of the Ukraine Gender Budgeting Project, can provide valuable input in this regard.

A key issue for any participatory budgeting effort is that information coming out of gender budget analysis and other gender assessments is part of information provided to citizens in the framework of the participatory budgeting exercise. It is of great importance to develop a gender-sensitive model of the overall process and the different modes of participation. Among these, ensuring equal access, e.g. as regards physical meetings, holding meetings at times and places which will facilitate, rather than prevent participation of women from different social groups, is a basic requirement. This includes ensuring that participatory methods, online or in meetings, and related processes are both gender equality friendly at all levels. Gender monitoring is a key tool to ensure gender equality: at the level of monitoring participatory processes it is necessary to keep track of representation in participation according to gender and other social characteristics, to monitor whether the process is meeting both men's and women's needs, and monitor substantive participation in order to provide a data basis for potential adjustments needed to ensure a gender balance in the process. In case of persisting imbalances gender quotas and targets and specific support measures for underrepresented groups, both in participation on their representation of priorities and needs shall be considered.

Public Participation in the Budget Process in Ukraine

Based on a focus on budget transparency and public participation in the budgeting process in the PFM Strategy for 2017-2020, as well as the principles of publicity and transparency in the Budget Code, major developments have taken place over the last years. Furthermore, article 24 of the Budget Code relates to the state fund of regional development with pilot competitions called “All-Ukrainian public budget”, which includes elements of participation.

And most importantly, the Order No. 94, “Methodological recommendations on the mechanism of public participation in budget process on local level” adopted on March 3rd,

2020, defines important aspects of participatory budgeting for the local level. The mechanisms of public participation in the budget process at the local level as specified in Order No. 94 include:

1. Consultations with the public: consultations are held in order to involve the public in decision making, establish a dialogue with the society on decision-making, create necessary conditions of dialogue with the public, and create conditions for public participation in draft decisions on the budget-related issues. Consultations can take different forms such as round tables, meetings, conferences, forums, briefings, public hearings (collective public meetings with representatives of local authorities, organized by territorial community or local authorities), online polls, meetings of local executive authorities and public councils, representatives of bodies of self-organization of communities, leaders of NGOs and others;
2. Civil Councils, formed at local authorities: activities of civil councils will promote public participation in the development and implementation of budget policies and making decisions at the local level, taking into account public opinion;
3. Involvement of mass media as an instrument of dissemination of information to the society. It is recommended to involve mass media in discussions and meetings on budget issues, and inform the society on results of its participation in the budget process;
4. Provision of information on the budget, according to Article 28 of the Budget Code, the information on the budget has to be published on official websites;
5. Use of interactive instruments;
6. Development of a public budget “participatory budgeting”: public budget is an instrument of direct democracy, when each member of territorial community can take part in the budget process and expenditure allocation. Such mechanism means that people create projects that will improve their living conditions and other representatives of community

vote for the best projects. It is recommended to local authorities to approve a provision on the public budget.

The Order No. 94 on the mechanism of public participation in the budget process at the local level does not include any provision on how these participatory mechanisms shall ensure gender equality in participation. However, each of these mechanisms can be made more effective if gender equality perspectives and gender equality in participation are fully integrated as discussed above.

Equally, as each of the main steps of the participatory budget paid key attention to gender equality, it is necessary to ensure quality and effectiveness of the participatory approaches. The following are some illustrative examples of how gender perspectives can be taken into account in the context of the different steps:

1. Development of the public budget: ensuring from the start that the participatory budgeting aims at inclusion of gender perspectives and provides for capacity building of public officials on how to do it and on the complementarity of gender budgeting and participatory budgeting approaches;
2. Approval of the Regulation on the public budget: inclusion of gender equality and gender budgeting in the Regulation;
3. Information campaign on the public budget throughout all stages of participation budgeting: ensuring that the information provided is highlighting how the budget impacts differently on different groups of women and men, and how the gendered socio-economic situation and roles lead to different needs and priorities to make sure citizens understand and get a good perspective on gender issues;
4. Preparation and presentation of projects: ensuring that different social groups with gender

balance are invited equally to present the projects and that projects address priorities from the women's and men's perspective. Ensuring that projects addressing the elimination of gender gaps get priority attention;

5. Expertise and selection process: ensuring that gender expertise is included in all stages, and ensuring that especially the selection process accounts for a good gender balance and balance according to other social characteristics;
6. Voting: ensuring that women and men are equally represented in voting, and that priorities of women and men are equally represented in results. Provision for a good gender monitoring to create a data base;
7. Implementation of projects. Ensuring that gender equality is integrally included in project implementation;
8. Monitoring of project outcomes: ensuring participatory monitoring with gender perspectives integrated; and ex post gender impact assessment of projects;
9. Preparation of summaries and reports of projects: all reports and other documents prepared shall include data disaggregated by sex and address gender issues and results of gender monitoring and other tools, e.g. ex post gender impact assessment;
10. Evaluation of project outcomes: full integration of gender perspectives and methods in evaluation of project outcomes, building on gender monitoring, ex post gender impacts assessments and other tools.

Public participation at own initiative from civil society actors

Another way of participation of the public in the budget process is own initiatives of citizens, or specific groups such as women's civil society groups or budget groups which actively participate at different stages of the budget process. Some examples include the Women's Budget Group (WBG)

in the United Kingdom with regular inputs to the budget process, the Femme Fiscale in Austria, a network of CSOs working on gender justice in budgeting and economic policies, for example focusing on investments in the care economy and gender justice in tax issues, or CSOs at local level in municipalities in Macedonia which advocate for specific funding priorities, such as early childhood development centers, preventive healthcare and medical treatment for women with breast cancer, or for a regional safe-house and free legal aid for women - victims of domestic violence.

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GRB in the times of COVID-19: a strategic tool for recovery

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The COVID-19 response has disproportionately affected women according to individual country and international organizations' analysis. The response by EU institutions has been to create new financial instruments and reform existing ones in order to offer Member States recovery support. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming have been identified as elements in the implementation of the EU recovery package. The business case for gender equality provides a basis to consider Gender Responsive Budgeting as a gender mainstreaming tool that can make scarce government resources more effective and efficient, expand fiscal space and reach the goals of sustainability and resilience. In addition, continued commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal 5 and its targets, should be accelerated so that recovery can yield stronger economies and societies.

KEY WORDS

Gender Responsive Budgeting, European Recovery Plan, business case for Gender Equality, SDGs in Ukraine.

The effects of the response to mitigate COVID-19 have disproportionately affected women and in particular those with higher economic and social vulnerabilities and those directly coming into contact with the virus as the majority of essential workers around the world. The shadow violence against women pandemic has also highlighted the need for more investment in prevention strategies against this persistent violation of human rights. Increasing evidence is mounting that the gains around gender equality made in the past few decades may be lost, in some cases irreversibly, if governments do not include gender sensitive responses in the recovery efforts (Secretary General of the United Nations, 2020). Commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in general and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) in particular may be sacrificed as countries face hard choices in order to service debt and choose policy options that leave the inclusion pillars of SDGs by the wayside.

As countries struggle to respond to the crisis within their fiscal space, gender responsive budgeting and its tools and methods can support governments in making expenditure more efficient and amplifying or expanding fiscal space as they make reforms to eliminate discrimination of women in the economic sphere and in other interconnected areas that reduce their economic contributions. Namely, the higher burden of unpaid care work and violence against women in the private and public spheres.

European recovery plan for COVID-19

In July 2020, there was a special meeting of the European Council to determine the terms and size of a comprehensive financial recovery package that encompassed the already adopted Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF, which is essentially the EU budget for a period of 7 years) and a specific recovery instrument that has been called Next Generation EU (NGEU). In addition to these efforts, there is also a Brexit Adjustment Reserve to offset unforeseen and adverse consequences in EU Member States and sectors that are worst affected by this reality.

In total the NGEU sums EUR 750 billion made up of already existing instruments and the addition of a Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) that is divided in loans to EU Member states (EUR 360 billion) to be repaid by 2026 and grants in the amount of EUR 312.5 billion to be used by the end of 2023. A very new development under this emergency response is that the European Commission has been authorized to borrow funds on behalf of the Union on capital markets to be transferred to programmes under NGEU.

