



NATIONS UNIES  
COMMISSION ÉCONOMIQUE  
POUR L'EUROPE

ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫЕ НАЦИИ  
ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ  
ДЛЯ ЕВРОПЫ

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION  
FOR EUROPE

*Background Paper V*

# ***Gender Responsive Budgets: issues, good practices and policy options***

*By Elisabeth Villagomez*

*Senior Consultant*

*Almera Estdios Economicos y Sociales S.L.*

***Regional Symposium on Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies***

*28-30 January 2004*

*Room VII - Palais des Nations, Geneva*

*The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.*

The author would like to acknowledge the following persons and institutions who provided valuable input into the description of different country examples provided in this note: Nisreen Alami, Programme Specialist, UNIFEM; Ana Alberdi, Project Manager, EMAKUNDE, Basque Country, Spain; Annalissa Roselli, Università di Roma Tor Vegata, Italy; Kate Bellamy, Project Officer, UK Women's Budget Group; Suzanne Cooper Information and Research Analyst, Gender-based Analysis Directorate, Status of Women Canada; Julia Romero, Delegación de Igualdad, Diputación de Córdoba; and Isabella Bakker of York University, Canada; Nathalie Holvoet, Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Introduction.....	4
1. Key issues and challenges.....	4
Location .....	5
Scope or Coverage .....	6
Budget cycle.....	7
2. Experiences in the ECE region and other experiences .....	10
United Kingdom.....	10
Sweden .....	11
Canada.....	12
United States of America .....	13
France.....	14
Spain .....	15
Italy .....	16
Russia.....	16
Belgium.....	18
Other on-going initiatives in the ECE region .....	19
South Africa .....	19
Ecuador .....	21
International Organisations.....	21
3. Challenges and policy implications .....	22
4. Institutional processes, mechanisms and tools.....	24
References and Bibliography .....	28
WEB Resources .....	30
<b>ANNEX 1</b> .....	<b>31</b>

## Introduction

The main purpose of this note is to provide an overview of key issues and policy options based on lessons and good practices of experiences where a gender perspective of budgets has been introduced and which are relevant to ECE member countries.

This note looks first at the main issues and challenges surrounding the application of gender responsive budgeting including its definition, location (*national budgets; special programmes; local authorities, specific policies, and actors involved*), the issues addressed (*e.g. health care, fiscal policies, social expenditure etc*), and where it can be applied in terms of the budget cycle (*planning, audit and evaluation*). The following section makes a brief review of the on-going initiatives based on an in-depth analysis of initiatives in specific areas of introducing a gender perspective into the budget in a selected number of ECE member countries. However, good practices from the most successful initiatives in few developing countries are also included. Next, a more systematic discussion of lessons learned and policy options is presented, which could serve as a guideline for new initiatives in ECE member countries. Finally, institutional processes, mechanisms and tools are reviewed focusing on processes for launching and managing the process of introducing a gender perspective into the budget.

It should be added that gender sensitive budgeting is a tool that deals directly with the responsibility of governments to international commitments to women, namely **equality** in the distribution, access and funding of public resources contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and United Nations World Conference on Women (Beijing platform and Beijing+5). It is also a tool that can be used to achieve other government objectives such as **transparency** and **efficiency**, but also addresses **accountability** as international and national commitments to human rights instruments are fulfilled at the same time that it can work towards consolidating the effectiveness of public policies and economic growth by reducing inequalities in the distribution and the impact of public resources. It is in fact a tool for effectively mainstreaming gender into almost every aspect of economic and social policy by governments and for ensuring that the adequate budgetary provisions are made.

### 1. Key issues and challenges

The growing recognition that macroeconomic policy plays an important role in the outcomes affecting living standards and economic opportunities for the population in general and women in particular is behind the economic rationale for introducing a gender perspective into budgets. There are costs associated with lower output, reduced development of people's capacities, less leisure and diminished well-being when macroeconomic policy, through its different instruments, increases inequalities instead of reducing them (Elson, 2002a). Increasing the possibilities for those who experience inequalities to have access to resources and opportunities has, consequently, positive economic effects. This can be applied to women as well as to other sectors of the population that endure inequalities. Given the importance of the budget as the key macroeconomic policy document and main policy executing tool by governments, **both**

**expenditures and revenues (fiscal policy) as well as the instruments used for each are the focus of attention when introducing a gender perspective into the budget<sup>1</sup>.**

Moreover, it is important to note that as such, socially determined gender roles in any given society as well as the different responsibilities and competences that are derived from these have been largely ignored in policy proposals and in their implementation in general. Conscious changes to these roles because they are regarded as unfair or as economically inefficient can be achieved through the use of specific policies which are usually associated with those achieving gender equality. Thus, both **gender responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming are complementary tools that can achieve the equality objective.**

The term “Gender responsive budgeting”, “Gender Budgets”, “Women’s budgets” and “Budget statements for women” refer to a great variety of processes and tools which aim to enable impact evaluation of government budgets in gender terms. During the evolution of these processes, efforts have been focused on auditing government budgets in order to determine its impacts on women and girls differentiated from men and boys. In these appraisals not only expenditure (including transfers such as pensions, family benefits, etc.) is covered, but also income or revenue of government (taxes, prices of public goods including privatised goods, tariffs, etc.) Following the use by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Development Research Centre of Canada and others, the term Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) will be used here to refer to these processes and tools. In the following pages the issues of location, scope, and budget process or cycle of the budget are addressed in terms of applying GRB and a number of arguments are given as to the importance that mainstreaming gender into the budgetary process has as well as pointing to the key challenges to the introduction of GRB initiatives.

### *Location*

A review of what has been done to date and of the on-going initiatives around the world points to a variety of levels where the process of GRB can be located at. Thus national, regional and local budgets are the subject of analysis depending on the political structures of countries and the geographical areas that the budgets cover. In this respect **decentralisation** processes are extremely important to understand and track the different competencies of government that are devolved or transferred to lower levels of government and which have a direct impact on the distribution of resources as well as on revenue collection. Although national statistics can show, for example, a gender imbalance in a given matter, it is important to know which level of government is responsible for deciding and implementing the relevant budget or budgets as well as the design of policies in order to carry out the analysis at the pertinent level or levels of government. This will allow, in turn, to target what changes in allocations and/or relevant changes to policies need to be made at the adequate government levels that aim to reduce

---

<sup>1</sup> Although there are other important macroeconomic policy instruments such as exchange rates and monetary policy, the introduction of a gender perspective is more adequate to fiscal policy (see Elson, 2002a for a more detailed discussion). However, there are on-going efforts in research and application of the relevance that the other two have in gender terms, although the links are more indirect than direct.

the inequalities identified. The impact should also be monitored in terms of its regional scale as differences between regions or localities will call for diverse intensities in the changes required. The adequate data at these sub-levels of government is another very important issue that needs to be addressed in introducing GRB, as will be illustrated below in the specific country experiences.

Another important aspect concerning location is the organisation of GRB initiatives by different groups. This refers to the stakeholder or group of stakeholders that initiate or carry out the actual analysis and carry forward or advocate for the changes suggested by the analysis. Therefore governments can organize these initiatives as well as parliamentarians or civil society groups<sup>2</sup>. The most effective initiatives, as documented by Budlender (2002), are those where all of these actors are actively involved. This procedure is also recommended to increase the transparency of budget processes as well as to increase citizen participation in the decisions and execution of government budgets, both of these issues are addressed below. In addition, the stakeholders and initiators of the GRB initiative or exercise should also have or create a strategy with regard to the continuity of the practice, much the same as in gender mainstreaming, in order to ensure that it becomes a regular practice. As the examples below will show this very much depends on the political willingness by Governments as well as the continued interest and advocacy by civil society. Timing with regard to political processes (elections) as well as political commitment to gender equality by political actors is also an important part of the success and continuity of GRB.

Finally, it is important to note that, although not subject to specific national macroeconomic policies, international organisations, political unions or trade blocks can also be the subject of GRB analysis inasmuch as their decisions also affect the distribution of resources. Accordingly, United Nations and more recently the European Union, have undertaken or are in the process of adopting GRB exercises to analyse the use of their budgets or the impact of their economic policy decisions in gender terms. These cases will be reviewed briefly in the section below dealing with GRB in the ECE region.

