

Mainstreaming gender equality into budget programming in Ukraine

After seven years of work in implementing gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), efforts at all levels of government have yielded significant results

#5 Gender equality
#16 Peace, justice and strong institutions



Graduation from GRB training, Photo: Andrei Novitsky



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Since its emergence in the mid-1980s, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) work has taken many forms, but the aim has always remained the same: applying a gender lens to public finance management (PFM) institutions and practices to ensure women and men get equal access to and benefits from public services. Budgetary decisions reflect values, power relations and real political priorities, and in Ukraine, gender equality gaps remain large.

In 2012, the Swedish Government launched pilot projects in the Ivano-Frankivsk and Lugansk oblasts (regions) aimed at showcasing the benefits of GRB to government stakeholders and popularising the process. As a result of the successes seen in these pilot areas, the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine officially requested bilateral cooperation with Sweden to facilitate the national introduction of GRB in February 2013.

No obstacle big enough

During its seven-year implementation, the GRB project was the largest global international project of its kind. Funded by the Swedish Government and implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the main purpose of the GRB project was defined as “increased economic efficiency and transparency in budget allocations that take into account the different needs of different groups of women and men”. Four key outcomes were expected:

- The concept of GRB is introduced in Ukraine and rolled out nation-wide;
- Selected line ministries introduce GRB in regular budget preparation;
- Oblasts introduce GRB in the regular budget preparation; and
- All relevant actors at state and oblast level are actively engaged and cooperating on GRB.

The project was marked by turbulent times for Ukraine, from the Revolution of Independence that coincided with the project launch, through many changes of government and finally, the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit in the last year of implementation. Despite the many challenges, GRB has become a prominent and recognised public finance reform in Ukraine. Gender equality discussions, which are often far removed from fiscal and financial debates, are now a central part of public finance discourse, and an important segment of measuring and reporting performance of budget programmes across sectors. The GRB project has laid the foundation for sustainable and continuous work on making budget process more equitable, transparent and gender responsive.

218

budget programmes analysed and improved from a gender perspective

3000

civil servants trained in application of GRB

Training and education through gender analysis

Gender analysis of existing budget programmes was at the centre of the GRB work in Ukraine from the earliest stage. Data collected from gender analyses supported not only relevant changes in the programmes to make them more gender responsive but also

Donor
Sida

Client
Ministry of Finance of Ukraine

Location
Ukraine

Contract value
€7,229,000

Duration
2013-2020



“All budget process stake-holders should realise that reducing gender gaps is not only a matter of the country’s dignity, but also a potential for increasing labour productivity, for economic growth. This is a powerful factor for the growth of budget revenues; therefore, the analysis of budgetary decisions’ influence on gender equality should become a reflexive action for our economists, politicians and civil servants. It is vital to understand the essence and importance of this instrument through painstaking training, through examples and dissemination of information”

Yuriy Dzhyhyr, Former Deputy Minister of Finance

A representative of a Key Spending Unit receiving a certification after gender analysis of the budget programmes in 2019.



As a result of gender budget analysis of HIV/AIDS programme in Vinnytsia, now more men in risk groups are being tested for HIV, and the number of early detection cases has been steadily increasing. This is because a gender analysis of the budget programme “Counteracting HIV Infection and AIDS” (2016-2020) in 2018 showed significant gender differences in the way preventive measures are carried out. Namely, there was a significant prevalence of men (61.1%) who had viral hepatitis compared to women (38.9%). At the same time, testing and prevention was primarily focused on urban areas and sectors in which women dominate (education, health). Therefore, in analysing those receiving consultation and testing, women comprised 62% between 2015 and 2016 in comparison to men (38%). Another important finding was that testing was being done mostly on urban populations, while rural areas were being neglected in testing.

helped to further institutionalise GRB. Most importantly, the finance and sectoral institutions of the Ukrainian Government performed gender analyses in intersectoral working groups. Thus all the learning was done while working on improving existing programmes, which yielded best results.

The three core elements of the GRB process are: (1) gender budget analysis; (2) amending programmes and budgets; and (3) consistent integration of GRB into the budget process and documents.

During the course of the project work, 218 programmes were analysed (118 at local and 100 at the state level) and made more gender responsive. Close to 3000 officers lead and participated in this work.

As a result, not only the programmes changed but also a number of other related documents, such as statistical reports and policies at the state and oblast level. Sex disaggregated data is being collected and published in all oblasts of Ukraine. In addition, gender considerations were integrated into Ukraine’s ongoing decentralisation reform process, so newly established amalgamated territorial communities immediately started to work with gender budgeting and legislate for it.

Legislative changes

A budget cycle is the life of a budget from its preparation, approval, through to execution and evaluation. GRB aims to ensure that all phases of the budget cycle in PFM include gender considerations and account for any implications of budget decisions on women and men.

During the past seven years, the project team reviewed

34

regulations governing budget relations have been made gender responsive

1075

budget programmes (“passeports”) that contain a gender perspective versus 6 in 2017

wed all the documents and steps used in the budget process of Ukraine, and provided suggestions on inclusion of gender considerations in every relevant step and document. Aside from the regulatory documents that are now made gender-responsive, the Ministry of Finance included gender and social considerations in the newly developed orders and documents regulating budget process, such as spending reviews. This shows a strong commitment towards more transparent and equitable budget process in Ukraine and sets the foundation for further work with other budget institutions and processes to make them more gender responsive (public investment management, public procurement, audits etc).

For the first time, the Ministry of Finance included information on the application of a gender-responsive approach in the budget process in the Explanatory Note to the draft Law of Ukraine on the State Budget of Ukraine for 2021.