

CASE STUDY 2: GENDER BUDGET INITIATIVE: THE CASE OF TANZANIA

Background

This case illustrates the potential of collective action for influencing and gaining a seat at the negotiation table of governments to achieve gender equal policy changes and budgetary allocations.

The Tanzania Gender Networking Program (TGNP) is an NGO concerned with facilitating the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality through training and outreach, information generation and dissemination, activism, lobbying and advocacy. Together, with 20 other like-minded NGOs united under the Feminism Activism Coalition (FemAct), the program pioneered the Gender Budget Initiative (GBI) in 1997. The reason for the GBI was the cost sharing and retrenchment policies implemented as part of Structural Adjustment Programs in the 1980s, which impinged on the quality of life of many citizens. At the same time, the policies created a feeling of severe marginalization (from policy and budgetary decision-making) in both citizens and the civil society that represented their interests.

Goals of the GBI

The GBI was initiated as an advocacy tool that called for more people, oriented and participatory development strategies, and equitable resource allocation. The main aims of GBI are:

- To promote examination of policy, decision-making processes and resource allocation/utilization with a gender perspective.
- To promote the design and adoption of tools for gender mainstreaming of budget policies and budgets.
- To strengthen lobbying and advocacy skills of civil society actors to campaign for participation in resource allocation processes.
- To organize and carry out a lobbying campaign to influence policymakers and other key actors such as donor partners.
- To provide popular information to educate and solicit support from the public.

The initiative was thus multi-functional, combining advocacy, lobbying, information activities and capacity building and training activities.

Approach to the GBI

The main strategy aimed to work through a broad coalition of NGOs. These included actors from different countries, who had prior experience in gender budgeting, such as members of a similar initiative in South Africa. The coalition identified strategic entry points for influencing key policies, structures and actors within government, parliament and civil society.

The coalition focused on four areas: (i) the National Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance as the key sectors in planning and budgeting; (ii) Health and Education, as vital sectors in service delivery; (iii) Agriculture as essential to the livelihood of the majority of men and women, as well as (iv) Industry and Commerce. The coalition established a team of researchers that included gender activists, academics and government planners or budget officers from the sectors involved. Each selected sector was then assigned a research team consisting of an NGO member, an academic and civil servants. The integration of government officials enabled the teams to access data, which would otherwise have been unavailable. It enabled the building of good working relationships between TGNP and the technical people in the ministries. A participatory approach was chosen, which involved stakeholders at the ground level.

The approach worked in such a way to initiate a gender budgeting exercise that was effectively a joint government-NGO exercise.

Activities

The activities of the initiative started off with the collection and analysis of data in the selected ministries by the appointed research teams. The analysis concentrated on the main direction of policy development, planning and budgeting, the decision-making processes, sources of income and the actual allocation of resources both to sectors and to planned and actual outputs.

The findings of this exercise were disseminated to activists, government and donor agencies. The findings were then shared in meetings and public forums with a broad range of stakeholders in civil society, government, the donor world and MPs.

In addition, lobbying activities which tried to get support for regular gender budgeting exercises were undertaken. Gender budgeting and the results of the first audit were summarized in a booklet in a very easy-to-read format. Information is still being produced in local languages and disseminated through media, public fora and a Web site.

The coalition also opened dialogue with government actors, political parties, and parliamentarians on the need to reform laws and policies in order to change gender biases and enable the closing of gender gaps. These activities were complemented by capacity building among coalition members, other NGOs, CBOs and key government actors. Activities in the field of capacity building included training sessions, information sharing, feedback sessions and backstopping through resource persons.

Supporting capacity building tools and instruments for gender budgeting were developed for the Tanzanian context. These included: (i) alternative gendered budget guidelines; (ii) checklists for the Ministry of Finance to facilitate gender mainstreaming of budgetary processes; and (iii) guidelines for the routine collection of gender-disaggregated data for budgeting purposes.

