

5. Short Presentations of some more Gender Budgeting Initiatives in Europe

5.1 Austria: Watchgroup. Gender and Public Finance

by Elisabeth Klatzer

The origins of the Watchgroup. Gender & Public Finance go back to 2000/2001. A group of women from NGOs, public institutions and universities initially aimed at making the concept of Gender Budgeting known in Austria, spreading knowledge and motivating both government, opposition parties and NGOs to pursue the issue further. With this in mind, the group published a book in 2002: "Frauen Macht Budgets, Staatsfinanzen aus Geschlechterperspektive" (available in German only). This book introduces the concept of gender budgeting, its potentials and its limits, reviews the main international initiatives and presents some approaches to engendering the Austrian federal budget. The work done on the Austrian federal budget addresses the overall macroeconomic strategy and its impacts on women as well as gender impacts of government revenue (focusing on taxes, social security and user fees) and selected areas of public expenditure (education and research, labour market policy and funding for women's organisations). The analysis is by no means comprehensive but is intended to illustrate how gender budget analysis may be done in practice. The expenditure analysis in the area of education and research is guided by the Swiss example and methodology.

The purpose of the book was twofold: governments at all levels (federal, regional and local) are addressed with a list of demands to introduce the concept of Gender Budgeting in a meaningful way into government policy, and specific recommendations are given how to change policies in order to achieve more gender equality.

The Watchgroup pursues the approach that Gender Budgeting is much more than a Gender analysis of government income and revenue. The aspect of transparency of the whole budgeting process, the translation of results of the analysis into alternative policies, the inclusion of the overall macroeconomic strategy into the analysis as well as the focus on participatory processes are included as equally important. This approach equally guides all subsequent work.

In response to the book and the promotion of its ideas, attention was drawn on the issue, especially from women activists, NGOs as well as opposition parties (Greens and Social Democrats). Many women active in local politics have been motivated to think about how to introduce the idea of Gender Budgeting in their practical political work. At this point there was a high demand for readymade recipes on how to do gender budgeting and disappointment when discovering that gender budgeting requires perseverance.

Especially as a response to the demand for more practical assistance in how to do gender budgeting at the local level, some women from the Watchgroup started a new project, the development of a handbook with more practical guidance on how to introduce Gender Budgeting at the regional and local level (published in 2004, available in German only). Furthermore, a workshop design was developed in cooperation with WIDE Austria, building on the experience in Economic Literacy workshops to foster training of political activists and interested groups.

Governments at all levels increasingly have shown interest in the concept and embarked upon pilot projects within public administration (as in Vienna) or commissioned external pilot studies (as the federal government or the Province of Upper Austria). All these pilots are (about to be) finished. Here in Austria, we are at a crucial point again, the challenge is to move from pilots to implementation in regular administrative work.

In 2004 the Austrian federal government decided to implement Gender Budgeting. A Gender Budgeting Working group has been set up but without adequate political power or clear guidelines and without additional resources. And somewhat hastily a section on "Gender Budgeting" was included in the 2005 and 2006 budget material. Due to little preparation and coordination the material in-

cluded is mainly a description of policies without analysis and little reference to budgetary allocations. Public officials involved are somewhat frustrated about this additional task. Facing this limited performance of the government so far, a strategy of some members of the Watchgroup has been to cooperate with the government officials in charge and to offer expertise. This was motivated by the hope to influence the scope of the exercise and push towards broad implementation and institutionalisation. The question of whether this cooperation strategy shows the expected effects remains open to date.

Many members of the Watchgroup who have actively participated in assisting and consulting the governments to develop tools and methods as well as strategies for implementation see the need to re-focus. Now it seems that time has come to focus more on external lobbying for meaningful ways to implement Gender Budgeting and for equality-oriented policies, on monitoring developments from the outside, on pursuing independent research. The question of Gender Budgeting as an instrument to promote democratisation of budgetary policies emerges as a special area of research interest.

One major constraint of the work of the Watchgroup is the lack of resources, both money and time. Several members have small children, many full time jobs and/or many other civil society engagements. And it is very hard to get funding for such activities in Austria. So far there was barely enough money to be raised to finance the material, all women power going into the project remains unpaid.

There have been some attempts to spread the ideas among NGOs in order to build up civil society pressure demanding governments to take action. But it is hard to maintain the level of activities. Again, this is mainly due to the lack of time and funding. Currently Austria has a conservative/right wing government pursuing neo-liberal policies, including restrictive budgetary policies. Currently it is getting more and more difficult for NGOs, especially women's organisations, to get funding.

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5.2 Germany: The “Initiative for a Gender Sensitive Budget in Berlin”

by Regina Frey

The “Initiative for a Gender Sensitive Budget in Berlin” was founded in May 2001 after a workshop on Gender Budgeting organised by of the NGO’s Women’s Forum.