### *Scope or Coverage*

As pointed out by Sharp (2002) in an excellent paper addressing the goals and strategies of GRB, gender mainstreaming and GRB have common goals with respect to the introduction of gender aware practices in policy formulation and implementation. This author states the GRB is in effect a gender mainstreaming device or strategy. In this sense, practically all policies that are reflected or can be reflected in budgetary terms, and which can in fact reduce or increase inequalities in the use and access to resources between women and men, can be looked at through a gender lens.

Therefore, expenditure on education, health, employment, innovation, transport, agriculture, trade, etc. and the specific programmes in each, or tax and benefit systems

---

<sup>2</sup> International development agencies and bilateral aid and development agencies can also be involved in the initiative as initiators or as partners.

and social security systems are all subject to GRB inasmuch as gender impact assessment can be applied in all cases. It is of utmost importance that **the relevant data in terms of use of services, payment of taxes or prices, or receipt of transfers disaggregated by sex** be available. The absence of this information and this focus can thus render macroeconomic policy, and fiscal policy in particular, as gender neutral, when it is in fact gender blind (Waring, 1994). **The availability of this data will also allow or limit the application of different methodologies used in GRB** which range from gender disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis to gender aware budget statements. These tools will be detailed in the final section of this issue note.

In terms of the impact that policies have on existing gender roles it is also very important to take into account the role of the so-called unpaid economy, in particular the care activities that are mostly undertaken by women and which are usually not accounted for in monetary terms in spite of their important contribution to social reproduction (Çagatay, Elson and Grown, 1995). In this case information on the use of time by women and men becomes very important to gauge the impact of policies that implicitly assume that households will take on the burden of reductions or changes in the provision of public services or resources and that in fact are assumed mainly by women. This is the case, for example, of reductions in social services or health that respond more to the necessity of reducing deficits rather than to demand for these services. Likewise, privatisation of these services through outsourcing or other means have to take into account the different paying abilities and use by different sectors of the population in order to avoid increasing or multiplying inequalities. Other less obvious examples such as changes or reductions in public transport, which as the example for Italy in the following section shows, also evidence a gender bias in terms of use of these services versus private transport and the consequences in terms of time use which is different for women and men.

The employment of information on time use is also useful in tracking the impact of policies that, on the contrary, aim to reduce inequalities in the access to resources and opportunities such as active employment policies that take into account family responsibilities in the design of training and other employability measures either through more appropriate hours or through the provision of care services during the training or other employability activities.

As the examples documented below show, in the section of GRB initiatives in the ECE region, the mix of approaches in coverage and in instruments of analysis as well as the specific policies addressed vary widely. However, the goals for gender equality, for making gender visible in policy formulation and implementation as well as improving transparency in the budgetary process by which policy is executed are common to all of the initiatives.

### *Budget cycle*

The process by which the budgets are planned, executed and evaluated or audited is also an important area that affects the application of GRB. The stakeholders who are active in the initiative may want to target a specific phase of the cycle which will determine to a great extent the expected changes in budgetary allocations or changes in policy. These

efforts may or may not induce change in the overall money spent but can provoke changes between budget lines or in the programmes being financed. “Planning and appraisal [to identify objectives] are constrained by commitments to existing activities, which may be difficult to change. Audit and evaluation should feed back into planning and appraisal but at best will do so with a lag, since next year’s budget must be prepared before this year’s budget has been audited and evaluated” (Elson, 2002b, p.17). Therefore **the timing and the possibilities of actually making relevant changes are very much linked to the phases of the budget cycle.**

Furthermore, the type of budgeting models in the different countries can also make a difference as far as the effectiveness of GRB analysis and data used. Budget models that are based on past and expected results as a basis for decision making -such as performance oriented budgeting systems- are more likely to make use of the analysis and data that GRB analysis offers than those models that are driven by highly political decision-making (Sharp, 2003). Furthermore, performance oriented budget frameworks also represent specific challenges to GRB such as including equity as a criterion of performance as well as “important performance measurement questions relating both to the adequate treatment of quality in the assessment of services and the greater emphasis given in practice to efficiency compared to effectiveness indicators” (p.77). On the other hand the approval of budgets by parliamentary bodies and the scope that parliamentarians have in changing any part of the budget through political accords or other means is also part of the budget process that should be taken into account, particularly by civil society groups advocating for changes to reduce inequalities. Therefore, **the ultimate step toward adopting GRB as a common tool within the budgeting process is limited by technical aspects as well as by political ones.**

In this sense it is important to note that in the ECE region there are still on-going **fiscal reforms** that offer both opportunities and limitations to the introduction of GRB, not to mention **decentralisation** processes that also affect the location and scope of GRB both of which will affect budget cycles and models used. In the Central and Eastern Europe region as well as in the Commonwealth of Independent States, for example, privatisation processes affecting the provision of basic public services such as water or electricity, the use of the privatisation proceeds and the continuation of the use of extra-budgetary accounts (especially in health, education, culture and science) and quasi-fiscal activities (linked mostly with government controlled tariffs applied by state owned enterprises) are all subject to gender impact assessment from diverse fronts: employment, user fees, beneficiaries of diverse programmes, etc. Although the introduction of more rational models and market oriented tax systems are being recommended by international monetary organisations, the impacts in gender terms of these changes have not been foreseen or analysed. The increase in transparency and consolidation of central budgets is indeed an opportunity to introduce GRB but also presents challenges in understanding what the present situation is generating in gender terms and what the expected impacts of the changes will have in these same terms.

Finally, it is important to highlight the recommendations by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with respect to good practices in budgeting transparency and also to review the survey that it has carried out with respect



to practices in gender budgeting by its members (OECD, 2001a and 2001b). With respect to the first issue, the OECD has defined budget transparency as “the full disclosure of all relevant fiscal information in a timely and systematic manner” (2001a, p. 3). Although the recommendations are not meant to provide a “standard” they are a set of basic principles around 1) budget reporting, 2) specific disclosures of the budget, and 3) integrity, control and accountability that which are all relevant aspects in the application of GRB given that they recommend availability and access to information at different stages of the budget cycle and because this information would allow interested citizen’s groups to use the information for analysis and to make recommendations for change. Although a separate OECD document (2002) gives recommendations for the participation of civil society in the formulation of budgets in developing and transition countries (see box below), some of the principles can also be applied to ECE countries given the same need for maintaining good governance and transparent formulation in the use of public money.

- Participation by civil society in public expenditure management promises to improve social and economic outcomes while increasing confidence in public institutions
- Participatory budgeting (PB) programmes depend on the effective engagement of three key domestic stakeholders: governments, civil society and legislatures. Participatory budgeting cannot be imposed.
- The successful execution of participatory programmes is hampered by serious capacity gaps among key domestic stakeholders. The introduction of PB programmes should be sequenced to reflect different national conditions and policy settings.
- Citizen-led participation in budget policy had the potential to improve the effectiveness of nationally driven development strategies such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)
- Donors should focus their efforts on investing in increased capacity among all stakeholders, while encouraging political engagement among governments in particular

Source: OECD Development Centre, Policy Brief No. 22, 2002

The annual Survey of Budgeting Developments Questionnaire that the Public Governance and Management unit at OECD carried out included a number of questions in 2001 under “Budgeting with a Gender Focus” (OECD, 2001b). The results produced an unclassified official document<sup>3</sup> containing the answers to this section of the questionnaire by all member countries with the exception of Germany, Poland and the Slovak Republic who did not participate. Eleven countries did not respond to this specific section and five responded in one line that there was no gender analysis of budgets in their respective countries. Of the eleven that did, with the exception of the United States, all pointed to efforts in gathering the relevant data and in introducing gender in the formulation of policies, but only few had experiences in actually translating gender impact assessment of policies into budgetary changes (expenditure or revenue). In this

---

<sup>3</sup><http://www.oilis.oecd.org/oilis/2001doc.nsf/87fae4004d4fa67ac125685d005300b3/c1256985004c66e3c1256a5300380be4?OpenDocument>

sense only Australia, Canada, France, and Sweden, in different capacities, reported introducing gender analysis directly into different budgetary documents.