Results

Thus far, the GBI has managed to establish good working relations with government actors in the ministries that were targeted. The government has recognized the GBI and has included gender in the budget guidelines. In 2001, budget guidelines further mandated all ministry, department and agency budget submissions to be prepared with a gender focus. Moreover, the treasury has plans to gender mainstream the budgets of all government sectors. An independent evaluation of GBI in government has shown that the selected sector actors in government have benefited from the gender mainstreaming exercises and capacity training. The Ministry of Water has been particularly forthcoming in making use of GBI activities and has succeeded most in gender mainstreaming their budgets.

In fact, in the six selected sectors, the GBI has contributed toward better institutionalization of gender mainstreaming. Government decided to use the opportunity available to them through the retraining of budget officers for the new requirements of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to also include gender training. Gender budgeting has become a training requirement of the MTEF process, and the TGNP coalition is the main resource of the government for the training.

Due to these efforts, the organization has gained a great deal of access to government structures. TGNP and its partners have also been invited by government and donors to participate in the Public Expenditure Review (PER) as well as the Tanzania Country Assistance Strategy processes. As a participant in these processes, TGNP has been able to advocate for transformations in macro-economic processes, transparency and accountability by government actors and inclusion of a variety of gender perspectives in government decision-making.

Box 7. Gender Budgets Point to Gender Inequalities, Enforce Gender Disaggregation and Evaluation and Help Keep Governments Accountable

Gender-sensitive budgets are efforts aimed at breaking down the government budget in order to analyze its impact on women, men, girls and boys. The budgets examine whether public expenditures are allocated in an equitable way and, hence, promote gender equality. Gender-sensitive budget formulation introduces gender as a cross-cutting criteria into planning and allocation of resources (Hofbauer and Balmori 2003). In more detail, gender budget initiatives analyze the situation of women, men, girls and boys in a given sector; assess the extent to which policies address the situation, and evaluate whether budget allocations are adequate for gender-responsive implementation. They also assess both short-term outputs of expenditure, in order to evaluate how resources are actually spent, and medium- and long-term outcomes or impacts (Budlender 2001). Thus, gender budgets focus on gender awareness and mainstreaming in all aspects of budgeting at national and local levels. The budgets promote the active involvement and participation of women stakeholders, monitor and evaluate government expenditure and revenue from a gender perspective, promote more effective use of resources to achieve both gender equality and human development, stress *reprioritization* rather than an increase in overall government expenditure and emphasize *reorientation* of programs within sectors, rather than changes in the overall amounts allocated to particular sectors. Gender budgets can thus be instrumental for improving accountability and for achieving effective policy implementation.

Lessons and Challenges

The project has been remarkable in that it was able to build a successful alliance between civil society and government, where the experiences of the civil society were accepted and resulted in the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming.

The fact that the gender budgeting exercise requires gender mainstreaming and the collection of gender-disaggregated data as well as gender analysis makes it an ideal tool to institutionalize gender mainstreaming, raise awareness about gender gaps, and encourage gender-aware changes to laws and policies. Gender budgeting is a useful advocacy and learning tool.

The GBI has given civil society a rare opportunity to influence government policy and strategy, as well as those of donors. These opportunities will have to worked out better and more efficiently by TGNP as its capacity to deal with macro-economic issues increases.

TGNP and its partners is furthermore in a unique position to act as conduit between the so-called “grassroots” and government. The partnership encourages participatory approaches to policy formulation and evaluation. The fact that gender budgeting will enable civil society and citizens to hold government accountable for following and putting into practice policy promises has a potentially large impact, but needs to be strengthened.

By viewing government officials as partners in the research and capacity building processes, government and civil society were able to learn from each other and capitalize on each other's strengths. It has also given the NGOs involved insight into the constraints of government, while alleviating some of the bureaucratic red tape that can often hinder a project. At the same time, a continuing barrier remains apathy and frustration on the part of budgetary planners caused by hierarchical processes that gave them little control over the actual budget allocations or process. At the same time, an additional challenge remains determining strategies to lobby government to genuinely transform government processes.

