

Position Paper: 15th Eastern Partnership Panel on Governance and PAR

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Executive Summary:

- Gender responsive budgeting should be considered as effective tool that works in different contexts (including the decentralization experience of Ukraine)
- Gender responsive budgeting is a tool for management and development, and should be part of any public administration reform

Introduction

Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) expands instruments for management of budgeting and should be considered as an important and unique tool for promoting good governance and effective community management. Link between GRB and good governance is evident; gender responsive budgeting as well as good governance require greater equality, transparency, efficiency and first of all greater involvement and participation. GRB should become a tool that is widely used at all levels of government. Consequently, the budget spending would be more transparent and budget decisions more efficient and thus contributing to good governance.

This principle should be introduced by all six Eastern Partnership countries since they are aspiring to fully implement the principles of good governance. It is hard to assess the progress of all six EaP countries in this regard, mostly due to lack of relevant data and different country contexts. However, the major trends are depicted below.

Ukraine features as a leader in implementing GRB. This process has been facilitated by a successful work that has been going on in Ukraine quite recently. There is an opportunity to get familiar with domestic experience in the analysis of gender responsive budgeting and to integrate gender dimension into budgets and programs at different levels. In 2014, after series of successful initiatives on gender responsive budgeting implemented with support from international programs and projects, the Ministry of Finance has decided to implement gender-responsive budgeting in Ukraine and to systematically support GRB activities at state and local levels. The example of such initiatives is the project "Gender Budgeting in Ukraine (GRB Project)". Among other key players, which promote GRB are the United Nations Agency for Women (UN Women), the National

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Democratic Institute (NDI) and others. The problem of gender equality is included in the Action Plan for implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union.

An important step for the implementation of gender responsive budgeting in Ukraine is the introduction of the 'Strategy for Reforming the Public Finance Management System for 2017-2020'.

Today the work on gender responsive budgeting is carried out both at state and local levels. All ministries, State Statistics Service, Parliamentary Committees and the Interparliamentary alliance on Equal Opportunities support GRB at the state level. At the local level, administrations of 24 regions, Kyiv city administration, city councils as well as particular communities are involved in the work.

Among current challenges and developments in regards to gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting within recent efforts on public administration reform in Ukraine, the following trends can be highlighted:

- undergoing decentralization reform was accompanied by several international initiatives, including projects on gender responsive budgeting as a tool for promoting good governance;
- some projects use gender responsive budgeting as a tool to contribute to restoring governance in crisis-affected communities (for example, projects supported by the UN and the European Commission). "Bureau of Gender Strategy and Budgeting" helped to adapt gender-responsive budgeting methodology for amalgamated territorial communities;
- "Gender Budgeting in Ukraine" is the leading project which promotes gender-responsive budgeting methodology in Ukraine and it is supported and financed by the Swedish government. The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine contributes to the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting in Ukraine since 2014 (to be possibly prolonged until 2020). The Ministry of Finance is keen to combine gender budgeting methodologies with budget reform methodologies. The approach to synchronize the goals of result-oriented gender budgeting with sector-based budgeting can become a guiding principle for many GRB initiatives.

Bureau of gender strategy and budgeting (hereinafter referred to as the Bureau), a local non-governmental organization, has initiated projects and took part in all above mentioned initiatives. It functions as a women's analytical centre, which brings together researchers, experts and practitioners in order to develop strategies for promoting women empowerment and gender equality in existing environment. Currently the Bureau experts provide support in gender-responsive planning and budgeting for:

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- local self-governance, national practices, local communities;
- the integration of good governance initiatives (including planning and budgeting)= at national and local levels in Ukraine;
- economic efficiency and transparency in budget allocations that takes into account different needs of both women and men, which consequently contributes to gender equality.

Since 2013, the Bureau has organised numerous trainings on integrating gender budgeting and gender-sensitive issues in existing programs and future budgets for NGOs, government officials and other concerned parties in Ukraine, as well as developed tools and methodologies for gender analysis, among which:

- 2 original methodologies on gender responsive budgeting and costing, including the publication of corresponding manual,
- adaptation and application of gender responsive budgeting methodology at the level of amalgamated territorial communities in the framework of the decentralization reform in Ukraine.

One the biggest achievements of the Bureau in 2018 is the introduction of an online platform on gender responsive budgeting.

Since 2016, the Bureau participates in projects on gender mainstreaming within the regranting scheme of the EaP CSF.

Armenia

The Economic Development and Research Center, a local non-governmental organization, has implemented a gender budgeting initiative supported by UNIFEM in 2009, which lasted only for a year. This short-term initiative focused mostly on capacity building within government institutions and civil society. The main result of this project is its endorsement by the Armenian government. It contributed to monitoring and evaluation of the project, as well as to publishing a report on “Gender Responsive Budgeting and Gender State in Armenia”. The report provides a scoring system, which helps to evaluate the progress and to track the development of gender-sensitive issues in each ministry. It is not clear though if this initiative continues at present moment.

Azerbaijan and **Georgia** recently demonstrated their interest in gender responsive budgeting through organising trainings and workshops on this topic.

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Belarus

Gender responsive budgeting initiatives in Belarus can be characterised as inefficient. The seminar “The State Service of the Republic of Belarus - New approaches to the public finances management: inclusion and broad public involvement. Gender budgeting and some other aspects of gender policy” was held within DANIDA-UNDP project “Strengthening Inclusive Local Governance in the Republic of Belarus” where the Ministry of Finance and other government institutions were represented. With support of Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) in Ukraine and Bureau of Gender Strategy and Budgeting involvement, several trainings on GRB for local deputies and NGOs were organised in 2015-2016.

Moldova

After taking part in UN Women Regional Programme “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe and the Republic of Moldova”, the country introduced a course on gender-responsive budgeting within the curricula of several local universities (for example, the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova).

Conclusion

The non-governmental organizations are playing important role in regards to good governance, including gender-responsive budgeting. Civil societies of six EaP countries represented through respective EaP CSF National Platforms can influence gender policy implementation, as it was demonstrated by the example of Ukraine. The EaP CSF Ukrainian National Platform is ready to provide assistance in implementation of gender responsive budgeting, which has proved to be an effective tool for good governance initiatives.

More Information

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms.

For more information, please visit the EaP CSF website at www.eap-csf.eu