It should also be noted that OECD in collaboration with the World Bank (WB) and financial support from WB and the Inter-American Development Bank offers through its website the results of the survey on Budget Practices and Procedures. This OECD/World Bank survey of budget practice was launched in February 2003, in more than 60 countries. Up to now, more than 40 countries have responded to the survey or are in the process of finalizing it. It is expected that some more responses in the coming months, and the database will be regularly updated until the end of 2003 (<http://ocde.dyndns.org/>). The data base contains relevant information on the budget cycle, and the budget practices in each country that can be of great use in the introduction of GRB at the national level.

## 2. Experiences in the ECE region and other experiences

This section is structured on concrete examples in the ECE region which are presented in a way that illustrate the key issues and challenges outlined in the first section of this issue note. The short description and main aims of each of the initiatives are meant to cover the three elements discussed in the first section: location, scope and point of the budget cycle where GRB has been introduced. Where possible, concrete results from the initiatives are included, such as changes in budgetary allocations. The order in which the initiatives are presented is chronological from oldest to most recent including some initiatives that are just beginning, and closes with a selection of some examples from outside the ECE region and efforts of GRB within international or supra-national organisations. In Annex 1 a summary table by area of initiative, tools, progress made/stage and results is presented.

This section draws extensively from the published information on the different experiences found in brochures, the Internet, and several reviews of the experiences worldwide which are now available. It also uses presentations at conferences and meetings where different aspects of the initiatives have been exposed.

### *United Kingdom*

This GRB initiative was started from civil society in 1989 and it has extended to the regional level although the main initiative remains national. The Women's Budget Group (WBG) is made up a variety of women activists and other organisations with similar equality goals, many of them academic, and has "gained extensive consultative access to policy-makers, especially within H.M. Treasury (the UK equivalent of the Ministry of Finance). [It offers] officials and ministers constructive feedback on consultative documents and proactive advice on pertinent issues such as childcare provision, tax credits, productivity and work-life balance. [It] also offers comments on major policy decisions such as the Spending Review and the annual Budget; and provide guidance on methodology and practice, for example the gender mainstreaming of policy and the selection of targets and indicators" (WBG brochure). The entry of the New Labour Party facilitated the contact of the group with the Treasury officials as well as the possibility of introducing the concerns of women in the policy agenda.

As mentioned, in addition to the WBG with focus on the United Kingdom there are also now groups in Scotland, Ireland and Wales with similar activities. The WBG has been able to influence government policy, draw attention of government to new issues and keep matters yet unresolved active on the table. Consequently, members of WBG meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the key work areas and to formulate responses to the Budget and Pre Budget statements. They have also been behind some GRB pilot experiences that H.M. Treasury has undertaken in some government Departments.

This group has focused mostly on taxing and benefits and less so on expenditure. The areas where the WBG has focused are tax credits and benefits, poverty, pensions, combining employment and caring, equal pay and productivity. The following can be highlighted as the main policy changes that the group has been able to influence through effective use of in-depth analysis of the issues by specialist in the different areas and by having applying gender analysis in turn:

“Giving couples the choice of recipient of the Working Family Tax Credit (WFTC); allowing couples who share full-time employment hours and caring responsibilities to claim the full-time premium in the Working Tax Credit (WTC); payment of the Child Tax Credit to the main carer; [and taking into account the] effect on second earners in the new WTC compared with WFTC” (WBG brochure).

These recommendations are based on the analysis of impacts on individuals within households, impact on the household and also on taking into account the unpaid care work that women are usually engaged in.

Finally it is important to point out that the group focuses on presenting efficiency arguments to H.M. Treasury and to other actors such as parliamentary committees, diverse government departments and the tax authority (Inland Revenue). However, this does not mean that the WBG abandons the main goal of equality or fairness, but rather that “efficiency” in economic theory need to be redefined to include equality. “Using the efficiency argument might seem a retreat from the more explicitly feminist argument for gender-impact analysis based on promoting equality. Yet, in practice, the efficiency argument is a *more* radical approach, because it requires policy makers to challenge the boundaries between economic and social policy making by tracing the effects of economic policy outside the traditional economic domain.” (Himmelweit, 2002)

### *Sweden*

In answer to the OECD survey of a gender perspective in budgeting (2001), the Swedish Government responded by stating that gender policy objectives were a collective responsibility of the Swedish Government and that all ministries are required to promote gender equality in their respective areas, including the Ministry of Finance. It is in fact the Minister for Gender Equality that coordinates the work and is also responsible for following up and developing gender policy, in this sense the Division for Gender equality under the Minister coordinates and advises all other ministries on this issue. The relevance of adequate gender disaggregated data has been an important part of the efforts

and Statistics Sweden received additional instructions to have all official statistics disaggregated by sex unless there were special reasons for not doing so.

The Swedish Government acknowledges the significance of the budget as the prime policy instrument and thus considers it highly important that gender analysis of all government policies be made within each of the corresponding ministries. “The ministries are expected to set gender equality objectives and targets within their government programmes proposed in the budget bill. In addition, the Ministry of Finance makes a special report of the distribution of economic resources between women and men, presented every year in the Government’s Budget Bill” (OECD, 2001b, p.11)

“In addition, the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill presented in April 2001 there is a description of how the policy measures proposed influence the income distribution for both women and men. It is shown that the policy measures are more favourable for women than for men” (OECD, 2001b, p. 12). There have also been efforts started in assessing how gender equality can be better reflected in the budget process. Sweden has joined efforts in the context of the Nordic Council of Ministers since 2001 that aims to mainstream gender in the budget process in all Nordic countries. This body also adopted measures to include GRB into their respective budgets in the area of international cooperation.

### *Canada*

Canadian civil society groups have been producing an alternative federal budget for many years (since 1995). The main promoter of this has been the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) which has been active since 1980. The Alternative Federal Budget is prepared each year by a coalition of community, labour, environmental and social advocacy organizations, coordinated by the CCPA. As such GRB has not been fully incorporated into its main body of research, although there are a number of areas where the alternative budget specifically address gender imbalances, discriminatory situations and it specifically addresses women’s unpaid care work in the context of continuous cuts and changes in the social health and care provision. This organisation also issues reports and statements on policy issues affecting equality between women and men directed to different Government ministries, departments and provincial governments.

Status of Women Canada (SWC) is also promoting the use of GRB by providing information on what it is and disseminating information on what has been done, primarily in developing countries. However, it also points to the submissions to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance that local and national women’s organisations advocating changes in the budget in Canada. In addition SWC in collaboration with Statistics Canada provide tools such as a guide for the production of data “and a selected set of Economic Gender Equality indicators. These indicators help provide a framework for assessing policy impacts on income, work, and learning, including tracking the positive gender equality effects of the personal income tax system.” (OECD, 2001b p. 4) Also special reports on the gender impacts of various programmes are produced as needed, an example of this has been the monitoring reports of the Employment Insurance which are disaggregated by sex and which showed that improvements in the access to benefits by women were needed. These changes were duly included in an economic and

fiscal statement in the fall of 2000. SWC also provides opportunities of exchanges between civil society (women's NGOs) and Government (diverse Ministries) through conferences it organises to discuss different policy and programme issues.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Canada have also carried out a Canadian Women's Budget (1993) which is meant to represent an alternative use of military spending, however, this effort did not contain specific gender analysis of the budget, but rather presents an alternative use of defence spending on programmes that address the needs of women and that advance social justice. It compares expenditures for social programmes and services with the national defence budget.

### *United States of America*

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in the United States (1996) produced a Women's Budget arguing for an alternative use of military spending. The approach here was to underline the reduction in various programmes supporting low-income families while criticising tax reductions that have, according to this organisation, benefited the richer citizens, corporations and the military industry. The unpaid work of women is cited as being the "shock absorber" of the government cuts in public services and programmes. The analysis and figures are geared mainly at advocacy and it urges citizens to ask Congress and the President to consider following a set of minimum guidelines for the preparation of the seven year budget package (1996-2001).

