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## Introduction

The topic of this edition of ENUT News is mainstreaming of gender equality and gender sensitive budgeting.

In 2008, The Estonian Women’s Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT) is a partner in the Nordic Council of Ministers funded project “Creating and expanding gender budgeting network in Baltic Sea region and Belarus” initiated by the Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia. Liivi Pehk, ENUT’s project coordinator, gives herein an overview of the project’s activities and its results.

Due to the fact that drafting of gender sensitive budgets is a relatively new and little known subject, we want to focus for the reader on what are gender sensitive budgets, how they are compiled, and why is it important to include the gender aspect in budgets. We also provide a brief overview about what has been done in this field in the Nordic Countries.

## International project “Creating and expanding gender budgeting network in Baltic Sea region and Belarus”



The aim of the project is to create a regional network that popularizes initiatives for gender sensitive budgeting, pursues gender sensitive analysis of budgets, and by applying these methods it insures the consideration of gender aspects by central and regional politicians and the increase of equal participation of men and women in the central and local governments’ budget writing process, thereby insuring equal opportunities and rights by men and women on all levels of government. The project’s lead partner is the Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia. Project

partners are the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations (NYTKIS), Women’s Issues Information Centre in Lithuania, Women’s Independent Democratic Movement in Belarus, and Swedish Women’s Lobby.

The creation of equal opportunities for women and men is an area where even small changes can bring essential development in society and where people responsible for a small role can have influence. The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, developed by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, calls on local and regional governments to advance

gender equality. It is on the local level that the greatest opportunities exist to combat gender inequality and to form a work and social environment in which all residents are valued equally and equal consideration is given to the needs and interests of women and men, girls and boys in everyday life.

Budgets are the principal means for implementing policies. By drafting gender sensitive budgets gender mainstreaming is implemented in the budgetary process.

The direct aim of the project is to raise public awareness of gender equality and of gender sensitive budgets, to introduce the basic principles of gender sensitive budgeting, and to promote the analysis of state budgets from a gender equality perspective. During the course of the project, information about gender equality is distributed to local drafters of budgets and their implementers. The project's activities are directed toward raising of people's awareness about the drafting of budgets via a participation process. The project is meant to demonstrate how a country's budgets can be changed to accommodate both genders by taking into consideration both sides' needs and interests in the budgetary drafting and decision-making.

### **The project's principal activities**

During the course of the project the partners conducted roundtable discussions and meetings with politicians, organized training sessions for members of local governments and non-governmental organizations, held meetings with representatives of local governments and non-governmental organizations with the aim of establishing networks for gender sensitive budgeting and disseminating of gender equality and gender sensitive budgets information to budgets' drafters and decision-makers.

**Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre held a seminar "Gender sensitive approach to drafting municipal budgets" on August 7-8, 2008**, in Pärnu for representatives of municipal governments and non-governmental organizations. The seminar was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Friedrich Ebert Fund. The purpose of the seminar was to raise the awareness of employees of local governments and non-governmental organizations about gender sensitive budgeting as a means for gender mainstreaming, to popularize the drafting of gender sensitive budgets and to encourage local governments to analyze budgets from a gender perspective, to introduce gender sensitive budgeting methods and practices, and to establish a network for the implementation of gender sensitive budgets' drafting and analysis.

Among the speakers at the seminar were the Commissioner for Gender Equality, Margit Sarv, whose topic was gender sensitive budgeting as an instrument for gender mainstreaming, ENUT Board Chairwomen, Reet Laja, who introduced gender sensitive budgeting strategies and methods, and project coordinator Liivi Pehk who focused on relationships between gender sensitive budgets and results-based budgets. The Executive Director of Association of Municipalities of Estonia (AME) Ott Kasuri and Märt Moll, who is a Financial Adviser of AME spoke about the uniqueness of drafting local budgets and the connection between developmental plans and budgets. Expert on regional development Rivo Noorkõiv, spoke about writing local governments' developmental plans. The representative from the City of Narva Government, Karin Uustallo shared information about micro-studies conducted with the 3R method in Narva. It is important that before embarking on gender sensitive budgeting the personnel possess skills

that recognize gender sensitive aspects and, also, have competence in the actual budgeting process, i.e., how developmental plans and budgets are connected, what is the timeline, who are the key personnel, what are the potential budgetary process entry points. The seminar helped to create good relations between the drafters of budgets and gender equality experts, and to establish a foundation for effective cooperation in the implementation of gender sensitive budgeting.