On the other hand, the MFF 2021-2027, that had already been negotiated was changed to adapt to the impact of the crisis. The total amount of commitments is now EUR 1,074.3 billion, which is lower than the amount that was arrived at in February 2020 and mostly reallocated into NGEU. As a note of interest, three own resources revenues for the EU have been approved (taxes): non-recycled plastic waste, carbon border adjustment, a digital levy and in the future a financial transaction tax (Tobin Tax). It is expected that any borrowing may be covered by the proceeds of these new taxes and levies.

In terms of how gender equality and gender mainstreaming (that includes GRB) has been incorporated into the financial approach to the crisis, Box 1 reflects the relevant adopted conclusions by the European Council. The sustainability and resilience of the recovery can clearly leave no one behind. The emphasis on the ability of the financial framework for the recovery to promote equal opportunities and to ensure that the instruments proposed carry a gender mainstreamed approach and contribute to equality between women and men is an acknowledgement of this. Furthermore, the specific mention of the incorporation of these issues into the process of the European Semester further reinforces the idea that the financial health of the EU cannot be disassociated from key social goals and targets. Furthermore, as it is shown in the following section of this brief, attaining gender equality goals can strengthen financial health of individual EU Member States and the EU as a whole.

BOX 1

Main messages related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the European Council Special Meeting Conclusions of July 2020

“The plan for European recovery will need massive public and private in-vestment at European level to set the Union firmly on the path to a sustainable and resilient recovery, creating jobs and repairing the immediate damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic whilst supporting the Union’s green and digital priorities. The Multiannual Financing Framework (MFF), reinforced by Next Generation EU (NGEU), will be the main European tool.”

“The overall framework will reflect simplification and lead to a reduction of red tape for beneficiaries and managing authorities, it will promote equal opportunities by ensuring that activities and actions in relevant programmes and instruments are gender-mainstreamed and contribute to equality between women and men.”

“The role of the EU budget in supporting the effective implementation of EU wide policy objectives should be further enhanced, notably by strengthening the link between the EU budget and the European Semester, including facilitating the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as in the areas of migration, environment and climate change and equality between women and men as well as rights and equal opportunities for all.”

Source: Special meeting of the European Council (17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July 2020) – Conclusions (European Council, 2020)

It is important to remember that, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) definition, gender mainstreaming requires both integrating a gender perspective to the content of the different policies and addressing the issue of representation of women and men in the given policy area. So that, in addition to analysing and making changes to specific policies, the equal representation of women in the institutions and the bodies that make decisions should also be reflected. In EIGE’s own words, both dimensions – gender representation and gender responsive content - need to be taken into consideration in all phases of the policy-making process.

Given the importance of the European Semester as the main framework of processes within the EU socio-economic governance, and as a core component of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the proposal that it has better links to the EU budget and that it facilitate the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights including equality between women and men opens the opportunity to integrate gender sensitive proposals and analysis throughout the annual aggregation of the different processes of control, surveillance and coordination of budgetary, fiscal, economic and social policies of the EU Member States. In the Annex a proposal for such an approach is presented.

The business case for gender equality: understanding why GRB is so important

There is a growing body of evidence supporting the idea that gender equality makes good business sense. Research work reviewed by

EIGE has found that between 6.3 million and 10.5 million additional jobs would be available by 2050 due to improvements in gender equality by addressing gender segregation in educational choices and increasing the participation of women in fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), with about 70% of these jobs taken by women. Also, that an increase in employment productivity and in the potential productive capacity of the economy as a result of addressing the under-representation of women in sectors with skill shortages and good employment prospects such as STEM. In addition, positive GDP per capita impacts over time as an improvement in gender equality (equal pay and other equal opportunities) would contribute to an increase in GDP per capita of up to 9.6% by 2050 in the EU. Finally, individual gains up to 12% increase in GDP per capita by 2050 in EU Member States with lower gender equality, based on current levels of gender equality as measured by EIGE's Gender Equality Index, if gender equality measures were implemented (EIGE, 2017).

Private lenders and financial institutions can also do more in creating financial inclusion opportunities ranging from banking accounts to credits for women's businesses. In this sense change in banks that, even though legislation forbids it, require male co-signing of credits, or have working stereotypes against women's businesses can revise their policies and use research and track record to make lending decisions. Micro credit institutions can also provide research into the successful growth of their client's businesses and support them into mainstream credit institutions.

Women's contribution to the economy must include the paid and unpaid care work and businesses must understand their role in the equal sharing of care work not only between women and men, but also of households, government and private sector. In this sense governments must also include household production into their national accounting system in order to fully understand and make better policy decisions that affect this essential sector of the economy that has so far been invisible.

According to research identified by EIGE (EIGE, 2017), it has been calculated that equal pay for equal work alone would generate a GDP per capita increase of 3.2% to 5.5% by 2050. This is up to €280 billion increase in GDP by 2030 and €1,490 billion increase in GDP by 2050. This is higher than the total expenditure foreseen of the EU Budget between 2021 and 2027 (€ 1,074 billion).

Although indirectly related to the business case, but hugely relevant to the economic impact of inequality, EIGE commissioned a study to measure the cost of gender based and intimate partner violence for each EU Member State. Using an extrapolation method based on a study in the UK, it was calculated that the cost of intimate partner violence to the EU annually was EUR 122 billion, of which EUR 109 billion was the cost of intimate partner violence against women. The cost to the EU of gender-based violence against women was EUR 225 billion, and this represented 87% of the total cost of gender-based violence to the EU which was estimated to be EUR 258 billion. These costs represent losses to individuals, families, communities, government, and the private sector. Over the course of the MFF 2021-2027 the amount, if nothing is done and remains as is, reaches EUR 1,806 billion, much higher than the estimated benefits from eliminating the gender pay gap (see above). Investing in prevention and eliminating this scourge is therefore a key issue for all EU member states.

It is clear to see how making policy changes in governments, private enterprises and the financial system that advance women's status can boost economies at the same time that women's human rights are fulfilled.

How can GRB help in the Recovery of Economies?

GRB can support the improvement of planning and budgeting for recovery efforts by avoiding discrimination towards women in the design of recovery policies (with discriminatory ideas such as jobs for men, jobs for breadwinners, cash transfers for households instead of individuals,

infrastructure investments that do not include the care economy among others) and also helping to place the focus on the most vulnerable groups where women are the majority. Using the tools of GRB such as gender analysis, gender impact assessments, gender sensitive budget statements, sex disaggregated beneficiary analysis, or introducing functional budget classifications for gender equality commitments (similar to those used for environmental commitments in some countries), to name a few, can improve the quality of public finance management (PFM) systems and also expand fiscal space.

While GRB is increasingly adopted by many governments, the impacts remain limited as the overall budgets for gender equality policies and the provision of services, social protection and infrastructure remain inadequate or the changes that gender analysis has suggested are unimplemented. For example, the thematic review on SDG 5 in 2017 by the High-Level Political Forum (UN, 2017) underlies the inadequate sources for the implementation of national action plans on gender equality and other gender equality policies.

Gender equality is a key element of strengthening domestic mobilization of resources through increased employment, consumption, and investment of half the population that is currently absent, partly absent or faces obstacles in economic engagement. The section above on the business case for gender equality makes it sufficiently clear. Fighting gender-based violence (intimate partner violence and other forms of violence such as sexual violence, sexual harassment at work and in public spaces, trafficking, femicide, harmful cultural practices, psychological and economic violence) is also a key issue that governments and the private sector should tackle with prevention strategies that can result much cheaper than the huge amounts that the problem is already causing.

The SDG 5 targets chosen by Ukraine can take centre stage in shaping national strategies and policies taking into account the interlinkages among themselves or with other SDGs that may be

at work and can also benefit from the dedicated use of the allocated public and private funds working towards achieving the targets. While concerns about the fiscal space and higher debt due to the COVID-19 response are mounting, making efforts to expand the fiscal space through gender equality can result in a win-win situation, in particular for women.

As a last note, some legislation in Ukraine was still behind or very much behind EU and world standards in 2015 regarding economic opportunities, violence against women and equal family and marriage rights. The recovery situation can be an opportunity to change legislation and include the appropriate resources, including the use of full impact analysis to estimate the total benefits to the economy. Table 1 shows how there is still a lot of work to be done in the legal reforms area that can further support other policy changes regarding equal pay, equal opportunities in education and employment, recognition of unpaid work and eliminating violence against women. While some of these parameters may have changed in the past 5 years, the database has not been changed.