This initiative does not offer further analysis of concrete changes in taxes or spending, but rather concentrates on general guidelines such as rejecting further cuts to social programmes affecting the poorest households, overturning decision on income support for poor children, reductions in unnecessary military spending as well as controlling fraud in the Pentagon, and increasing investment in education, infrastructure and job training while reducing tax reductions for wealthier citizens and gradually reducing the Federal debt burden. As with the Canadian Women's Budget, WILPF in the United States did not apply specific gender budget analysis but rather compared defence spending with social and welfare spending.

An interesting local initiative in the U.S.A. is that of the City and County of San Francisco. In 1998, this local and regional government passed an ordinance to implement CEDAW at the local level. To monitor its commitments, the City commissioned a gender analysis in three areas: Service delivery; Employment practices; and, Budget allocations. Training about what gender analysis is and how human rights issues are important in the workplace was provided by the Department On the Status of Women (DOSW) to the senior management team which consists of the Chief Probation Officer, Division Directors, Personnel Manager, and Business Manager. The initial review involved a three-step process: gathering gender disaggregated data and reports, assessing the differences between women/girls and men/boys; and formulating recommendations for action. This further developed into a five step process which also included implementation of recommendations and action plan and monitoring the action plan and CEDAW implementation. This process is still underway and has been undertaken in six departments so far and has also been applied to the cuts in the budget in 2003 (assessing the impact on gender of those cuts). The DOSW has prepared guidelines for all

departments which include definitions and examples but some preliminary evaluation findings point to the need to simplify guidelines for undertaking an applied gender analysis. Other obstacles encountered are the institutionalisation of the guidelines into the budget process and disaggregation and interpretation of data. On the other hand new programs and departments seem to be offering the most receptive entry point for such initiatives as they are in the process of setting up new data collection and evaluation mechanisms.

### *France*

According to The Budget Act for 2000, the French government established the presentation in subsequent exercises the obligation by government to submit an annex to the draft Budget Act presenting the moneys earmarked to promote gender equality and those that are specifically dedicated to addressing women's needs. Hence, this government initiative presents a detailed identification and catalogue by each ministerial department and the actions they have taken to foster gender equality or to heighten awareness in addition to programmes specifically targeting various categories of women. Each department was also invited to specify its gender equality guidelines and to present the **equality indicators** it considered most relevant to its particular area of responsibility (French Ministry of Economy, 2001).

The document for 2001 in fact presents a first step in introducing concerns about gender equality into its budgetary process. In fact this first document states: "The results of this ministerial scrutiny of activities do not give an accurate idea of the efforts undertaken, especially insofar as measures adopted or envisioned to reduce inequalities do not always have financial repercussions. Clearly, however, they do reveal the difficulty our administration has in grasping and incorporating concerns over gender equality. This annex is therefore in itself an instrument of the overall policy approach that the Government has decided to promote in the realm of equality between citizens of both sexes. The future development of the annex will trace how and to what extent each department has taken on board this process conducive to social and political renewal" (French Ministry of Economy, 2001).

This first edition did not include all of the French Ministries, but it did include information on the appropriations to promote gender equality by the regional councils. It is important to note that the reports (now in their upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> edition) do not as such present efficiency arguments nor do they present research findings on the roots of the inequalities that are reflected in the numbers presented. Rather, it is an exercise that has gradually encompassed all of the ministries of government, has provided more detailed information on the status of women and efforts to achieve gender equality. In its latest edition, 2003<sup>4</sup>, this document presents a more detailed analysis of women's situation in the economic, social and political arenas than in 2001 and it also identifies areas where efforts should be made to reduce inequalities.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://alize.finances.gouv.fr/budget/plf2003/jaunes03/1001.pdf>

## *Spain*

The most complete GRB initiative to date in Spain since 2001, has been initiated at a regional level by EMAKUNDE, The Basque Women's Institute which was founded in an Act dated 5 February 1988 as an Autonomous Organisation dependent on the Presidency of the Basque Government. The approach has been departmental and specific programmes were chosen within those departments for gender analysis of expenditure. The departments chosen were: culture, industry, trade and commerce, interior, territorial development and environment, health, and transport and public works. Each of the departments chose a specific programme within their departments which, having applied gender impact assessment analysis, was especially relevant to their expenditure exercise. The exercises provided proved helpful in identifying lack of proper sex disaggregated data as well as helping the different departments formulate recommendations conducive to changing the inequalities found. In all cases the recommendations did not advocate for more funds, but rather to a more equitable access to resources, employment within the same departments and further research into the gender differentiated impact of the programmes. After this experience, EMAKUNDE and the Finance Department of the Basque Country are currently seeking a common methodology to apply to all departments focusing on both expenditures and revenues.

In addition to this regional experience, the sub-regional government of Córdoba (Diputación Provincial de Córdoba), in Andalusia, is also carrying out a GRB initiative which is in its initial stages and it is expected to fully engage the Finance Area so that all other areas of the Diputación can apply GRB in the process of presenting their financial reports of their different programmes and activities. It is important to note that this effort has been part of the II Equal Opportunities Plan for the province for 2001-2003 (which has received a best practice mention by the UN HABITAT Committee in Dubai in 2002)<sup>5</sup>.

This plan has laid out a strategy for gender mainstreaming in all the areas of the Diputación and GRB was contemplated as one of the tools that could help in achieving this goal. A Gender Mainstreaming Commission has been established and gender focal points have been activated in all the areas where the Diputación works. The first step has been to raise awareness among officials, women's NGOs and local researchers through a two-day workshop where representative from other GRB initiatives in Europe were invited and also Spanish researchers working on effects of taxation on women and men. The next steps include finding a methodology to apply to all areas and working closely with the Financial Area in an attempt to institutionalise the practice of GRB. Given the importance that the Diputación has giving support in different aspects to local governments or to groupings of local governments, such as employment, environment, youth, culture, women, local development and agriculture, the application of GRB is expected to have an impact throughout the province of Córdoba.

---

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.dipucordoba.es/ctg/> for more details

## *Italy*

The initiative in Italy was originated by a seminar organised by the Ministry for Equal Opportunities in 2000 on gender impact assessment of government budgets to which local administrators from all Italy attended. The Ministry proposed a plan to implement GRB at the central government level, but the newly elected government in 2000 did not follow through with this initiative. However, at the regional level this idea took hold and by 2002 there were already 4 regional initiatives started. Here we concentrate on the Emilia-Romagna region in Northern Italy and the sub-regional and local initiatives in the Province and Commune of Modena. This initiative analysed the effects of regional government programmes and spending on labour market outcomes and related benefits and on the use of different transportation options. These were chosen because the regional, provincial and local level governments are responsible for different aspects of these issues in Italy and because they presented highly unequal outcomes in the initial analysis that was carried out. As far as the stakeholders involved, there was direct participation and political support by these different levels of government as well as the participation by a number of experts in different areas who participated in the collection of the relevant data as well as in the analysis of the impact of regional and local expenditures and revenue collection on gender inequality.

It is very important to point out that the “standard” list of GRB tools which is found in many of the existing manuals and literature turned out to be excessively expensive (particularly in the collection or availability of data) or inadequate to analyse the realities of budgeting or fiscal policies at the local level (these tools are reviewed in the final section of this issue note). Therefore, the researchers proposed a methodology based on the use of indicators that determined which specific issues needed to be looked at in budget terms depending on whether their value was above or below Italian or EU averages. This benchmarking methodology then allowed to identify trouble spots in the region and at the provincial or communal level which were in turn linked to the corresponding policies for which these regional and local level governments were financially in charge. On the other hand, a series of efficiency indicators on local level finance issued by Italian legislators were reviewed and found to be very gender insensitive and in some cases highly contrary to gender equality goals. The findings and recommendations from this exercise remain preliminary and it is expected that they will be available soon. Suffice it to say here that these recommendations include different criteria for allocating and increasing public child care places (based on socio-economic indicators rather than solely on rent criteria) as to increase women’s chances to either find work or attend training, especially those with lower educational levels, as well as recommendations to adapt transport policy to the different needs and uses by women and men.