The goals of the initiative are:

- Lobbying for a qualified implementation of Gender Budgeting as a strategy to assess the gender impact of policies on the state level in Berlin (“Länder”-level in Germany); and

- Providing a critical reflection on the ongoing implementation of GB in Berlin, which started in 2002 – for example we did a “shadow report”, commenting on the second report on Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting in Berlin delivered by the Berlin Senat.

All members of the Initiative are working on a voluntary basis. The participants in this group are women from NGOs, foundations, scientists, parties and labour unions. The initiative is part of the participation process because it functions as an NGO. However, it is connected to groups of the women’s movement in Berlin, though this could be intensified. It was involved in the Berlin people’s Budget Initiatives, however many do not longer exist. In Berlin Lichtenberg a people’s budget is going on, also reflecting gender-aspects.

The initiative was active in the Berlin-election in 2001, introducing Gender Budgeting into the election campaign. A first step was an open letter to the parties in Berlin and the representatives of the local government. This letter was signed by 104 individuals and 26 organisations/ associations. The Senate from Berlin decided to implement GB with support from women from different parties. After the election, the initiative set up talks with politicians and selected members of the Berlin administration in order to get Gender Budgeting going quickly.

The initiative has a seat in the political process in Berlin the working group for Gender Budgeting in the respective commission (*Landeskommission*).

The initiative did not analyse budgets by itself because the administration is doing so in Berlin. The Berlin Senate nowadays focuses on a benefits incidents analysis, relying heavily on quantitative data. The Initiative is pushing for making the analysis more qualitative orientated.

In the “shadow report” of the initiative to comment on the implementation process of GB in Berlin the following points are highlighted:

- It is not enough to state that there are quantitative disparities in the budget and not look at the causes of these disparities. It would be helpful to interlink Gender Mainstreaming with Gender Budgeting activities to design policies in the respective sectors which are addressing disparities or actively promoting gender equality.
- The Initiative holds a seat in the main implementation committee. We push topics like communication strategy between politicians and the administration, to build up gender competence through external experts, also to establish a network with universities, to demand financial support for the process.
- Some members of the initiative are working as external experts in the implementation process and are involved in the pre-feasibility study for the implementation of Gender Budgeting on national level.

The initiative tries to influence the budgetary process by lobbying: Shadow report, public relations (flyer), networking with other civic groups, critical questioning of politicians, organising events in GB. We have a Germany wide Gender Budgeting webpage, where you can find all activities and reports: www.gender-budgets.de.

We are initiated network meetings with other Gender Budgeting initiatives and groups in Germany and we started with an co-ordinated activities (letter to the administration in Munich).

Lobbying activities include presentations of the initiative activities at local, national and international meetings and congresses (Berlins women’s centre, at Femme Global, at international congresses from political Foundations Heinrich Böll), in the local government, presentation of the activities in Poland.

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In 2005 we organised a workshop with the persons responsible for Gender from different parties, the involved administration and the public.

Gender Budgeting at the national level in Germany:

- In October 2002 the newly elected government agreed in the Coalition agreement that „Gender Mainstreaming should be sustainably implemented as a method in all governmental departments. And that Gender Budgeting will be a part of this strategy.“
- In June 2003: A sub-division on Gender Budgeting was set up to prepare proposals for the implementation of Gender Budgeting at the national level until 2006.
- A feasibility study on Gender Budgeting was carried out by external experts (not published yet).

Gender Budgeting in Berlin:

- The Initiative for a Gender Sensitive Budget in Berlin was founded in May 2001.
- After the election of the new local government in 2001 Gender Budgeting was adopted into the coalition agreement. Women from different parties focused on Gender Budgeting, for example with a paper to the topic from the Social Democratic Party.
- One year later, in 2002, Gender Budgeting was successfully integrated into the Gender Mainstreaming strategy as a political guideline.
- In 2004 the Berlin parliament decided to implement a law of procedure to ensure that GM is a top down process and to introduce progress reports on Gender Budgeting at administration level for the budget period 2004/2005.
- At district level a control body was established.
- In Berlin twenty-one (21) Gender Mainstreaming and four (4) Gender Budgeting pilot projects were developed in 12 government and district administrations.
- All involved administrations were supported by external organisations- and gender experts and the top management participated in gender trainings.
- Four GB projects were developed: three projects at district level and one project at the local ministry level. The aim is that all sectors in the administration have to implement GB on a step to step basis until 2006.
- The Berlin Administration started to collect data to carry out benefits incident analysis.
- At the district levels the focus is on areas like libraries, sports, health care, children and youth.
- On the senate level the budgetary position for „economic development“ is analysed.
- The selection of budgetary positions and products was made from a practical point of view:
 - Individual development measures (e.g. counselling or accommodation)
 - Use of public institutions (libraries)
 - Direct financial distribution of resources

The administration has also done an assessment on sex-disaggregated data available in Berlin as a pre-condition for Budget analyses.