TABLE 1
Legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality (percentage of achievement, 0 - 100), SDG target 5.1*

Area 1: Overarching legal frameworks and public life	90.00
Area 2: Violence against women	83.33
Area 3: Employment and economic benefits	50.00
Area 4: Marriage and family	81.82

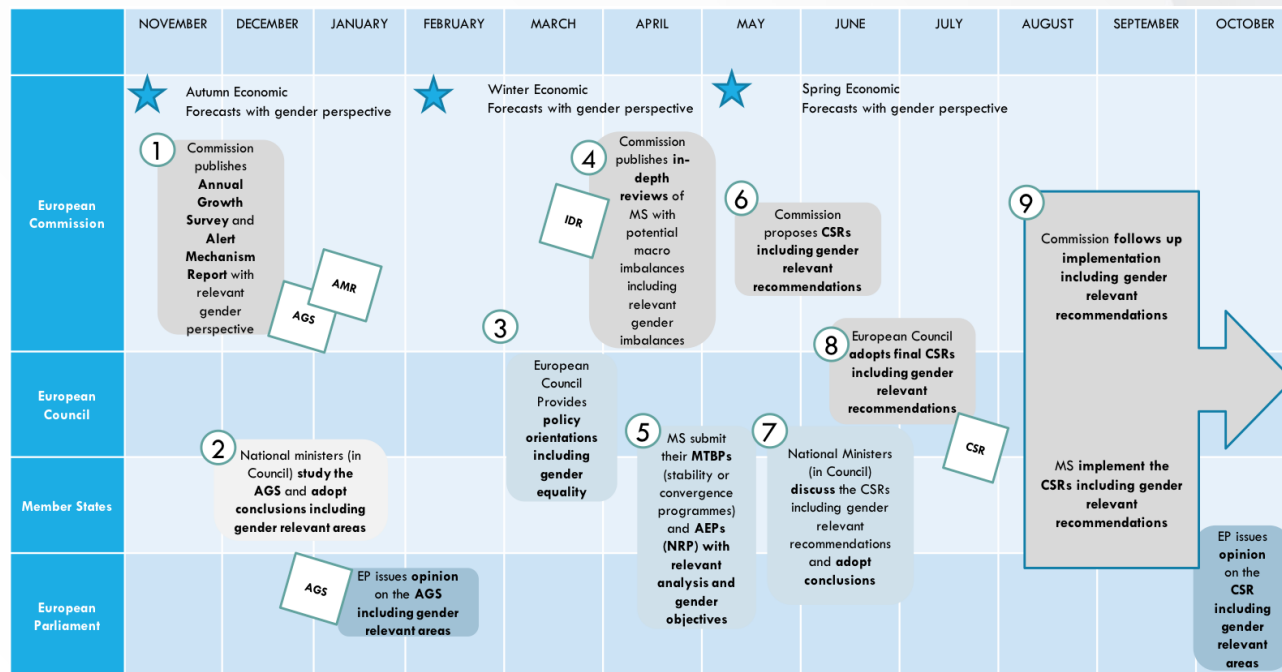
* Self-reported by Government of Ukraine to UN SDG database through survey methods as of 2015

Furthermore, the World Bank database on Women, Business and the Law that has compiled the legislative changes that grant women equal rights in the areas of mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets and pension in the past 50 years shows that although Ukraine achieves a mark of 100% in the areas of mobility, workplace, marriage, entrepreneurship and assets, on the other hand, the area of pay has a value of 0 (zero) meaning that there is absence of equal pay legislation and restrictions on night hours, dangerous jobs and some industries. Pension rights are also not the same and there are only some equal rights on parenthood that include policies that recognise unpaid work by women and give men the right to also care for their families.

Conclusions

This brief analysis has attempted to summarize the effects of the COVID-19 response on women and to give an overview of the COVID-19 recovery efforts by the EU from a gender perspective. The business case for gender equality should provide yet another argument for strengthening GRB efforts in any country and in this case Ukraine. GRB can be a tool not only to improve efficiency and efficacy of Government spending, but it can also help to achieve gender equality goals, such as the SDG 5 targets (that can help to plan efforts) and expand the fiscal space through higher employment, income, consumption and investment. The fight against gender-based violence and aiming for its elimination can save economies vast amounts of resources, and also help fulfil one of the basic obligations of any state to protect citizens from violence. In the case of Ukraine there is some room to improve legislation that underpins gender equality efforts, in particular regarding economic rights of women.

EUROPEAN SEMESTER WITH GENDER MAINSTREAMING



AGS – Annual growth survey,
AMR – Alert mechanisms report,
IDR – In-depth reviews,
MS – Member states,

CSR – Country specific recommendations
MTBP – Medium term budget plans
NRP – National reform programmes
AEP – Annual economic plans

Source: European Commission adapted by EIGE and edited by author for this brief.

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European union – policy response to COVID-19. Implications from gender equality perspectives

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305:342.722-055.2]:616-036.21COVID-19](4-6C)(045)

ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The paper presents findings of a quick gender impact assessment (GIA) of the European Union response to Covid19 economic challenges, the EU Recovery Plan “Next Generation EU”. It starts with a review of gender implications of the Covid-19 crisis in the EU, which shows large gender imbalances, increased burden of women in both the labour market, with higher risks of job loss and being exposed to violence and exploitation, and increase in unpaid care work in households. Women serve as a buffer in the crisis.

The gender impact assessment shows that the EU Recovery Plan is largely gender blind: “Next Generation EU leaves women behind”. The large funds, in particular, fail to address the challenges related to the corona crisis in the care sector and the specific challenges for women.

The weak mentioning of gender related issues does in no way mirror the enormous challenges to women and rising gender inequalities due to COVID-19 and the related measures and impacts, and are insufficient to counteract these tendencies.

The paper ends with a set of key recommendations to integrate gender equality in the EU recovery plan. This includes shifting the focus of the recovery and stimulus instruments to include investment in sectors with the highest employment potential in order to use the funds effectively, especially focus on investments in care, the requirement of robust gender equality impact assessments, gender and sex-disaggregated key performance indicators and the application of Gender Budgeting in all funds and instruments of the proposals, and adopting a “Dual Approach”, focusing on both dedicated funding for gender equality and requirements for gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting.

KEY WORDS

European Union, EU-Recovery Plan, Gender Impact Assessment, Care Economy, Care Investment

Gender Implications of Covid-19 Crisis in the European Union.

The social and economic impacts of Covid-19 and of related Government measures issues are highly gendered. The crisis has considerable effects on health, social and economic well-being, especially where women are concerned. First and foremost, women have been leading the health response: women make up the majority of the health care workforce, exposing them to a greater risk of infection. At the same time, women have been shouldering much of the burden at home due to school and childcare facility closures and longstanding gender inequalities in unpaid work. Women are also at greater risk of job and income loss as they are more likely to work in sectors most affected, and face increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment during times of crisis and quarantine.

Many of the negative effects tend to affect the most vulnerable and disadvantaged workers, again with gendered impacts. Migrants, young people and single parents are among those facing the greatest challenges. 80% of care in the EU is provided by informal carers, 75% of whom are women, many of them with migrant backgrounds. Among parents of young children, women are more affected by work-life conflicts resulting from Covid-19, than men. Women with young children have been more considerably impeded from devoting the amount of time they wanted to on their paid work than men.

Changes in unemployment rates do not show the full impacts of the crisis on the labour market; there is strong evidence suggesting that many people drop-out of the labour market, the majority being women.

The unpaid care sector has acted as the first main buffer of the COVID-19 economic lockdown. It is the most resilient sector that keeps society going in any crisis, in which taking care of the daily and generational reproduction is a priority. Following the lockdown, women have taken over a vast amount of public sector work by unpaid care, such as child care, education and health care. Moreover, it assumed a great deal of the market economy with a broad range of online home-based production and services.

Even before the crisis, gender-based violence has been wide-spread within the EU. There is a documented rise in domestic abuse during the times of crisis. As normal life shuts down, victims – who are usually women – can be exposed to abusers for long periods of time and cut off from social and institutional support. For example, there was a 32 % jump in reported domestic violence in France in just over a week, with Lithuania observing 20% more reported domestic violence over a three-week lockdown period than over the same period in 2019. In Cyprus, calls to helplines have increased by 30%.