## *Russia*

In 2001 the Open Society Institute supported a pilot experience in Russia that brought together academics and government officials in awareness raising seminars and commissioned a research document in which the theoretical and institutional framework for analysing the budget in Russia were described by a series of university and think tank



researchers. It also described some selected issues in the labour market or related to the labour market where there was direct budgetary link and where women were having particular problems (wages, gender discrimination in the labour market, low wages in public employment, pension reform, healthcare, education and decentralisation reform). A special section was devoted to gender statistics, examples of gender monitoring in other countries and a direct reference to the Federal Budget for 2002 was made using the statistics where possible.

The approach consisted in identifying the areas and programmes within the budget that were already addressing gender issues and where calculation could be made with beneficiaries (men or women) of the programmes. The group's main task consisted in calculating a sample gender budget for 2002 (including federal security funds) based on the existing institutional framework, statistical data and various statistical methods. Some of the results of this exercise are highlighted in the box below. It is important to note that the exercise also calculated forgone earnings (in taxes) due to gender segregation and wage differences.

**Main findings of the Gender Budget Initiative in Russia Sponsored by the Open Society Institute-Russia**

- **Institute of the National Budget is gender segregated as to management in diverse areas are dominated by men (foreign affairs, army, defence, space, nuclear energy, mining, etc.)**
- **Those in charge of local budgets are predominantly female and deal with "female" expenditures such as schools, hospitals, kindergartens, social services, etc. and which, in nay case have been reduced as part of the deficit reduction efforts**
- **Gender segregation in general in the Russian economy induces the loss of between 15-20% in fiscal earnings and represents 40-50% of annual budget growth**
- **There are also asymmetries in budget expenditures as women and children, constituting two-thirds of the population, receive approximately one-third of aggregate state expenditure. Moreover maternity benefits are fully supported by women's contributions to the system (budget and obligatory insurance)**

**Source: Note prepared by Elena Kozyr for the Gender Budget workshop sponsored by the NEWW conference on Women and Economy (see Reference section for documents produced as a result of the Open Society initiative)**

Finally, the group also suggested ways in which the participation of civil society could be incorporated into the budget process. Following the scheme used on environmental issues where the Russian Government is advised on the environmental impact of industrial activities, the group proposed a similar structure for a gender budget group that would be placed within the legislative and executive systems. No further publicly available information in English is available on the final results of this initiative.

More recently, 2003, UNIFEM and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Russia are undertaking another GRB initiative but at the regional level in the Komi Republic. In this case an overview of the budget process has already been carried out focusing on procedures, legal background, timing and stakeholders of the process in Russia identifying the critical points of possible intervention by civil society. In addition and with support of the Ford Foundation and Eurasia Foundation the creation and updating of open budget databases and national and regional levels was completed. The foundations had previously supported open budget initiatives at the municipal level, but these did not include gender. The initiative has raised awareness within government and civil society as well as obtained political support. The next steps will consist of conducting gender analysis of financial decisions and allocation of resources; formulating mechanisms for estimation of the financial flows of government resources; defining the role of GRB in the national machinery as a tool to improve women's status; and elaborating recommendations from women's NGOs that could be applied to all stages of the budget cycle.

### *Belgium*

A Gender Mainstreaming project was started within the federal government in Belgium in 2001 through the Directorate of Equal Opportunities (DEO). The project was set up so that each ministry had a strategic objective in the area of equal opportunities and that within each ministry an official would be in charge accompanied by a resource person from different Belgian Universities. In 2002, and inspired by the High Level Conference supported by the Belgian Government in favour of Gender Responsive Budgets during the Belgian presidency of the European Union, a GRB initiative was launched by the DEO. Its main goal was to assess the feasibility of introducing gender budgeting within the federal Belgian Administration following the three category expenditure framework elaborated by Sharp and Budlender (1998)<sup>6</sup>. One of the activities of this initiative consisted in training of the budget and gender mainstreaming officials of all federal administration and ministerial cabinets. This training included explaining the rationale and tools of GRB using materials referring directly to the Belgian budget as well as examples from other regions of the world. A second activity consisted of action research that commenced with an information round involving all the federal ministries and using a checklist prepared by the university experts. Through this process, information was collected on the first two categories of expenditure and information was also gathered that could be useful in developing exercises falling into the third category of expenditure. This process revealed that in some instances the ministries were already applying some rudimentary GRB analysis as it was necessary for their own work but without labelling it as GRB. Based on the availability of data and the willingness of a few administrations, a third step was to analyse in depth some areas of third type expenditures which are not usually evaluated in terms of their gender impact.

The initiative generated some important lessons about the availability and the limits of sex disaggregated data that affect the analysis of the budget from a gender perspective but it also raised questions about budget transparency and efficiency beyond the gender

---

<sup>6</sup> The three categories are: first level or spent on programmes that address gender imbalances, the second level is equal opportunity expenditures and the third level is general expenditures.

focus. The absence of performance based budgeting in Belgium leaves a degree of discretion in spending, which can be politically driven. According to the researchers involved in the initiative, the on-going reforms to move toward a more programme oriented and planned budget will probably offer a good opportunity for integrating a gender dimension into the budgeting process.

One of the recommendations from the exercise addressed the fact that although a National Action Plan following the Beijing Conference requirement exists, there is no information about the budgetary allocations associated for its implementation. In this sense, the link to the international commitments of the Belgian federal government to the rights of women could be further advanced if the recommendation is followed.

Although the imminent change of government in 2004 has put this initiative temporarily on hold, the training and awareness raising at the level of the ministry of finance as well as the other ministries where the initiative took place points to the possibility of continuing the work. It should also be noted that women's organisations as well as women parliamentarians are now also taking interest and in the case of the latter, a proposal to change the budget law to introduce GRB to all federal ministries has been made.

#### *Other on-going initiatives in the ECE region*

A scan of the region has revealed that there are several other on-going GRB initiatives in the ECE region at different stages in the process and for which information could not be gathered more precisely for the purpose of this issue note. These countries are, so far: Germany, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Albania. UNIFEM also informs of a regional initiative to be launched by NGOs (Network of East-West Women) in the Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent states that will call its preparatory meeting in Spring of 2004. In principle the countries involved are: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Belarus, Estonia Croatia and Poland. The meeting will aim to define the location and scope of the initiatives and the idea is to build capacity in the region to undertake GRB analysis and to lobby or engage governments for change based on this analysis.

It is interesting to note that in the case of Albania the approach has been to build a "community of practice" sponsored by UNDP, and that some background work is now under way after a meeting to raise awareness in 2003 was convened in Tirana gathering NGOs, parliamentarians, academics, local government representatives, and representatives of relevant Ministries. UNDP is also currently planning a training of trainers to build capacity in the region and to have available personas that can carry out the analysis.

#### *South Africa*

South Africa was one of the first countries in the world to have a GRB initiative in 1995, only after Australia's initiative in the mid-1980's, and closely linked to the end of apartheid. Its main initiators were a group of parliamentarians and NGOs, and it has been known as the Women's Budget Initiative (WBI). The approach was to contact experts in

academia and the NGO sector to carry out the analysis of different sectors that were identified as reflecting particular inequalities looking at the sectorial policies and the corresponding budgetary allocations for those policies. Once the research had been produced it was agreed that parliamentarians would advocate for relevant changes. In its first year the initiative produced a report which was launched in a large event which was opened by the Deputy Minister of Finance and was attended by a wide range of stakeholders (Budlender, et al, 2002).

The initiative has since then grown and adjustments have been made to its approach and the stakeholders involved have also changed according to the specific issues that year upon year the WBI identifies as relevant. From the beginning the WBI focused on issues affecting the most disadvantaged “namely those who, in addition to being female, were black, rural and poor” (Budlender, et al, 2002, p.158). In this context, violence against women was identified as an issue that affected women across different characteristics such as location, age, race, and class and that could unite women around a common cause. Thus, in the second year of the WBI initiative the budgets of the departments of police and prisons were assessed in order to know what resources were being directed to address violence against women. In addition a law on domestic violence that was passed before the apartheid government was voted out of power (1993) was also analysed under a GRB perspective and it was found to have many weaknesses. Some years later, this law was substituted by a new Act in 1998 and it was found that although there had been an allocation of money and some activities planned it was clearly not sufficient to realise the full potential of the Domestic Violence Act. Another important issue surrounding this Act was that the implementation was not the responsibility of the central government, but rather the provinces so that there was a need to also investigate what specific budgetary allocations were necessary or in place to implement the Act.

