



## GRB INITIATIVES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

### **The first initiative in the world: Australia**

The first GRB initiative in the world was established in Australia in 1984 after a change in government. The initiative eventually covered budgets of federal, state and territorial governments to assess the impact of expenditures and some elements of revenue on women and girls. The results were published in women's budget statements that were presented together with the annual budget documents. The government-led initiative was coordinated by the Offices on the Status of Women but was abandoned at the federal level in 1996 after another change in government.

### **South Africans Women's Budget Initiative**

One of the best documented GRB initiatives was established in South Africa in 1995 after the end of the apartheid system. In contrast to the government-led Australian initiative, the South African Women's Budget Initiative (WBI) was led by two policy research NGOs and a parliamentary committee. Within the first three years, the initiative analysed all 27 votes of the national budget from a gender perspective, and later also focused on local level budgets and revenue. The detailed findings of the research from the first years were published in books. In addition, the initiative produced shorter easy-to-read booklets that summarized the research findings and were disseminated to a wider public. In cooperation with a gender training network, the WBI developed workshop material for capacity building

activities related to gender responsive budgeting.

### **Growing number after the Fourth World Conference on Women**

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women that was held in Beijing in 1995 gender budget initiatives have been established in more than 60 countries across all continents, and the number is still growing. The initiatives differ in terms of

- *Actors:* In some countries, governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Women's Affairs take the lead. In others, GRB was taken forward by NGOs, research institutes or parliamentarians.
- *Scope of analysis:* Some initiatives cover all portfolios of the budget. Most start by working on pilot sectors seen as having special relevance in terms of gender issues or which account for a large proportion of the budget. Typically, in developing countries these include education, health and agriculture.
- *Tools and approach adopted:* Several tools for gender responsive budgeting have been proposed, e.g. gender aware policy appraisals or gender-disaggregated benefit incidence analysis. Each initiative has to choose the tool(s) and approaches that are most suitable for the local context, for the skills and purposes of the actors, and which fit best with the country's budget system.



## ...grb initiatives in other countries

- *Activities carried out:* Initiatives differ in the kind of activities they carry out. Some initiatives focus on research, some on awareness raising or advocacy, and others on capacity building.

## What have GRB initiatives achieved so far?

In different countries gender responsive budget initiatives have achieved the following:

- Greater awareness on gender impacts of budgetary decisions
- Increased capacity to analyse budgets from a gender perspective
- Reprioritisation of public expenditures in favour of women and girls
- Changes in budget guidelines and formats
- Debate on gender issues in parliament and mention of gender issues in the budget speeches of Ministers of Finance
- Greater transparency of budget processes
- Increased participation by civil society in the budgetary process

## What can we learn from other countries experiences?

- Quick results should not be expected from GRB initiatives. The integration of a gender perspective in the different stages of the budget cycle is a medium to long term task. Therefore, perseverance and the institutionalization of gender responsive budgeting approaches are important.
- GRB has proved to be more successful

in countries where inside and outside government initiatives complement and collaborate with each other. This necessitates mutual trust, transparency and access to information and documents.

- Often the proposed tools can not be applied because sex-disaggregated data are lacking. The collection of sex-disaggregated data and time use data must therefore be one of the first steps.
- The size of the budget is determined by macroeconomic decisions based on macroeconomic models. For a budget to be truly gender-responsive, the macroeconomic model that informs it needs to incorporate a gender perspective. In addition, the gender implications of monetary, trade and exchange rate policies need to be assessed.

### *Lessons from GRB initiatives in Commonwealth countries*

- a. Political and bureaucratic commitment and the right attitude are required*
- b. National women's machineries need strengthening*
- c. Ministries of Finance and sectoral ministries must take ownership*
- d. Awareness and capacity-building need to be enhanced*
- e. Donors need to commit to longer-term involvement*
- f. Civil society organisations play an important role*
- g. Ongoing monitoring, review and appropriate data collection are required*

*Source: Commonwealth Secretariat: Gender-responsive Budgeting in the Commonwealth: Progress and Challenges, 2004, p. 4-6.*