Women are at greater risk of poverty within the EU, and they are potentially more exposed to material hardships due to the COVID-19 crisis, especially if they are heads of single-parent households. Also, women are under-represented in economic and political leadership positions. The gender imbalance has become far more noticeable during the Covid-19 crisis, especially in bodies assigned to deal with the Covid-19 crisis and design economic stimulus and recovery measures.

Main Results of the Preliminary Gender Impact Assessment

The gender impact assessment of the EU Recovery Plan called “Next Generation EU” shows that the recovery plan is largely gender blind. The large funds, in particular, fail to address the challenges related to the corona crisis in the care sector and the specific challenges for women. The mentioning of gender related issues at the margin does in no way mirror the enormous challenges to women and rising gender inequalities due to Covid-19 and the related measures and impacts, and is insufficient to counteract these tendencies.

There is a general, but not quantified commitment to “measures to support gender equality and non-discrimination” as necessary for a balanced recovery package. This is not reflected in the legislative proposals or in the budget allocations. However, most of the proposed funds do not include reference to gender equality.

The EU Recovery Plan focuses on economic stimuli for sectors with high shares of male employment, for instance the digital, energy, agriculture, construction and transport industries, while many of the sectors highly affected by the corona crisis have high shares of female employment. Thus gender gaps are likely to increase as a consequence of the EU Recovery Plan implementation.

While there is a focus on transformation towards a digital and green economy, the need to focus on a recovery of the care sector is not addressed at all.

Why gender equality must be at the core of recovery

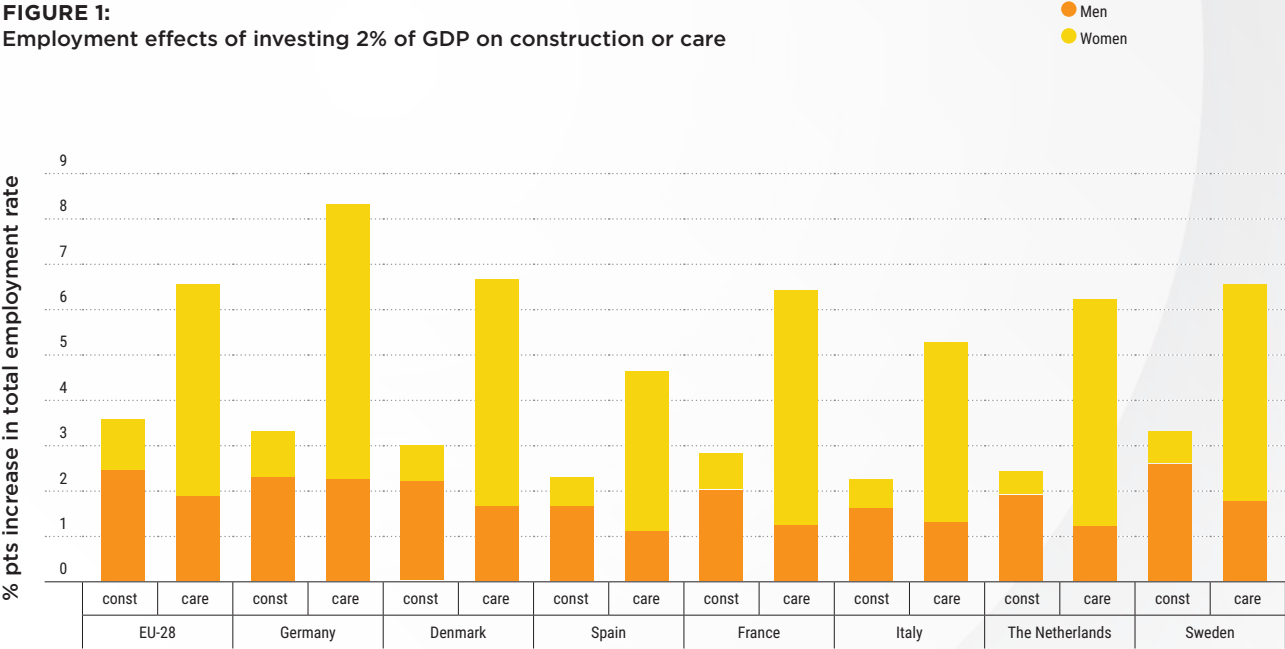
1. Investing in care infrastructure has greater employment stimulus effects

Investing in care infrastructure is an important and more effective way to recovery and employment creation than investment in physical infrastructure. The employment effects of investing in care are at least two times greater than investing in construction. The greater stimulus effects still hold, even where working hours and wages are matched. Investment in care also yields far more employment for women, whose jobs have been most at risk, and is not substantially less beneficial for men. Figure 1 shows the effects of investing 2% of GDP in either construction or care in terms of increases in total employment rate for women and men, for EU-28 and selected countries. For some countries, such as Germany, the total effect of jobs created for men by investing in care is equal to the number of jobs created by investment in construction, while the amount of jobs created for women is 6 times higher. This would decrease the gender employment gap, whereas investment in construction would increase it by creating very few jobs for women.

2. Macroeconomic gains from gender equality

There is growing worldwide evidence of macroeconomic gains from gender equality. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) calculated that the cost of employment loss associated with women's care responsibilities is about EUR 370 billion per year for the EU. Investing in an effective comprehensive gender equality strategy is therefore a strategic investment as half

FIGURE 1:
Employment effects of investing 2% of GDP on construction or care



of the €750 billion recovery instrument could be recovered each year. Moreover, the study shows that investment in gender equality leads to an additional GDP increase of 6.1% to 9.6% by 2050, which would benefit women and men, reducing poverty and inequality, and improving the well-being of all.

The cost to the EU of gender-based violence is estimated to be EUR 259 billion, an annually recurring cost. Investments in ending violence against women will save billions and create a more democratically resilient and human rights-based European Union.

3. Building resilience through gender equality

Building resilience in the European economy through gender equality: investment in care and social innovation is needed to create an enabling environment in which all women and men, in all their diversity, can fully enjoy their fundamental human rights. Combating gender-based violence and promoting gender equality requires investments in public services, health, education and awareness raising, women's economic empowerment, social security and income support, support for the home-based economy, and gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities strategies in all measures proposed by the recovery instrument.

Key recommendations to integrate gender equality in the EU Recovery Plan

Shift the focus of the recovery and stimulus instruments to include investment in sectors with the highest employment potential in order to use the funds effectively.

Include focus on investment in care in the Recovery Plan ("Next Generation EU") in addition to a just digital and green transition, because it not only has highly positive employment and economic recovery effects but also addresses the key challenges towards building truly resilient European economies.

Require robust gender equality impact assessments, gender and sex-disaggregated key performance indicators and the application of Gender Budgeting in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all funds and instruments of the proposals.

National recovery and resilience plans, which are a prerequisite for Member States to receive EU funds, shall include national gender equality plans for recovery and strategies to address gender issues emerging in the crisis, including gender-based and domestic violence.

Adopt a “Dual Approach” throughout the recovery proposals: dedicated funding for gender equality and requirements for gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. This includes setting up specific budget lines for gender equality related areas in the scope of each of the specific instruments.

All governance, management and implementation bodies shall be required to include people with gender equality expertise and to ensure gender balance in their composition. Increase funding to the European Institute of Gender Equality as a main body in the provision of gender equality expertise within European institutions.

Set up a Recovery & Gender Equality Advisory Body – at EU and national levels - to accompany implementation of the Recovery Plan from a gender equality perspective. This body shall be linked to Parliaments with participation of civil society and gender & gender budgeting experts.

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Community resilience, gender equality and GRB in the time of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The concept of resilience continues to grow in influence and prominence in national and international programs seeking to improve individual and collective capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters. This paper examines how gender equality and gender budgeting scholars and professionals are conceptualizing and applying the concept of community resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic. Introducing principles of gender equality in community resilience offers much promise as a guiding paradigm for the promotion of gender responsive risk reduction in the future and for the enabling of recovery through attention to, and investment in, local capacities for adaptation to a changing and uncertain environment with equity and equality in mind. However, there remains work to be done in the clarification of the concept of gender responsive community resilience and in the operationalisation of the mechanisms leading to enhancing such capacity for resilience.

This paper explores three primary questions: (i) how does gender influence the experiences, vulnerabilities, and capacities of men, women, girls, and boys in the face of recurring shocks and stresses and in particular in the face of Covid-19 pandemic; (ii) how will integrating gender, empowering women and girls lead individuals, households, and communities further along the resilience pathway; and (iii) what steps do development actors need to take in order to integrate gender and utilize gender budgeting to address gender inequality in its resilience-focused efforts.

