

6. Round Table Discussion: Gender Budgeting as an instrument to promote emancipatory policies?

Key Objectives of the Round Table

The purpose of this discussion was aiming at increasing awareness for the necessity to introduce Gender Budgeting, both at the national as well as the European level. Therefore the idea was to involve politicians and key representatives from the administration in order to shape their perception of how to Gender Budgeting can contribute towards reaching gender equality goals. The event was open to the public in order to give the general audience an opportunity to challenge the official views presented and give voice to broader concerns. A large, interested audience attended the round table discussion.

Discussants

- Diane Elson, Women's Budget Group, Great Britain
- Eva Lichtenberger, Green Party, Member of the European Parliament
- Barbara Prammer, Social Democrats, Vice-President of the Austrian Parliament
- Christa Schlager, Watchgroup. Gender and Public Finance
- Gerhard Steger, Director General, GD Budget, Austrian Ministry of Finance
- Daniel Waterschoot, DG Employment, European Commission³¹

Moderation: Margit Schratzenstaller, Watchgroup. Gender and Public Finance

6.1 Diane Elson: Gender budgeting has a lot of potential to promote emancipatory policies - but this potential has not yet been realized

What does Gender budgeting (GB) mean?

The core idea is that in order to get better implementation of policies for gender equality we need to 'follow the money'.

Council of Europe definition of GB: 'Gender based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues in order to promote gender equality'

The gap between new laws and policy statements and budgetary practice

Too often new laws and policy statements are not linked to mobilization and allocation of resources in government budgets.

For instance, the EU promotes the objective of increasing women's labour market participation, but at the same time many member countries have tax systems that discourage this by imposing a higher marginal tax rate on married women's earnings.

Governments claim to be mainstreaming gender but use criteria for the allocation of business support that indirectly discriminate against women.

New laws on domestic violence are introduced but the agencies that must implement them are underfunded.

³¹ In spite of a very early invitation the European Commission chose to be present at the desk officer level only.

Netherlands example: progress, but incomplete

- Until 2001 Personal Income Tax had allowance for dependent spouse
- Disincentive for dependent spouse to do paid work
- Low labour market participation of married women
- Allowance abolished in 2001 and tax allowance introduced for parents who combine paid work with family responsibilities
- Women's participation in labour market rose from 39% in 1999 to 66.2 % in 2003.
- But 72.8% of employed women had part-time jobs, compared to 29.3% EU average
- Lack of child care facilities, lack of transport facilities
- Time schedules of public services not attuned to mothers working fulltime
- Reliance of public services on women's voluntary labour

Different practices, common principles

- Not just one way to implement GB
- A variety of tools and procedures:
 - Gender-aware policy appraisal
 - Gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessments
 - Gender-disaggregated expenditure incidence analysis
 - Gender-disaggregated tax incidence analysis
 - Gender-disaggregated impact in time use
 - Gender-aware medium term economic policy framework
 - Gender-aware budget statement
- Select tools according to context and objectives
- Adapt existing tools to specific circumstances
- Develop new tools
- Note that GB analysis is not just about expenditure and tax incidence analysis

Underlying the diversity of GB practices, one basic question:

Does the way the government raises and spends money:

1. Reduce gender inequality
2. Leave gender inequality unchanged
3. Increase gender inequality

Some Clarifications

- GB does NOT imply that 50 per cent of tax revenues should be paid by males and 50 per cent by females, because women's incomes are lower than men's
- GB does NOT imply that 50 per cent of spending on EACH programme should accrue to females and 50 per cent should accrue to males, because women and girls and men and boys are present in different proportions in the groups relevant to different programmes

- GB does not necessarily have to cover every item of expenditure and revenue, but it should not be confined to social sectors

Sweden: introducing GB: an example of good practice

- 2003 gender budgeting project in 3 policy areas: Regional Development, Social Welfare, Transport
- 2004 began plan for implementing gender mainstreaming in all policy areas with special focus on the budgetary process, beginning with identification of gender equality targets and indicators
- Gender equality annex to the budget finance bill
- Focus in 2004 was economic costs of parenthood
 - SEK 300 000 (€ 30.000) for average cohabiting mother
 - SEK 10 000 (€ 1.000) for average cohabiting father

Limitations on potential of GB

- Limited in many cases to small pilot projects on selected expenditures
- Pilot projects focus only on distribution between women and men, girls and boys, of relatively small amounts of money. Adequacy of levels of funding in relation to policy objectives is not considered
- Results of pilot projects not published
- Learning from pilot projects not institutionalised
- No changes in tax and expenditure as result of GB pilot projects
- No linkage to broader economic policy framework

Research to improve the emancipatory potential of GB

- Develop a scorecard to evaluate GB initiatives by EU national, regional and local governments:
 - Low marks for small pilots
 - Top marks for GBs that result in tax and expenditure changes that promote gender equality
- Comparative research in EU on trends in public finance and their relation to gender equality
- Comparative analysis of gender dimensions of budgetary responses to the aging of the population and the pensions and care crises, to identify policies consistent with gender equality. E.g. budgetary support for gender equality in provision of unpaid care

6.2 Christa Schlager: Gender Budgeting - ein Instrument zur Förderung emanzipatorischer Politik in Europa?

Was ist Gender Budgeting?

Es gibt verschiedene Definitionen, mit einigen Gemeinsamkeiten: Wesentliche politische Ansprüche von Gender Budgeting sind die Erreichung von Gleichstellung bzw. Geschlechtergerechtigkeit sowie eine Demokratisierung der Budget- und Wirtschaftspolitik (Budlender 2002, Elson 1998, BEIGEWUM 2002).