By 2001 GRB had also been expanded to one province (KwaZulu-Natal). This is especially relevant because the provincial governments are responsible for the delivery of health, education and welfare. The work here is also carried out by parliamentarians and NGOs in collaboration with the parliamentary Commission on Gender Equality. Through a methodology of questions posed to the different provincial departments on the gender impact of their activities, formulated by NGOs and sent by the Finance Portfolio Committee in the provincial parliament, the idea was to use the answers as a baseline for follow-up during the course of the year (2001-02). Although not all of the departments answered (9 out of 13 did) there was a missed opportunity as the commission members did not question further any of the answer sent back nor was there a systematic analysis of the information contained in the answers. In the 2002-03 period, once the provincial Office for the Status of Women (OSW) was established, a more specific set of questions for each department was developed based on the differences by sectors but the cooperation with the finance parliamentary committee used the previous year was not possible due to a change in the chairperson. This illustrates the importance of building institutional inroads that do not depend on the sympathy or political will of the actors involved. Although the NGOs sent the questions directly to the different departments, the answers and their analysis and use was left basically to other bodies (i.e. OSW and Commission on Gender Equality, and an inter-departmental forum).

## *Ecuador*

The GRB initiative in this country has been promoted by UNIFEM and it is part of a multi-country approach which is based on women's economic and social rights in the Andean Region. Two of the six initiatives launched by UNIFEM in the region are in Ecuador and they take place at the local level in the cities of Quito and Salitre, the other initiatives are located in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, they are carried out at the municipal level as well and there is one national experience (Bolivia). It is important to note that the UNIFEM programme took advantage of various participatory budgeting initiatives that were taking place and that were focusing on citizen participation, municipal accountability and transparency in the region but did not have a gender perspective. The input by women's NGOs working on economic and social rights in the region, the engagement of players in the region already committed to transparency and the building of a strong cadre of experts were three of the most important elements that have made the regional experience a success and the initiatives in Ecuador in particular (Pearl, 2002).

There were two local level initiatives in Ecuador, one in the capital, Quito, and another in a small coastal city of Salitre. It is important to point out that these initiatives took place in a highly volatile political and economic time in the year 2000 and that the financial constraints affecting the country were also applicable to the local level governments. In both cases women's NGOs were active in gaining knowledge about the budgets as well as gaining understanding on how the different gender roles affected the way in which the money spent by municipalities was more or less beneficial to them. Unfortunately these exercises have not served to introduce gender mainstreaming in a more general way into the general activities of these local administrations. The lack of proper tools as well as the adequate data also presented difficulties for analysing the impact of the budget in gender terms in addition to some difficulties in having access to all the budgetary information. Although both initiatives were able to engage the political will of the officials, carrying forward the recommended changes derived from the analysis as well as the possibility of continuity have not been fully resolved. (Pearl, 2002)

## *International Organisations*

Very briefly, it is worth noting the efforts being carried out by international organisations and bodies that have carried out exercises in GRB or are encouraging their use by their member states. The first is that of the United Nations based on the request made during the Beijing Conference that the UN system mainstream a gender perspective into all medium-term plans and programme budgets. This has led to the overview of a number of UN entities and to the completion of a number of in-depth case studies. This exercise has also been carried out in the framework of a shift to results based planning and budgeting of the organisation and has been an attempt to raise awareness among officials about the importance of disaggregating expenditure in terms of different groups, in particular of women. In this case a task force was set up under the direction of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender issues in 1999 and its goal was to develop tools for monitoring the progress toward mainstreaming a gender perspective in budgetary planning. The results of this exercise have shown that there is still some distance in the organisation of understanding what gender mainstreaming within budget processes means

and that despite significant advances capacity needs to be strengthened. On the other hand it was found that several UN entities are making a greater contribution to gender equality that shown or reflected in their programme budgets. Finally, internal governance issues such as oversight and accountability functions have been also highlighted as central to ensuring adequate attention to gender equality goals within the organisation and in its development programmes. (Bakker, 2002)

The Nordic Council of Ministers has also undertaken an initiative to promote the inclusion of GRB in the international cooperation programmes of its Member States as well as to encourage the use of GRB internally. The Nordic working party worked on a proposal for gender mainstreaming in budget work. During the year 2002, a joint conference was held on the subject by the Nordic Council and the Nordic Finance Committee on Gender Mainstreaming in Budget Work. The 2003 budget of the council included some advances in this respect.

Finally, the European Commission is undertaking some preliminary steps in introducing this tool as part of its gender mainstreaming efforts that have been built up over the most recent years. In the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality for 2001-2005<sup>7</sup>, the commission sets out to develop strategies to encourage gender mainstreaming in all policies which have an impact on the place of women in the economy, (e.g. fiscal, financial, economic, educational, transport, research and social policy). The most relevant actions proposed to achieve this are:

- Propose a Commission communication on social issues in public procurement, and
- Integrate gender analysis in development cooperation policy into the design, implementation and evaluation of measures, especially those relating to macro-economic policies and poverty reduction.

In addition, the Annual Report on Gender Equality (prepared by the commission) will be revised to include more information on the implementation of the framework strategy (*inter alia*, budgetary information on allocation and expenditure) and on developments at national level, including progress in reaching the benchmarks, and assessment of the results achieved.

### 3. Challenges and policy implications

The preceding examples point to challenges and policy implications that can be structured around a number of main areas of discussion and present a number of lessons learned that can serve as guidelines for new GRB initiatives in ECE member countries.

The first observation is that the application of GRB implies a profound change in the way that policy is usually formulated and executed and it shares this goal with the main goal of gender mainstreaming. Introducing a gender focus into the budgeting process requires

---

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/strategy\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/strategy_en.html)

**raising awareness** among all those involved in this process, **promoting accountability** for budgetary and policy commitments and finally **changing the budget** in a way that it promotes gender equality (Sharp, 2002). If sound economic analysis is being produced proving the fact that equality actually enhances economic growth and efficiency, and on the other hand governments are obliged by their international and national commitments to women and gender equality, budgetary processes and objectives should be revised in the light of the research.

Indeed, one of the issues that arises from this observation is that of the GRB analysis in itself of great importance and one of the first steps in the process. As the experience in the UK shows, very serious and rigorous analysis must be carried out of how a given policy is creating inequalities as well as presenting a case for change. The same is true of the initiative in Italy. Although the French case is highly laudable and is certainly a good practice easily transferable to all ECE countries in the area of mainstreaming, it does not present a deeper analysis and the ensuing recommendations from such an analysis. Although it is certainly a starting point as an annual exercise in monitoring the status of women and the efforts toward gender equality throughout the entire French budget, more is needed. The focus on indicators, as with the Italian case, should prompt a deeper analysis of the issues that result unacceptable from the equality point of view and their links with economic results for proper policy changes to be recommended and made.

Two other important points with respect to GRB analysis that have an impact on the formulation and execution of policy is the recognition of unpaid care work by women and the recognition of differences in the use of time and resources within households. In this respect the United Kingdom and Italy are both good examples of how these principles have been taken on board in the analysis of the impact of budgetary allocations (See Elson, 2002b for a broader discussion, p25).

Another important challenge is that of citizen participation in the budget process from formulation to execution. This point is very relevant as the budget, even though it is a highly technical document and the trend is clearly towards making it more transparent and predictable, it is also part of a political process to which civil society can not be indifferent, in this case women. Although here there is certainly much to be said about the different styles and degrees to which civil society is usually engaged in this process and the degree to which governments are more or less open to this participation, there are indications that some political formations are more open or more sensitive to gender equality issues than others. Again, raising awareness of both the commitments to which governments are held accountable, irrespective of who is in power, and the possibility to present economically sound arguments towards eliminating inequalities of any type involves active participation by civil society, be it academics or women's groups or those representing women in a more institutionalised form within government (women's machineries). The examples for the ECE region point to a variety of formulas in which this participation can be promoted or enhanced. In the case of Russia, for example the support of international organisations is yet another way in which both awareness-raising and supporting analysis can work towards recommending changes, but there are still elements that require strengthening the position of civil society to effectively advocate for those changes and making them a reality.