KEY WORDS

Individual Resilience, Community Resilience, Covid-19, Gender Responsive Budgeting, Benefit Finding

Resilience is a complicated term used in many areas of research including ecology, engineering, organizational studies, psychology, family studies, international development studies, and more. In this paper, we follow the definition of the United States Agency for International Development, which defines resilience as the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth (USAID 2012b; pg. 5). Indeed, we view community resilience as a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations, as well as to learn from past experience to strengthen future response and recovery efforts.

Previously often used when speaking about natural disasters the context of community resilience has recently embraced a much wider range of disasters including those man-made/man-induced.

The big questions about disasters are how to prevent them and how to mitigate their effects through pre-disaster preparedness and post-disaster relief, and longer-term recovery aid to vulnerable regions, communities, households and individuals. Much of disaster-related work worldwide has long focused mainly on technical issues such as infrastructure repair and health care provision, whilst social issues, generally recognized as important in disaster relief, were often not a top priority in the essentials. Within the category of social issues, gender specific needs and capabilities were even more neglected by planners and relief providers (Fothergill 1996), in spite of growing knowledge about the critical importance of a gender-specific approach to both prevention and relief.

So much has however changed in such a short time. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, tens of thousands of people worldwide are testing positive for the virus daily. Most of the world is self-isolating at home. Large sectors of the economy have grounded to a halt and politicians are currently debating how best to spend trillions of dollars to combat the global pandemic and to support the economy in what is considered the worst economic crisis since the great depression. Surprisingly (and maybe predictably enough), however, the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent economic crisis have presented a massive opportunity for those of us who have been or are currently engaged in building national/local community resilience. In fact, many groups have already been taking inspiring and meaningful actions to counter the economic, social, and health impacts of COVID-19: scaling up efforts to teach people how to grow their own food, banding together to provide local investment for struggling local businesses, organizing mutual aid networks, and advocating for a “green stimulus” (Hall 2020). These efforts have to be celebrated, supported, and replicated throughout the globe. Many more should be developed to help meet skyrocketing needs.

Community resilience is about people, health, social, and economic systems. Moreover, it is about communities’ ability and need to steward their own assets, resources and connections. Finally, it

is about creating a shared culture, inclusive sense of space and networking to enhance the ability of individuals and of the public in general to respond to and to survive crises, whatever they might be.

Gender as a social ‘stratifier’ – similar to race, class, age, and religion – influences individuals’ and communities’ capacity to cope with and recover from disasters, and therefore, focusing on gender, enables important insights into individual vulnerabilities during disaster situations as dictated by social roles and dynamics. Failing to act upon these insights will set the scene for social unrest and long-term economic depression.

Globally, women are more vulnerable to economic shocks wrought by crises such as the coronavirus pandemic. As the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic roll through economies, reducing employment opportunities and triggering layoffs, temporary workers – the majority of whom are women – are expected to bear the heaviest brunt of job losses. Preparation, mitigation and prevention planning in response to the pandemic must not be gender blind, or else women will carry a disproportionately higher economic cost than men. The following issues have to be taken into consideration if indeed differences between genders in the ability to draw on resilience capacities should be capitalized on to strengthen household and community resilience:

- Safety nets not wide enough - Many women will not be rescued by social safety nets as access to those frequently depends upon a formal participation in the labour force. Since women frequently work without clear terms of employment, they are often not entitled to reliable social protection such as health insurance, paid sick and maternity leave, pensions and unemployment benefits;
- Service sector reeling under restrictions - Since 55% of women are employed in the service sector (in comparison with 44% of men), they are more likely to be adversely affected. Moreover, female-dominated service sectors such as food, hospitality and tourism are among those expected to feel the harshest economic effects of the lockdown measures;

- Limited access to credit - Women entrepreneurs are often discriminated against when attempting to access credit. This will be a challenge as credit will be of paramount importance in the survival of firms. Without open and favourable lines of credit, many female entrepreneurs will be forced to close their businesses;
- More work, no pay - Women's unpaid work is set to increase. Women remain responsible for the lion's share of domestic chores and care work. Measures to contain the pandemic such as quarantines and closures of schools imply additional household work and responsibility;
- Safeguard gender progress - As governments take steps to address the economic and social effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, they should not let it reverse the gender equality progress achieved in recent decades.

Integrating gender into resilience implies a coordinated approach to strategic planning, program design, monitoring, and evaluation and learning and more importantly allocating budgets for gender equality. Lack of doing so can result in unintended negative consequences in particular in the current circumstances.

A gender-blind approach to fiscal stimulus has so far resulted in an inefficient allocation of resources; furthermore it risks exacerbating existing inequities. These two aspects, which apply in times of prosperity, are even more pronounced in times of crisis. If governments were to apply GRB principles in deciding on actions funded either in the context of this emergency or with reprioritized funds, they might prevent the long-lasting consequences of gender-blind budget decisions that can lead to an increase in care burden on women, loss of child care, loss of economic stability and increased violence against women. In each and every response, we should be cognizant that COVID-19 highlights the multiple and interrelated levels of inequality that shape vulnerability to the infection itself and to the personal, social, and economic impact of the crisis.

Following are just some of the gender issues decision-makers should carefully examine when developing new financial policies and measures:

- Unemployment and underemployment - Social distancing and lockdown measures have impacted nearly 81% of the world's labour force. We know that women are more likely than men to lose their jobs during this crisis. In the UK, for example, lower-paid, female, and young workers are seven times more likely to work in sectors that have shut down to contain the spread of the virus (Close the Gap 2020);
- Wages and access to social protections - For entrenched structural reasons, women earn 16% less than men (global average). Some countries have pay gaps of up to 35% and in the US, home to the world's largest economy, the gender pay gap is around 18%. Moreover, women represent less than 40% of total global employment but represent 57% of part-time workers (workers whose jobs are among the first to be cut in times of economic crisis). Earning less, saving less, and holding less stable jobs reduces women's ability to absorb the economic aftershocks of COVID-19 (Ortiz-Ospina 2018);
- Health work - Globally, 75-80% of healthcare workers are female. Despite being a majority within the health workforce, only a minority hold leadership positions, leaving many of their needs unmet, from planning interventions to shifts, for example. When planning a fiscal measure for health workers, women's representation and participation is essential to ensure informed measures;
- More caregiving and housework - Under business-as-usual scenarios, women and girls do more than their fair share of unpaid care work, but in a pandemic situation, this is multiplied. COVID-19 patients, self-isolating people, and children who remain at home all need care. All this "looking after" – unpaid caring labour – falls more heavily on women because of the existing patterns at household and workforce level. Measures such as lockdown and self-isolation are in the immediate term increasing (mainly) women's care burden. Fiscal and

financial measures must be put in place to ensure women will not be trapped in unpaid work when the immediate crisis is over. New grant schemes funded through Government need to take into account the “economy of care”;

- Outsized effects on the most vulnerable (namely women) and more economic stress - As the Ebola virus has demonstrated in the past and as the Covid-19 pandemic shows, quarantine measures dramatically weaken women’s economic ability, thus increasing their poverty rates and the severity of food insecurity. In past instances, while economic activity bounced back quickly for men, economic insecurity lingered much longer for women. As women absorb more unpaid care responsibilities, they may begin to sacrifice income. Work interruptions and stoppages due to the Coronavirus, whether a result of layoffs or of having to care for family members, will highly impact women. Lost hours translate to greater economic insecurity. Women tend to work in lower paid sectors and are often unregistered, so emergency financial measures must include also those without formal contracts to ensure that their livelihoods are safeguarded (UN Women 2020);
- Increase in gender-based violence - Under “normal” circumstances, UN Women reports 137 women are killed every day by a member of their family. Research has shown how disaster situations often lead to an increase in gender-based violence as households come under economic, psychological and health-related strain – being confined to the same space certainly does not help the situation. The increased rates of violence must also be weighed against service interruptions and school and work closures. For example, shelters for women fleeing violence may be particularly concerned about their capacity to keep their doors open in the wake of the Coronavirus (UN Women 2020);

These are just a few examples of the already existing inequalities that are being amplified during this crisis and that will deepen further if governments neglect the gender dimension

when preparing fiscal and financial responses to COVID-19. Any effort to mitigate the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic without the gender lens will dilute its overall efficacy.

