

FINANCIAL AND FISCAL COMMISSION
POLICY BRIEF

GENDER BUDGETING: TRANSLATING GOVERNMENT GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS INTO REALITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on this key finding, several key intervention areas are proposed to make local government budgets gender sensitive.

This study examined gender budgeting in the South African local government sector. The Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of 30 municipalities were reviewed for their gender sensitivity. In addition, the gender responsiveness of local government budgets was evaluated using case studies of seven selected municipalities. The findings indicated that gender budgeting in the local government sector is limited.



BACKGROUND

The South African government has shown its commitment to gender equality through various policy and legislative measures, including anti-discrimination legislation and employment-equity policies. Despite these commitments, unacceptable gender inequalities remain. African female-headed households are the poorest of the poor in South Africa. Statistics show that 43.8% of South African households are headed by females. Of these female-headed households, 22.8% fall into the poorest quintile 1, compared to 18.1% of the male-headed households¹. Furthermore, 31% of female-headed households fall into quintiles 4 or 5, compared to 45% of male-headed households. It is time to look at alternative levers for change.

The intergovernmental fiscal relations (IGFR) system is one such lever that should receive greater emphasis. A successful IGFR system would be sensitive to the needs of women and contribute to moving them out of poverty. Innovations in policy design and implementation are required to ensure gender-sensitive resource allocation. One such innovation is gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), which is an instrument that seeks an efficient and equitable distribution of resources based on the needs of different gender groups in society. In many countries, governments are increasingly resorting to GRB to translate their gender equality commitments into reality.

Given the poverty profile of South Africa, any attempt to target public resources at the poor must confront gender-related issues. In the mid-1990s, gender budgeting began to be implemented at national level in South Africa, but the process has gradually lost momentum. It is not clear whether the government's gender commitments are being translated into

fiscal commitments at local level. Yet gender budget initiatives are needed most at local level, where gender disparities in basic services provision are more glaring.

In assessing the gender responsiveness of local government budgets², the study followed a two-pronged approach. First, the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of 30 randomly selected municipalities were reviewed and, second, the gender responsiveness of municipal budgeting processes was evaluated in seven case studies. The results of the study suggested that gender mainstreaming (and thus gender budgeting) in the local government sphere is limited. The reasons for limited gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in the local government sphere include:

- Absence of an approved gender policy across all municipalities.
- Absence of a municipal gender-mainstreaming strategy.
- Although municipalities generally provide resources (human and financial) for gender focal persons and Special Programmes Unit portfolios, the incumbents are not trained in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting.
- Personnel in management (who make decisions) and budget officers (who track expenditure) have not been trained in gender mainstreaming.
- Gender equality indicators and the collection of gender disaggregated information are limited.



1 StatsSA (Statistics South Africa). 2011, *Report on the Living Conditions of Households in South Africa*. Pretoria: StatsSA, September.

2 The details of the methodology and key findings are contained in the Financial and Financial Commission (2012) Technical Report, Chapter 10.

POLICY OPTIONS

For municipalities to move towards GRB, the following are the key areas of intervention by national and provincial governments, and municipalities.

National and provincial governments should:

- Run a pilot on gender budgeting in a few municipalities and evaluate the results before wider application.
- Ensure that gender planning is institutionalised in municipal IDPs by sector (e.g. water and sanitation, local economic development, etc.) and include gender-disaggregated performance indicators and targets.
- Provide gender-budgeting good practice guides and toolkits.
- Provide guidelines for collecting sex disaggregated data for budgeting processes and ensure that municipalities are capacitated to analyse budgets from a gender perspective.



Gender budgeting is important if government's gender equality commitments are to be translated into reality and, in particular, move women out of poverty.



Local governments should:

- Institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting processes linked to IDPs.
- Build capacity for gender mainstreaming and GRB at the local level.
- Ensure gender-responsive appropriations and budget allocations.
- Ensure gender-sensitive public participation and consultations at the local level.

Gender budgeting is important if government's gender equality commitments are to be translated into reality and, in particular, move women out of poverty. All spheres of government need to work together and institutionalise gender-sensitive budgeting across the board, in particular at local level.



Enquiries: Mkhululi Ncube (mkhululi@ffc.co.za)

Financial and Fiscal Commission
2nd Floor, Montrose Place, Bekker Street,
Waterfall Park, Vorna Valley, Midrand,
Private Bag X69, Halfway House, 1685
www.ffc.co.za
Tel: +27 11 207 2300
Fax: +27 86 589 1038