However, the influence that could be established on government policies/strategies at the macro-economic level has been repeated during the PRSP process. This process has unfortunately largely excluded consultation with and inclusion of the concerns raised by various stakeholders, including TGNP and the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, who submitted a lengthy and elaborate document suggesting changes to the Interim PRSP to reflect gender gaps and differences (McGee, Levene and Hughes 2002). Apparently the collaborative work of TGNP with the Ministry of Finance was not deemed important enough for inclusion in the PRSP.

Despite the efforts of the GBI for which the agriculture sector was one of the chosen entry points, the 2001 Agricultural Sector Strategy (ASDS) and additional inputs by the MCDGC have not taken gender equity goals on board. In fact, although agriculture supports the livelihoods of more than 80 percent of Tanzania's population, and women contribute by far the largest share of work to the sector (the overwhelming majority are small-scale farmers), the ASDS vision for the agricultural sector concentrates on creating an enabling environment for the commercialization of agriculture with a stress on productivity and profitability.

The needs of the majority of small-scale farmers -- women prominently among them -- including collateral free, affordable agricultural credit are, however, not addressed. It is merely assumed that the commercialization of agriculture will trickle down to small-scale farmers sufficiently to increase household incomes and thus reduce rural poverty and enhance food security. No effort has been made to look at the different needs of men and women, to address the increased empowerment of women and their control over incomes and produce. In fact, farmers are treated as androgynous creatures and households appear to be the lowest unit of accounting (ASDS 2004). None of TGNP, the Ministry of Gender, and the gender focal points of the Ministry of Agriculture were consulted regarding the content of the ministries' major strategy until the Final Draft had already been written and accepted.

Summary

While the GBI has experienced success in integrating gender concerns in macro-economic policy, and in facilitating the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming, the initiative has had problems taking effect outside the circumscribed areas of influence. This brings us back to the earlier observation that initiatives, such as gender budgets, can be effective only if they are undertaken in an environment where gender mainstreaming is institutionalized in all ministries, and not only at the center but also at the district level. In Tanzania, gender focal points have remained very weak, even at national level. There, they have been marginalized in the organizational structure and been starved for resources and opportunities to be of influence. Altogether, the gender focal points are missing at the district level.

The GBI constitutes a valid and important step in identifying and addressing gender imbalances in involving and empowering civil society and in equipping its members with skills to hold government accountable, as well as building the capacity of government to mainstream gender. The GBI thus represents a viable force which should be utilized in the PRSP process, sector policy and strategy formulation processes, both for diagnostics and monitoring and evaluation.

Tasks:

1. The participants should be asked to consider the benefits gender budgeting might have on gender mainstreaming. You should ask:
 - If gender budgeting will also encourage gender mainstreaming in ministries, which are not normally very gender conscious?
 - What institutional requirements have to be met for gender budgeting to have an impact in the ministries that are engaging in gender-budgeting?
 - How can gender budgeting be better integrated to have a greater effect?

2. The participants should consider the Tanzanian approach to gender budgeting and reflect on the pros and cons of situating budgeting within government only or within the NGO sector.

Notes for Instructor:

1. The trainer should encourage participants to consider the workings of the gender budgeting, clearly to understand that this is not a separate gender budget, but a gender-disaggregated look at expenditures. They should be able to point out the inclusion of the gender budget into normal procedures on the one hand, and the PER process on the other, is a huge success. He/she should also make sure that participants understand that the budget process caused government ministries to collect gender disaggregated data and even forced them to do some gender training.

The exercise should also bring participants again back to the fact that without institutionalization of gender mainstreaming (support of management, gender focal points with clout, sanctions etc.) gender budgeting will remain an isolated “add-on and quickly forgotten” task only.

2. The results of the task should consider that perhaps, the Tanzanian strategy worked out well because it avoids two dangers:
- Placing gender budgeting responsibility in the NGO sector only could mean marginalization and would reduce the possibility of capacity building of ministries and NGO sector alike.
 - Placing gender budgeting responsibility with the government only would build the capacity of government but would diminish the capacity building of the NGO sector and forestall the greater participation of the NGOs in the budgeting process.

Participants should understand that the NGO/government/academics cooperation builds the capacities of all, creates opportunities for better and deeper monitoring and evaluations and offers NGOs the possibility to lobby government more effectively.