Post Covid-19 Word: Creating a gender-equal future?!

- An opportunity to implement changes that could protect women from bearing the heaviest brunt of shocks like these in the future;
- Improved education and training opportunities for women to facilitate the shift from precarious jobs to more stable and better-protected employment;
- Gender-responsive trade policies to open new opportunities to women as employees and entrepreneurs;
- Broader provision of social services to lift women's care burden and give them more time for paid jobs and leisure;
- Flexible work arrangements (put in place in response to the pandemic) should continue beyond it and provide a new model of shared responsibilities within households;
- Our ability to bounce back from COVID-19 is dependent on how we include everyone equally. If more women take part in shaping a new social and economic order, chances are that it will be more responsive to everyone's needs and make us all more resilient to future shocks.

The GRB community, including practitioners, academics and budget-watching NGOs, is engaged to raise these concerns now when COVID-19 responses are being prepared. We are hopeful that the financial community is listening because gender budgeting not only accelerates and fortifies economic recovery, but it also fast-tracks communities at large to an equitable and more resilient world.

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GRB in the Republic of Serbia

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

The following article is an overview of the key elements of the GRB in the Republic of Serbia. The key characteristics of the GRB in Serbia are: it is a mandatory by the organic budget law for all budget users at all levels including national, provincial, and municipal level; gender equality is defined as one of the objectives of the entire budget system; GRB is embedded into program based budgeting and since 2015 has been gradually introduced based on MoF annual GRB plan as defined by the Law and followed by continuous capacity building; GRB methodology was developed and tested and it represents a 3-steps approach in setting of GRB objectives (gender aspects of budget users ‘functions + sectoral financing priorities +gender aspects of sectoral policies’); budget circular includes guidelines on how to apply GRB; software for budget planning at the provincial level has integrated GRB while at the national level is still in the process of changes; annual progress on GRB in Serbia has been tracked and described in the annual GRB progress reports published on the Government website. State Audit Institution in a regular annual audit is checking if institutions are implementing GRB, representing another strong element of sustainability of GRB in Serbia. So far achievements are indicating that it is a good practice in the implementation of the GRB into public finance management.

However, in order to see more substantial budget restructuring and reallocations to tackle gender gaps the following remains to be done: overall improvement of the policy planning across all budget users and strengthening of the program based budgeting; integrating a gender perspective into all sectoral policy priorities, and the strengthening of external demand for GRB among civil society organizations and the Parliament.

KEY WORDS

GRB mandated by the organic budget law, gradual process of GRB introduction, gender equality one of the objectives of the budget system.

GRB as a part of budget system in the Republic of Serbia

Inequalities in society are a structural and complex problem and as such require a structural response. It requires commitment and resources on a continuous basis, but also simultaneous action that goes beyond a single line ministry. Coordinated activity involving multiple sectors at a time is needed. GRB is recognized as a way to align the priorities that will contribute to the achievement of gender equality with the priorities in different sectors. This can only be done if the gender perspective is systematically incorporated into the policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. With the incorporation of GRB tool within the public finance management where the actual budget is a result of complex planning process gender mainstreaming realizes more successfully.

The experience of Serbia shows that good basis to tackle complex gender gaps are if gender considerations are mainstreamed in the Budget System Law; if gender responsive budgeting

is supported by the Ministry of Finance, the Institutional Gender Equality Mechanisms and the Parliament; and if technical support to budget users is available. The change needs to be gradual and incremental, leading to sustainable results even if new budget users are added each year. Providers of technical support must have a gender background, and be able to understand the theoretical underpinnings of gender responsive budgeting (GRB), but also translate them into practice, offer clear guidance and provide practical advice to civil servants.¹⁰ In addition, they also need to have an excellent understanding of the budget planning process; policy planning and program based budgeting.

GRB in the Organic Budget Law

Serbian Government has formally introduced GRB with the adoption of the new Budget System Law in 2015, thus implying a gradual reform that is to be fully implemented by fiscal year 2021.

GRB definition, Budget System Law, Article 2, 58v: Gender responsive budgeting entails gender mainstreaming in the budget process, including gender analysis of the budget and restructuring of income and expenditures in order to advance gender equality.

Budget objectives, Budget System Law, Article 4: Budget system should achieve the following: 4) efficient allocation of budget resources with the objective of advancing gender equality.

The key steps in the implementation of GRB

- Annual GRB Plan, by March 31st and Instructions
- Technical Assistance to Budget Users
- Budget Circular

10. GRB in the Republic of Serbia <https://www.rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs/sites/default/files/2020-10/ROB%20pramflet%202019.pdf>

- Budget Preparation
- Budget Adoption
- Progress Report on GRB – on what has been adopted in the budget
- Analysis of GRB in Budget Execution Report

Key actors

- The Coordination Body for Gender Equality
- The Ministry of Finance
- The Provincial Secretariat of Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality
- The Provincial Secretariat of Finance
- The Women's Parliamentary Network, the National Parliament
- The Women's Parliamentary Network, the Assembly of the APV
- Local women's civil society organizations and gender experts
- UN Women

Challenges

- Full Institutionalization of GRB;
- Insufficient capacities for monitoring and evaluation;
- Lack of sex disaggregated data in some sectors

Illustrative examples of GRB in the 2020 budget

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY plans to produce a monograph “Women inventors in Serbia in 1920-2020”, which is of great importance to the increase in visibility and contribution of women to a segment that is important for the development of the economy and society. Also, the budget user plans within the long-term transformative goal activities to close the gender gap that exists in the field of intellectual property protection.

OFFICE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE contributed to accessibility by sounding documents on the Government’s Internet portal. This example of applying GRB is good because it shows that GRB as a tool can be targeted at closing the gap in access to public services by strengthening accessibility for those groups of women and men whose needs are not met by the usual way of providing the service. So the same goal – to keep citizens informed – is achieved in different ways for different groups. This example also shows how GRB contributes to the implementation of recommendations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the National action plan for gender equality in the part related to multiple discrimination and vulnerable groups.

THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT DIRECTORATE has kept pace with the European good practice through the expressed intention to contribute to gender equality in the field of public procurement. Through gender analysis, this budget user has recognized that public procurement is not used to the same extent by companies of different sizes and owned by women, that is, men, as a resource for private sector development. That is why they introduced GRB objective: improved gender equality in the field of public procurement as a gender transformative goal. Respecting the principles of equality, non-discrimination, transparency, competition and a unified basis, this budget user will begin to monitor the level of participation of women-owned enterprises in the total number of those concluding contracts.

THE MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE is working on improving the condition and accessibility of railway infrastructure to women, men, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. This budget user has established an important practice of measuring the satisfaction of railway service users.

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At present available only in Serbian.
3. The information about GRB in Serbian and English is available at:
<https://serbia.un.org/en/11839-gender-responsive-budgeting>

GRB in the Western Balkans

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ABSTRACT (SUMMARY)

This paper seeks to examine different success factors behind a relatively consistent commitment by Western Balkan countries to implementation of gender responsive budgeting. As a region, the Western Balkans has a very strong legal basis for activities seeking to advance gender equality. In addition, Albania and Serbia have anchored GRB in organic budget laws. Finally, availability of national GRB expertise as well as consistent support by UN Women over the last decade are all found to contribute to a streamlined process of GRB implementation. Notwithstanding the early success, the region's investment in gender equality will remain fragile and insufficient until a transformative role of GRB is fully implemented and GRB and budget oversight are strengthened.

KEY WORDS

Gender responsive budgeting (GRB), budget, public finance management, Western Balkans

Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Western Balkans – a success story in the making?

Gender responsive budgeting has taken root in the Western Balkans over the past 10-15 years. This thesis seeks to present the different solutions that are implemented by the following Western Balkan countries and territories: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹¹, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. It further seeks to shed light on proven solutions that deliver results in a given context in order to serve as inspiration for adaptation in other contexts.

11. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

The principle of adequate financing for gender equality is rooted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA)¹². The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030¹³ also calls for a significant increase in investment to close the gender gap. In addition to BDPFA and SDGs that the Western Balkan countries are committed to, they have all ratified relevant international conventions, including The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)¹⁴ and the Istanbul Convention¹⁵. Based on the experiences in implementation of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in the Western Balkans region, this relatively novel tool is increasingly taking place of the principle tool to help bridge the glaring gaps between de jure commitment to gender equality and the de facto commitment that is felt through improvements in the quality of daily life. Furthermore, there is a growing body of evidence that GRB in the Western Balkans is leading to increased investment in gender equality as well as to integration of a gender perspective throughout the budget process.