The regional and local initiatives that have been described also point to some important policy issues and lessons for replication in the ECE region. The continuous drive towards decentralisation, of various elements of public services and also policies, has several implications affecting the introduction of gender mainstreaming and GRB. The first is the process by which decentralised activities are funded, in other words: what is the political and technical process behind the financial activities of regional or sub-regional governments? What taxing powers do they have<sup>8</sup>? What basic services are they expected to cover that limit the range of possible changes suggested by GRB analysis? The second issue is related to the availability of adequate data. In both the Spanish cases and the one for Italy the search for methodologies that are best suited for analysing budgetary exercises at these sub-national levels which do not always correspond to the usual list of tools suggested by GRB researchers which are more suited to the analysis but the use of indicators in the Italian case shows one way of overcoming this obstacle. Although it is obvious that these sub-national economic decision makers are subject to the macroeconomic frameworks they are still bound to the same efficiency arguments used in national initiatives such as the one in the United Kingdom.

A no less important element in all the experiences described is the link of GRB to gender mainstreaming efforts. The Swedish case, which can probably be best described as one of the most advanced in the ECE region, points to a great effort in effectively mainstreaming gender, the need to produce the adequate data to monitor the process and the introduction of a gender perspective in policy making. However, it is interesting to note that the step towards taking this to the level of the budget has only recently started. In all the examples for the ECE, with the exception of and Russia and to some degree the United Kingdom, commitment to gender mainstreaming is an essential step for a more likely and successful introduction of GRB analysis.

Finally, the examples outside the ECE region also point to important lessons with respect to transparency and good governance that are sometimes taken for granted in countries of the ECE region. Although in these countries gender mainstreaming remains under-developed, the opportunities opened by a surge of participatory budgeting initiatives as well as an increasing acknowledgement of improving governance are valid entry-points that have had varying degrees of success, but that have also raised awareness among government officials as well as increased the knowledge by women of how economic decisions affect their lives directly. The South African initiative is also relevant in the wider approach that it takes with respect to other groups suffering inequalities and that tries to cut across age, race, location and economic status in addition to gender.

#### 4. Institutional processes, mechanisms and tools

Based on the previous descriptions and definitions, this section focuses on processes for launching and managing the development of GRB. Mechanisms and tools for such mainstreaming are discussed, including gender sensitive analysis and data of budgetary

---

<sup>8</sup> In the case of the Basque country, for example, all three provinces have, individually, all taxing powers devolved, except for VAT which is regulated at EU level. Thus the discretion they have in using these tools for greater gender equality is very important. Social security, however, remains the competence of the central Spanish Government.



expenditure, raising gender awareness in respective ministries and institutions, building commitment at policy levels, establishing networks and synergies among all stakeholders –governments, civil society, parliamentarians, private sector.

The first of these is the scope that civil society (or outside government) initiatives have in influencing budget processes depending on political sympathies of those elected in government. Many of the initiatives point to changes in government or specific political situations where the introduction of GRB was made easier such as the entry of the New Labour government in the United Kingdom, end of apartheid in South Africa, or the increasing interest for transparency in Andean region (Ecuador). The challenge to these initiatives is to find ways of institutionalising the practice of GRB, which is easier if governments are also committed to gender mainstreaming.

A second point is referred to institutional government initiatives (or inside government) such as the ones in Italy, Spain, Sweden or France and to a lesser degree Canada. Although the involvement of civil society here is limited (usually to experts in budgets and gender) or non-existent, the commitment to gender mainstreaming in all government policy formulation gives the initiatives a higher chance of continuity, although there is certainly a degree of political will that could easily change as a result of elections or other changes in government. Although in the French case this is more difficult for this to happen given the status of law that has been given to the annual reports, much in the same manner that the Russian initiative proposes, we find again the challenge of institutionalising the practice in an effective and practical way.

Another important challenge is that of adequate data for the analysis. The French and Swedish case as well as the efforts in Canada and Belgium show that the collection and processing of adequate data is fundamental to the application of serious gender impact analysis. As the Italian case also shows, data at the national level is not useful in many instances for sub-national efforts in GRB analysis and alternative methods must be applied to diminish data collection costs. However, gender mainstreaming in itself can be useful in adapting not only survey type data but also administrative data that is a basic element of GRB analysis. This is the case of the Basque Country initiative in Spain where specific programmes in different departments were found to have enough sex disaggregated data in order to apply gender impact assessments, but that in others efforts in “engendering” the administrative data were to be further exerted.

A useful list of steps when considering launching a GRB initiative, be it from inside or outside government is the following:

- Raise awareness among women, politicians, parliamentarians and technical government personnel
- Ensure that there is access to the budgets
- Ensure that there are statistics by sex and sensitive to gender
- Lobby and try to guarantee political will
- Include citizen engagement and define clear objectives on the changes that are expected from a practical application of the analysis.

All of these steps, in one way or another can be traced in each of the ECE region examples that have been described in this note. Furthermore, the analysis itself can also be summed up in the following steps:

- Describe the situation of women and men, girls and boys (and different sub-groups) in the sector. Check whether policy is gender-sensitive i.e. whether it addresses the situation described in step one
- Check that adequate budget is allocated to implement the gender-sensitive policy. Check whether the expenditure is spent as planned
- Examine the impact of the policy and expenditure i.e. whether it has promoted gender equity as intended, and changed the situation described in step one

Although both lists try to simplify very complex and sometimes lengthy processes, they are useful to keep in mind when launching an initiative and when trying to capture the essence of initiatives which are being analysed for replication.

Finally, several tools have been proposed in the literature on gender sensitive analysis of budgetary expenditure. Some of these are reflected in the experiences described in this note. However, it is important to remember that these tools are not always adequate for analysis of budgets at sub-national levels and that even at national levels the type of data needed is not always so readily available. The following list and references to the previous country initiatives should not be taken as definite and final, as the Italian case shows there is also room for the use of indicators, much like the ones the ECE has been developing or the ones being used in France, to pinpoint trouble spots that can in turn be analysed in terms of the budgetary implications and the relevant policies affecting such situations.

- *Gender-disaggregated Public Expenditure Incidence Analysis*: an estimate of the distribution of budget resources (or cuts in these resources) among males and females by measuring the unit costs of providing a given service and multiplying by the number of units utilized by each group. None of the examples cited apply this methodology, although, in principle, like the French or Swedish case, this can be more or less easily done given the detail of gender disaggregated data that they have generated. This type of analysis can be very useful in measuring not only the degree to which gender equality efforts have been financed, but also to calculate use of different services and, in combination with other indicators, help to target the most needy groups in the population. *Gender-disaggregated Beneficiary Assessments*: surveys or focus group studies designed to find out how men and women evaluate whether public services meet their needs and how existing patterns of public expenditure accord with their priorities. In a way these are the experiences described in Canada or the United States where alternatives to other spending are compared to the needs that are not being met in other important areas of a country's commitments. Although the transmission of these opinions is not immediate, opportunities within initiatives piloting participatory budgeting can be used for introducing gender concerns. *Gender-disaggregated Analysis of*

*the Impact of the Budget on Time Use*: a calculation of the link between budget allocations and their effect on how household members spend their time, using household time use surveys. In different ways the United Kingdom and the Italian initiatives both take into account the impact of policies on time use. Although the Italian experience is yet to be made public, the impact of time use on transport policy at the regional and local levels will demonstrate the importance of taking this element into account.*Gender-aware Medium Term Macroeconomic Policy Framework*: a framework that incorporates gender analysis into the models on which medium term public expenditure planning is based. This can be done by disaggregating by sex the variables that refer to people, such as labour supply, or by including new variables to represent the unpaid care economy. There are no examples of this in the ECE region.*Gender-disaggregated Revenue Incidence Analysis*: a calculation of the relative amount of direct and indirect taxes and/or user fees paid by women as opposed to men. There is a growing literature in this subject across Europe. It has been especially relevant in reducing obstacles to women's participation in the labour market as well as to produce the most recent European Commission proposal for introducing equality in the prices of goods and services<sup>9</sup>. To a certain degree the Russian initiative supported by the Open Society has used this methodology and has been used in some cases in the UK.*Gender-aware Budget Statement*: a government report that reviews the budget, using one or more of these tools, and summarizes its implications for gender equality with different indicators, such as share of expenditure targeted to gender equality, gender balance in government contracts or job training, or share of expenditure for public services used mainly by women. The French case is the closest example to this type of tool, it is also one of the practices that can easily be replicated in other countries having similar budgetary processes whereby special annexes are included addressing crosscutting issues that by law need to be monitored. "It gives the government a means to display the results of its proactive policy, to measure the development of that policy and to detect shortcomings when translated into budgetary terms" (Philippe-Raynaud, 2002).

