



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR **PEACE & FREEDOM**

Good Practice Case Study: **Equidad de Género and Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Mexico**

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Overview

Gender-Responsive Budgeting is a tool involving programming and budgeting to modify negative impacts caused by the gendered social order by addressing gender inequalities. Gender-responsive budgets address changes in both law and political frameworks and ultimately lead to a more efficient use of resources.

Mexican civil society organization Equidad de Género has been training governmental authorities on Gender-Responsive Budgeting for 20-odd years. By doing so, it aims to help government agencies to generate and allocate their resources in a way that affects men, women or however identified equitably.

What are women doing to create change?

Equidad de Género uses the following methodology to implement Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Mexico.

1. Carry out gender diagnostics
 - This requires an analysis of the differentiated conditions of the population and specific inequalities within it
 - This stage also involves a sectoral and thematic gendered analysis. For example, when working with a highway authority, Equidad de Género would promote a disaggregation of data by sex, age and other conditions. The diagnostic would also consider contextual situations, such as persistent organised crime and the extreme conditions under which male drivers work (i.e. extensive periods of lack of sleep, and use of drugs to stay awake in order to keep on driving and avoid the risk of exposure to organised crime). An agreement would then be signed with the local police, who would be an integral part of implementing the project. By examining who generally uses the highway in question, and what overlapping issues they may be dealing with, the product itself would effectively consider all these issues – allowing the highway to be transformed to address the needs of the targeted population



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- In carrying out this gender diagnostic stage, Equidad de Género trusts the expertise of the people working in its sectors, as they know by experience where the women, men or however identified are, what their differentiated needs and interests are, and which are the installed institutional capacities to address them

2. Commence a programmatic revision

- This involves an analysis of the program as it currently exists in comparison to the results shown in the gender diagnostic - and the re-prioritisation of the program's actions
- This analysis should be undertaken by the government institution itself. This way, the solutions proposed will be aligned to its faculties and mandate, maximising the changes of effective implementation.
- This approach also implies that an authority doesn't have to fix everything all at once, but rather it can simply focus on addressing inequality that occurs within its range of action. For instance, an institution providing services of water should focus in the challenges and inequalities that women face to guarantee their human rights in relation access to water, rather than attempt to change the entire gender social order

3. Prioritise actions

- All sectors have a gendered impact – even those sectors that are said to have no direct population, meaning that normally there is no way to include a gender perspective in its action
- A gendered analysis of these impacts - and of institutional capacities to address those impacts - can ensure that certain measures are prioritised.

4. Conducting budgetary re-allocation

- A budget must be allocated in direct proportion to actions. If certain new actions are to be prioritised, then on some occasions the budget will need to go through a re-allocation process
- In order to ensure this re-allocation is safe, some technical measures may be implemented - for example, introducing non-transferability and non-reducibility criteria for those programs that already underwent the gendered analysis. Any such technical measures will need to be procured both in the Legislative and the Executive powers
- Another issue worth considering is the possibility of making a link between revenue and expenditure. Activists have proposed that the revenues of some negative impacts should be deviated towards more “positive expenditures”. Some fiscal frameworks allow to make this connection: For example, in the US, taxes for tobacco goes directly to health care for lung cancer. However, this type of linkage is only possible within some regulatory frameworks.
- Equidad de Género then uses gender indicators to measure the process, result and impact of the program in question



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5. Following up:

- Depending on any problems that arose during the above phases, some measures to strengthen the results may need to be developed, such as training staff, changing actions according to results, clarifying if (and how) the gap is diminishing, and determining expected impacts in the following years

Impact

Women's use of Gender-Responsive Budgeting has had an impact!

Successful outcomes from Equidad de Género's work in Mexico include:

- The introduction of safety booths, better lighting and panic buttons along a deserted highway in Mexico, where women had previously been assaulted;
- The improvement of uneven cobblestone streets in Mexico, where women with strollers faced mobility issues;
- The increased responsiveness of one government agency to all people - including pregnant women, chronic ill persons and people with disabilities - simply by spending a dime on a piece of paper allocating one waiting line as a line for pregnant women and people with disabilities. This got such a good response that it prompted the government agency to form teams which then actively went into the community and sought out pregnant women and people with disabilities;
- The devising of measures going beyond gender roles to promote sports and exercise for women of all ages;
- A shift in measures to address the risk of dengue: rather than ask women to clean the backyards where men store their old stuff, to avoid possible nests of mosquitoes, men were now addressed in the program;
- An expanded vaccination program, calling men to take charge of the health of their children; and
- The differentiated transportation in Mexico City to prevent sexual harassment; for example, different wagons in subway and bus rapid transit system in peak times, and buses in specific lines that are for women/children the/elderly/people with disabilities only.

Challenges

- Government agencies often do not see that there is a "gender aspect" to their work, and/or may not know that they are adding to the problem by failing to invest in the infrastructure linked to gender issues



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- For example, a government may say gender violence is a priority, but fail to invest in the appropriate infrastructure such as domestic violence shelters and prevention education
- The recent push for further counter-terror initiatives has seen gender funding cut in many states, including in countries where gender equality has been considered a given, such as in several Nordic states
- Gender-blindness, as well as a structural resistance for gender mainstreaming, remain very real challenges. This is also true in the military sector, where blunt hostility against gender mainstreaming can be the norm. Methodologies to address those resistances from the start need to be devised
- Mainstreaming across all sectors remains a challenge, especially because some sectors (e.g. transport) are considered of general utility, and the institutions have no mandate to have access to the data needed to devise further measures. In addition, other sectors (e.g. infrastructure and energy) are said to have no direct population, and therefore some believe there is no way to include a gender perspective in their work.

Lessons learned/recommendations

- Gender-Responsive Budgeting is about well-spent money that is more effective, rather than simply moving a percentage of funds from one place to another
- It's also about shifting the rules of money and actions, not just money itself
- Member states must recognise that budgets are not just about money: they are a declaration of priority, in that they set out the quality of activities and the order they will be addressed
- Budgets are interlinked with programs in the first place, but also laws and technical procedures that need to be modified as well
- Policies should be aimed at gender equality, rather than being viewed as "for women", as policies for women risk reproducing traditional gender roles and inequalities
- Budgets should address the fact that persons, women and men, are diverse. Therefore, a program should not be addressed with a single measure; rather, budgets should include differentiated actions that bear in mind the diversity of population
- Implementing Gender-Responsive Budgeting is a long-term process. But by changing one program at a time - one law at a time- a difference can be made!