However, the experience in GRB implementation in the Western Balkans also serves to prove that public finance management reforms – and GRB is no exception – take time and that institutionalization of GRB depends on a variety of factors. Thus, further efforts are needed by Western Balkan societies in order to fully stabilize and institutionalize gender mainstreaming in budgets at all levels.

Main features of GRB implementation in the Western Balkans

Strong legal and strategic basis for equality protection and antidiscrimination. All Western Balkan countries and territories have a strong legal and strategic framework supporting gender equality, stemming from constitutional commitments to equality protection.

12. P. 345 and 346 1995 https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf

13. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

14. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

15. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home?>

In **Albania** the Law on Gender Equality in Society¹⁶, the Law on Protection from Discrimination¹⁷ and the National Strategy on Gender Equality¹⁸ serve as guiding documents in this area. Furthermore, gender equality is a core principle in the Law on Organic Budget¹⁹ since 2016. In addition, the approval of Law on Local Government Finances served as a basis for GRB inclusion in budget programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Law on Gender Equality²⁰ and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2018-2022²¹ serve as basis for GRB implementation as GRB is referred to in the latter document as a key measure that cuts across the GAP.

In **Kosovo**, one of the most progressive Laws on Gender Equality²² in the region refers to Gender responsive Budgeting as ‘the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the budgetary process. This means the valorization of budgets from the viewpoint of gender, in which case the gender is taken into account at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring incomes and expenditures with the aim of promoting the equality of women and men²³’

Montenegro has a Law on Gender Equality²⁴ and an Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality for 2017-2021, with the Implementation Program for 2017-2018²⁵. In the section on mechanisms

16. (No. 9970/24.07.2008)

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20. <https://arsbih.gov.ba/english/law-on-gender-equality-in-b-h/>

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22. https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Annex-LAW_NO_05_L-020_ON_GENDER_EQUALITY.pdf

23. Article 3, Definitions

24. <https://www.legislationline.org/topics/country/57/topic/7>

25. <http://www.mmp.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=285226&rType=2&file=Action%20Plan%20for%20Achieving%20Gender%20Equality%20APAGE%202017-2021.pdf%20>

to achieve gender equality at the local level, the document acknowledges that ‘Municipalities of Tivat, Bar, Budva, Berane, Herceg Novi and Pljevlja recognized the importance of gender budgeting within their budget, and allocated special funds for implementing their local action plans’²⁶.

In **North Macedonia**, a *lex specialis*, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men²⁷ stipulates in Article 11 that ‘The state administrative bodies shall be obliged, within the framework of their strategic plans and budget, to incorporate the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, to monitor the effects and the impact of their programs on women and men, and to provide information within their annual reports.’ A similar clause is included in Article 14 pertaining to local governments. The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2013-2020²⁸ refers to gender mainstreaming of policies and financial instruments.

In **Serbia**, the Law on Equality between sexes²⁹, Law on Prohibition of Discrimination³⁰ and the National Strategy for Gender Equality for 2016-2020³¹ serve as the framework. The latter document supports GRB introduction as key to strategy implementation. However, the strongest basis for GRB lies in the Law on the budget system³² adopted in 2015. Article 2 of the Law defines GRB as integration of gender perspective in the budget process, which implies gender budget analysis and restructuring of income and expenditure in order to advance gender equality. Furthermore, Article 4. Budget objectives, stipulates that gender allocation efficiency includes distribution of budget resources with the objective to advance gender equality. A gradual and progressive GRB

26. Ibid, p.24

27. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/44b26f664.pdf>

28. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/commitments/fyr-macedonia>

29. Law on Equality between Sexes, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 104/2009

30. (“Official Gazette RS”, No. 22/2009)

31. National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020 with the Plan of Action for the Implementation for 2016-2018, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 4/2016; Available online: http://socijalnouljuducivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/strategija-rodna_ravnopravnost190_cyr.zip

32. Official gazette number 54/09, 73/10, 101/10, 101/11, 93/12, 62/13, 63/13 – amended 108/13

introduction is foreseen in the period from 2016 to 2021. GRB is mandatory across the entire Budget System at the national, provincial and municipal levels. In Article 79, the Law specifies obligations regarding budget execution reporting. Semi-annual and annual reports must include information on progress/regress against targets set for indicators at program, programme activity and project levels, including for GRB objectives and indicators. Deviance from targets must be justified.

Overview of status of GRB implementation in the Western Balkans.

According to a recent Report³³, Albania has adopted the Decision No. 465 on the Introduction of Gender Mainstreaming in the Medium-Term Budget Program.³⁴ It draws its legal basis from the Law on Management of the Budgetary Systems,³⁵ and establishes the steps for the preparation of gender-sensitive Medium-Term Budget Program.³⁶ Based on it, in 2013, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Youth issued an Instruction No. 21 on procedures for integrating gender in the Medium Term Budget Program,³⁷ ensuring that the 2016-2018 budget includes gender in selected programs³⁸. Planned budget allocations contributing to gender equality can be assessed, but the actual budget execution cannot, at this point.³⁹ GRB is incorporated in the

33. Report of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network Delivering on S D G Indicator 5 C.1 in the Western Balkans and Republic of Moldova, Dr M. Risteska, et al, May 2020, supported by Austrian Development Cooperation and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

34. Decision no. 465, of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on the Introduction of Gender Mainstreaming in the Medium Term Budget Program May http://www.financa.gov.al/files/userfiles/Buxheti/Udhezime/Udhezime_per_buxhetin/Buxhetimi_Pergjigjshem_Gjinor_ne_PBA/Buxhetimi_Pergjigjshem_Gjinor_ne_PBA.pdf

35. Law No.9936, Law on Management of the Budgetary Systems <https://albaniaenergy.org/onewebmedia/ACERC%20Law%200004.pdf>

36. The actions include: i) the identification of gender equality objectives with targeted outcomes and indicators; ii) the setting of gender equality criteria for the distribution of Regional Development Funds; ii) the alignment of gender budgeting with the National Strategy on Gender Equality; iv) identification of the Ministerial responsibilities for implementation, and v) provides for a strategy to roll out gender budgeting across all line ministries by 2013. .Points, 1,2,3,4,5, Decision no. 465, of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania on the Introduction of Gender Mainstreaming in the Medium Term Budget Program http://www.financa.gov.al/files/userfiles/Buxheti/Udhezime/Udhezime_per_buxhetin/Buxhetimi_Pergjigjshem_Gjinor_ne_PBA/Buxhetimi_Pergjigjshem_Gjinor_ne_PBA.pdf

37. Instruction no. 21 on procedures for integrating gender in Medium Term Budget Program http://www.financa.gov.al/files/userfiles/Buxheti/Udhezime/Udhezime_per_buxhetin/Buxhetimi_Pergjigjshem_Gjinor_ne_PBA/Buxhetimi_Pergjigjshem_Gjinor_ne_PBA.pdf

38. According to the Ministry of Finance, in the MTBP of 2016-2018, 19 programs were prepared in compliance with this instruction Gentian Opre, Director of Budget Analysis and Programming Department General Directorate of Budget Ministry of Finance

39. According to the UN Women, GRB programmes in the MTBP 2016-2018 amount to \$ 61,534,4001. Eleven (11) Ministries are engaging in GRB, with the Ministry of Justice accounting for 36,1%, while Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration for only 1,4%, Dolly Wittberger Gender Expert Un Women Albania; Personal Interview

medium-term budget program at the local level. Financial Law 68/2017 for Local Government⁴⁰ stipulates that the medium-term budgeting program objectives ought to address gender gaps and ensure full respect for gender equality. Outcomes are measured by gender responsive indicators. Reporting requirements specify that the portion of budget expenditure on gender responsive policies ought to be reported as a share of total spending⁴¹. Equally, the law instructs local governments to consult with the stakeholders when developing their budget proposals. The Medium-Term Budget Program for 2019-2021 includes 33 budget programs with 52 gender responsive objectives and outputs. The total investment from the budget in gender equality amounts to USD 298 million or 6.30% of budget expenditures. Albania is the only Western Balkan country that is currently able to accurately report on total value of GRB investment.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (BiH), Decision of the Government of Federation of Bosnian and Herzegovina⁴² and Decision of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of BiH on application of the Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina guide the work. The Ministry of Finance budgetary instructions give guidelines for GRB integration in budget planning. GRB is implemented at national, entity and local levels. Gender mechanisms⁴³ at national and entity levels work with respective Finance Ministries⁴⁴ on GRB implementation. Government of the Republic of Serbia launched GRB implementation in 2012. In 2000, Agreement on Joint Financing was signed by the Council of Ministers of BiH and a group of donors. This agreement is titled the Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan of BiH (FIGAP Program). Therefore, gender actions tend to be co-funded by external sources. The Budget for FIGAP II program in