The theme of the seminar was new for many of the participants. Between the presentations the participants engaged in lively discussions and presented questions to the speakers. Brain-storming took place on the second day and the following questions were raised: at the beginning, what activities are best suited for gender perspective analysis, which budgeting cycle provides the best opportunity for starting gender sensitive budgeting. The seminar ended with the decision to form a gender budgeting network and to continue to cooperate on matters concerning gender sensitive budgeting.



**On December 15<sup>th</sup> was held a roundtable “Good governance and gender budgeting in local authorities” in Tallinn.** Participants of the seminar were politicians and members of NGO’s. The Association of Municipalities of Estonia (AME), The Association of Estonian Cities (AEC), The Estonian Regional and Local Development Agency (ERKAS), Union of Harju County Municipalities (HOL) were represented at the roundtable

Subject of the roundtable was to discuss further plans about gender sensitive budget implementation at local level and co-operation to advocate gender budgeting initiatives to local authorities. Speakers in the roundtable were: Gender Equality Commissioner Margit Sarv, who talk about gender mainstreaming experiences in Estonia and in other countries; The Executive Director of AME Ott Kasuri held discussion about new challenges and possibilities, what gender sensitive budgeting gives to local municipalities. ENUT Board Member Reet Laja talk about the Gender Budgeting advocating activities in 2008 and about ENUT further plans and ENUT project coordinator Liivi Pehk made the presentation about the “Procedure for Sustainable Gender Mainstreaming- The Ladder principle”, worked out by Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee. After speeches were held live discussions about Gender Budgeting implementation possibilities and were made further co-operation plans. The joint decision was to proceed with advocating Gender Budgeting initiatives to local authorities and to carry on a Gender Budgeting pilot project at least in one local municipality on next year.

On December 18<sup>th</sup> the project coordinator Liivi Pehk presented the project “Creating and Expanding Gender Budgeting Network in Baltic Sea Region and Belarus” activities and results at the ENUT annual seminar. South Caucasus Women’s NGO’s delegations (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia) who were on visit in Estonia, NGO members from Estonia, officials from Ministry of Social Affairs and from Estonian Open Foundation took part in the seminar.

Project activities and results will be presented in Nordic-Baltic-Belarus Bulletin on Gender Budgeting. The Bulletin is available at: [www.enut.ee](http://www.enut.ee).

### **Gender sensitive budgeting experts' conference in Riga on November 1.**

Experiences about best practices in beginning gender sensitive budgeting were exchanged. The workshops discussed ways to advocate and advance gender sensitive budgeting in the EU, the Baltic region, and in central and municipal governments. Promote effective communication and real cooperation between national and international networks of GB experts and include news/information on GB in one-day informative seminars aimed at local communities and organizations.

By GB experts have developed a series of recommendations at different levels:

#### **For the European Union (EU):**

1. To create special funds for developing Gender Budgeting (GB) initiatives in member States and neighbouring countries
2. To implement ESF policies that promote GB initiatives
3. Adoption of an EU directive making GB initiatives obligatory in member States
4. To support the EWL 50/50 campaign
5. To include Gender Budgeting as a part of the Budget law at the EU level
6. To prepare common instructions for implementing GB in the EU

#### **For the Baltic Sea Region:**

1. To include gender mainstreaming in all spheres of activity
2. To initiate and support the platform for experts on GB from NGOs and other parties in implementation of Gender Equality policies

#### **For Governments:**

1. To use international experience in the gender budgeting concept, as well as the experience of EU and CIS countries
2. To conduct gender analysis of selected sectoral policies and programmes (review of data, existing analytical documents, and consultations with wider stakeholders)
3. To ensure that national planning and budgeting processes would involve gender experts and Gender Focal Points of the relevant sectoral ministries
4. To ensure streamlining and strengthening of monitoring mechanisms, making the sectoral ministries and agencies accountable for reporting on development indicators, including on gender
5. To strengthen coordination between civil society and government to promote dialogue on gender aspects of budgeting;
6. All official statistics should be disaggregated by sex
7. Gender equality analysis should be a part of the budgetary process
8. The Ministry of Finance should produce the budget appendix on the distribution of financial resources between women and men
9. To develop Gender Budgeting Manuals including step-by-step guidelines on gender analyses
10. To create a special interministerial Gender Budgeting Group for coordinating Gender Budgeting implementation at ministerial level

11. Gender aspects should be considered when dealing with the financial crisis and turmoil in the financial market.
12. Training, informative seminars and user friendly sources on Gender Equality policies and GB should be easily available for politicians and decision-makers at different levels

**For Local Authorities:**

1. To sign up to with The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life
2. Gender Budgeting must be enshrined in the budgetary law
3. Experts from multiple areas should be engaged in a gender sensitive budgeting process
4. All local statistics should be disaggregated by sex
5. To carry out gender impact assessments in all local development plans and strategies