---

<sup>9</sup> For more information see  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2003/nov/equality\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2003/nov/equality_en.html)

## References and Bibliography

- Bakker, I. (2002): “The Example of Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives for the Poverty Eradication and Democracy in the Developing World” Background paper for Human Development Report 2002 on Fiscal Policy, Accountability and Voice.
- Buldender, D. (2002) “A Global Assessment of Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives” and “A Profile of Country Activities” pp. 83-164 in *Gender Budgets Make Cents*, Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Affairs Department, London
- Budlender, D., J. Hicks and L. Vetten (2002) South Africa: Expanding into diverse initiatives pp. 152-171, in *Gender Budgets Make More Cents*, Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Affairs Department, London
- Çagatay, N, D. Elson, and C. Grown (1995) “Introduction to Gender Adjustment and Macroeconomics”, *World Development*, Vol. 23, No. 11, pp. 1827-1836
- Commonwealth Secretariat (2002) *Gender Budgets Make Cents* Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt and Tanni Mukhopadhyay authors, London.
- Elson, D. (2002a) “Integrating Gender into Government Budgets within a Context of Economic Reform”, in *Gender Budgets Make Cents*, Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Affairs Department, London.
- (2002b) “Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives: Key Dimensions and Practical Examples” in *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experiences*, UNIFEM, NY.
- French Ministry of Economy (2001 and 2003) *Projet de finances pour 2001 (2003), États des credits qui concourent aux actions en faveur des droits des femmes, Annexes Informatives Jaunes* (see below for web links)
- Himmelweit, S. (2002) “Making Visible the Hidden Economy: The Case for Gender-Impact Analysis of Economic Policy”, *Feminist Economics* **8(1)**, pp 49–70.
- Kozyr , E. (2003) Summary of the Russian GRB initiative supported by the Open Society Institute presented at the Gender Budget Workshop, NEWW conference on Women and the Economy, Gdansk, April.
- OECD (2002) “Strengthening Participation In Public Expenditure Management: Policy Recommendations For Key Stakeholders, Jeremy Heinmans, OECD Development Centre, Policy Brief No. 22
- (2001a) “OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency”, Unclassified Document, PUMA/SBO(2000)6/FINAL
- (2001b) “A Gender Perspective On Budgeting -- Country Responses” Public management Service, Public Management Committee, Prepared for the 22nd Annual Meeting of Senior Budget Officials, Paris 21-22 May.
- Pearl, R. (2002) “The Andean Region: A multi-country programme”, pp. 23-42 in *Gender Budgets Make More Cents*, Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender Affairs Department, London

- Philippe-Raynaud, F (2002) “ The yellow Budget Paper and Gender Equality in France” in *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experiences*, New York, p.136-139.
- Sharp, R (2003) *Budgeting for Equity, Gender Budget Initiatives within a framework of performance based budgeting*, UNIFEM, NY.
- (2002) “Moving Forward: Multiple Strategies and Guiding Goals” in *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experiences*, UNIFEM, NY
- UNIFEM (2002), *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experiences*, New York.
- Waring, M (1994) *Si las Mujeres Contaran: Una nueva Economía Feminista (If Women Counted: A new Feminist Economics)*, Vindicación Feminista, Madrid
- Women’s Budget Group, Brochure

## WEB Resources

<http://alize.finances.gouv.fr/budget/jaune01/4232.pdf> and  
<http://alize.finances.gouv.fr/budget/plf2003/jaunes03/1001.pdf> French Ministry of  
Economy Yellow papers on the advancement of women

<http://www.olis.oecd.org/olis/2001doc.nsf/NEWRMSENGREF?OpenView&Start=1&Count=100&Expand=21.12#21.12> The document on the

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/13/1905258.pdf> Best practices for budgetary  
transparency from the OECD

<http://www.olis.oecd.org/olis/2001doc.nsf/87fae4004d4fa67ac125685d005300b3/c1256985004c66e3c1256a5300380be4?OpenDocument>

[http://www.sfgov.org/site/dosw\\_page.asp?id=19795](http://www.sfgov.org/site/dosw_page.asp?id=19795) The City and County of San  
Francisco Department on the Status of Women Gender Analysis guidelines

[http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/background\\_papers/2002/Bakker\\_2002.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/background_papers/2002/Bakker_2002.pdf)  
Background paper for Human Development Report 2002 on Fiscal Policy, Accountability  
and Voice: The Example of Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives for the Poverty  
Eradication and Democracy in the Developing World report

[www.gender-budgets.org](http://www.gender-budgets.org) web site of the UNIFEM-IDRC-Commonwealth Secretariat  
initiative including various links and documents

[http://www.emakunde.es/actualidad/presupuestos/indice\\_.htm](http://www.emakunde.es/actualidad/presupuestos/indice_.htm) Basque Country initiative  
materials in Spanish including digital library of various documents in English and  
Spanish and some also in Basque.

## ANNEX 1

**List of countries by location scope and results of GRB analysis**

Country	Initiating institution/s	Stage	Political Location	Sectors or Departments Analysed	Instruments used	Concrete steps taken
United Kingdom	Civil Society	Continuous rapport with government and introducing changes suggested	National and Regional	Tax and benefit systems	Gender-disaggregated Revenue Incidence Analysis and Gender-disaggregated Analysis of the Impact of the Budget on Time Use	Changes in taxing and benefit policies
Sweden	Central government	Assessing results and planning implementation of changes	National	Various departments	Gender-disaggregated Public Expenditure Incidence Analysis	Recommendations and monitoring of possible changes
Canada	Civil Society	Continuous lobbying in order to introduce changes suggested	National	Tax and benefit systems	Beneficiary assessment and Alternative use of military spending and policies affecting women	Recommendations
United States of America	Civil Society and local government	Continuous lobbying in order to introduce changes suggested	National and Local	Various departments at the local level	Beneficiary assessment	Recommendations
France	Central government	Assessing results and planning implementation of changes	National	Various departments	Gender-disaggregated Public Expenditure Incidence Analysis and Gender aware Budget Statement	Recommendations and monitoring of possible changes
Spain	Local Government	Assessing results and planning implementation of changes	Regional and Sub-Regional	Various departments	Beneficiary assessment adn ad hoc analysis of progamme expenditure	Recommendations
Italy	Local Government	Assessing results and planning implementation of changes	Regional and Local	Labour market and transport based on analysis of indicators	Indicator based methodology, ad hoc for the specific circumstances of the regional level. To some extent also gender dissagregated analysis of the impact of the budget on time use	Recommendations
Belgium	Federal Government		National	Minsitry of Finance and Other Line Minsitries	Using the three Catagories of Expenditures: targeted at women, equal opportunities and General budget the analysis of the budget revealed data and analysis in some ministries for the frist two and less for the third one	Recommendations and a second stage is planned involving civil society and parliamentarians
Russia	Civil society	Results have not been taken yet on board	National and Regional	Labour market and tax and benefit systems	Gender-disaggregated Revenue Incidence Analysis	Recommendations