40. Law No.68/2017 on the Finance of local self-government, Article 36, point C <http://www.qbz.gov.al/Ligje.pdf/qeverisja%20vendore/LIGJ%20nr.%2068,%20date%2027.4.2017.pdf>

41. Ibid, Article 5

42. No 547/2016 ("Official Gazette of F BiH", no: 19/16)

43. Agency for Gender Equality Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gender centre of the Government of RS and FBosnia and Herzegovina Gender Centre

44. Ministry of Finance and Treasury Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Finance RS and Ministry of Finance FBosnia and Herzegovina

2019, was KM 749.222,50. Of that amount, KM 299.690,50 was for the Gender Action Plan implementation. FIGAP II program in 2019 spent KM 458.479 (EUR 234.416)⁴⁵.

In **Kosovo**, GRB is part of budget planning at central and local levels. Law on Gender Equality calls for 'inclusion of gender budgeting in all areas, as a necessary tool to guarantee that the principle of gender equality is respected in collecting, distribution and allocation of resources'⁴⁶. The Ministry of Finance Budget circulars encouraging institutions to adhere to GRB⁴⁷ but this is not mandatory and commitment varies. Still, in 2019, 29 out of 38 (76%) local level budgets and 29 central level budget users out of 48 (60%) included GRB⁴⁸.

There is no formal requirement for inclusion of GRB in **Montenegro**. Still, there is an informal initiative by Women's Political Network to support GRB implementation at the local level by pointing at specific gender gaps and funding initiatives. In 2019, a total of Euro 220.000 was set aside for gender equality objectives. This is under 1% of total budget expenditures.

In **North Macedonia**, GRB implementation started since 2008 with UN Women support to pilot initiatives. The GRB institutionalization was guided by the Strategy for gender responsive budgeting (SGRB)⁴⁹ that expired in 2018. The budget circulars for central level budget users and local level budget users include gender considerations in budget analysis of revenues and expenditures. Gender indicators are also required by the budget circular and there is a mandatory reporting on budget execution, including gender disaggregated data.⁵⁰ At the local

45. Budget execution 2019. Source of data: Report of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network Delivering on S D G Indicator 5 C.1 in the Western Balkans and Republic of Moldova, Dr M. Risteska, et al, May 2020, supported by Austrian Development Cooperation and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency https://mft.gov.ba/bos/images/stories/budzet/izvrsenje/2020/januar/Izvestaj_o_izvrsenju_Budzeta_institucija_BiH_I_medj.obaveza_BiH_za_I-IX_2019._bosanski.pdf

46. Article 5 (1.5). Law No.05/L-020 Gender Equality (Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo no.16/26) <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10923>

47. Budget circular <http://mf.rks-gov.net/en-us/Reports/Reports-and-Publications/Budget-Circular>

48. MOF response to free access to information request from Kosovo Women Network, June, 2020

49. Strategy for introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Republic of Macedonia (2012-2017), available online: http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/strategija_eng_rob.doc

50. The method was developed in cooperation with UNWOMEN and is called "Budget statements".

level, 55 programs were gender mainstreamed in 2019. The planned gendered expenditures were 0.10% of the total budget expenditures in the 2019 budget⁵¹. Ambition of Western Balkan countries to excel in GRB is also reflected in the initiative to establish a GRB Center for Excellence in North Macedonia. Thus, good examples and best practices, as well as resource materials will be publicly available once the Center develops into a regional hub, based on UN Women model of Knowledge Hubs on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting⁵².

Serbia has developed a specific and unified approach to GRB implementation that starts with gender budget analysis, then moves to intersection of gender aspects with institutions' mandates, respective sectoral policy priorities, and priorities of the gender agenda in order to identify GRB objectives in all sectors and at all levels. This is supported by the requirements in the Budget System Law as well as the Law on Planning System⁵³ which introduce mandatory ex post gender impact analysis of all planning documents⁵⁴. It is also quite unique in the region at this stage that the State Audit Institution verifies alignment with the GRB implementation requirements as part of its audit methodology. In the budget for 2019, 40 (75%) national institutions and 18 (69%) provincial institutions implemented GRB. In 2020, 41 (77%) national and 25 (96%) provincial institutions did so, along with roughly 50% of local governments⁵⁵. Serbia implements the system of 'traffic lights' to assess contribution of gender responsive budget interventions to gender equality:

51. https://finance.gov.mk/files/u6/BUDZET_2019_%28SL_%29_VESNIK%29_ZA_OBJAVUVANJE_0.pdf

52. GRB Regional Centers of Excellence: Knowledge Hubs on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting/UN Women <https://gender-financing.unwomen.org/en/highlights/grb-centers-of-excellence>

53. ("Official Gazette RS", No. 30/2018)

54. Ex - post assessment of public policies is defined in the article 40 of the Planning System Law: as the evaluation of the effects of public policies, i.e. assesses the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of public policy

55. No precise data regarding overall local government implementation of GRB are available but the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities would have more details in this regard

FIGURE 1.
Traffic lights – Scale of contribution to gender equality

Scale	Explanation
GENDER NEGATIVE INTERVENTIONS	Gender based inequalities are invested in streightened or sustained through attainment of programme/project/measure objectives. (Examples: discontinuation of public transport has a negative effect on women who need to work outside of residence during the pandemic)
GENDER NEUTRAL INTERVENTIONS	In intervention planning, gender is not taken into account and it is deemed irrelevant for attainment of objectives. (Example: reporting on number of persons who have contracted COVID-19 as proven by test, number of persons on ventilators, lethality, fatalities, number of violations of ban on mobility and other information without gender disaggregation (i.e. disaggregation by sex, age, municipality and otherelevant variables).)
GENDER SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS	Gender is considered as an important variable in attaining intervention objective and data are, at least partially, available disaggregated by sex (Example: support to economic resilience of micro and small enterprises)
GENDER POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS	Gender is considered key in attaining intervention objectives and gender analysis constitutes one of the main parameters in planning and decision making. (Example: measures to address GBV in circumstances of COVID-19, designed in consultation with women's groups)
GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE INTERVENTIONS	Interventions tackle root of gender gap. Transformation is systemic aand sustainable. (Example: gender responsive resource allocation during and after COVID-19 response, gender responsive fiscal policy: initiatives and policies to increase balanced distribution of unpaid work.)

All GRB related documents, five Annual Progress Reports, GRB Execution Report and other resource documents are publicly available at rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs.

Conclusions

To a great extent owing to a consistent support by UN Women as well as an authentic women’s movement that has given way to emergence of local GRB expertise, GRB in the Western Balkans is making its way in the public finance management reform. In 2020, UN Women engaged in implementation of a regional project “Transformative Financing for Gender Equality towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans” (2020-2024). This will

further boost GRB penetration in budget and policy planning, implementation and monitoring. Continuing regional exchanges within the GRB community of practice will help to sharpen up the approaches through identification of best practice examples.

Whereas GRB pilot initiatives have started in civil society, there was a hiatus in civil society inclusion in 'official' or institutional GRB initiatives, especially at the national level. Now, civil society actors are getting increasingly involved in gender budget watchdog initiatives. This should serve as an impetus for an improved quality and increased investment in gender equality.

A stronger parliamentary budget oversight, including GRB could further reinvigorate decision makers' readiness to move forward in GRB implementation towards sufficient funding to close gender gaps that are documented by very strong factual evidence.

When Ministries of Finance and national gender equality machineries join forces in guiding GRB implementation, solid results can be attained over a relatively short period of time in terms of GRB penetration throughout the budget and policy making cycles. However, GRB in the Western Balkans suffers from the same flaws that affect broader decision-making processes regarding budgets and other policies.

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