**For NGOs:**

1. To highlight gender equality perspectives and issues as a basis for government decisions
2. To promote Gender Budgeting as an effective tool for improving economic governance and sustainable development
3. To increase knowledge and strengthen skills with regard to the gender budgeting Concept
4. To use gender sensitive budgets as a powerful and innovative tool for advancing gender equality.
5. Using CEDAW and other Human Rights instruments in identifying strategic areas where gender will need to be mainstreamed, based on clear links between priority development areas and gender equality
6. Using civil society to pressurize governments to raise their accountability for fulfillment of the commitments towards gender equality (harmonization of the commitments within MDGs, CEDAW and BPFA);
7. To build partnerships for gender budgeting initiatives.

The project's activities and the results will be recorded in the joint information bulletin foreseen in the project; the bulletin will publish all the partners' completed activities and their experiences. The bulletin is available on [www.enut.ee](http://www.enut.ee)

## Gender sensitive budgets as means for gender equality mainstreaming

The need for gender sensitive budgeting and their importance in the implementation of gender equality mainstreaming is acknowledged in numerous international documents to which Estonia is a signatory.

In the platform adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations Women's Conference in Beijing

**Item 345 notes** "This will require the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions on policies and programmes, as well as the adequate financing of specific programmes for securing equality between women and men. /--/ funding will need to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors."

**Item 346 notes** that "Governments should make efforts to systematically review how women benefit from public sector expenditures; adjust budgets to ensure equality of access to public sector

expenditures, both for enhancing productive capacity and for meeting social needs; and achieve the gender-related commitments made in other United Nations summits and conferences. /--/ Governments should allocate sufficient resources, including resources for undertaking gender-impact analysis.” ([www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Beijing/platform/plat2.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Beijing/platform/plat2.htm))

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, of which Estonia has been a member since October 21, 1991, is a legally binding document that contains internationally recognized women’s basic rights which apply to all women regardless of their status. The convention’s primary legal norm is the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Every country that has joined the convention is obliged to adopt all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. ([www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/))

Also, EU member states have in recent years adopted ever increasing numbers of initiatives in gender sensitive budgeting both at the central and municipal governmental levels and these initiatives have included the whole budget as well as small parts of a budget. **The Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** acknowledged in 2002 that budgets are “the principal agents for policy planning” and it recommended the application of gender equality mainstreaming in a new area - EU budgetary policy.

([www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/strategy/opinion\\_on\\_gender\\_budgeting\\_en.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/strategy/opinion_on_gender_budgeting_en.pdf))

**The Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** announced its position in May, 2003, acknowledging that gender sensitive budgeting is an essential part of EU’s adopted responsibility for gender equality mainstreaming.

([www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/ce074/ce07420040324en07460751.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/ce074/ce07420040324en07460751.pdf))

According to the definition of the **Council of Europe**, gender sensitive budgeting is the application of gender equality mainstreaming in the budgeting process. It is a process by which a state’s budgets are analyzed whether they are assisting or preventing expansion of gender equality in the society. Thus a budget’s gender base is evaluated and its gender aspects considered in all stages of the budgetary process. If needed, changes that would assist advancement of gender equality are made in the budget.

Budgets are a means for implementing political promises and for setting priorities. In the efforts to expand gender equality a critical question is: have gender equality requirements been considered at the decision-making level of the budget.

Different means, approaches and strategies are used in gender sensitive budgeting in order to check the results, appearances, activities and substance from a gender perspective. The integration of a gender equality aspect into the budgetary process helps to reveal undesirable differences in women’s and men’s conditions and to document them. The application of public resources is in better accord with the target groups’ needs, and expenditures are more effective when consideration is given to conditions, needs and preferences from a gender perspective. The results of budgets’ gender based evaluation are more equal conditions, and user-friendly public services in harmony with the target groups’ needs.

Government has an important role at the beginning stages of gender sensitive budgeting whether that happens at its own initiative or in response to citizens’ initiative. At both European and member states

level citizens, women's organizations and social partners have an important role in the promotion of increased public interest and good governing practices in the member states and also in EU.

In order for gender sensitive budgeting to be effective, it is crucial to meet three important requirements:

- 1) Political will - the budget reflects political priorities and decisions. In order to be effective, the initiative for gender sensitive budgeting has to be grounded in the political will to advance gender equality. The more clearly and publicly the political will is presented and expressed, the more effective the results.
- 2) The promotion and advancement of information about gender sensitive budgeting and gender equality - gender sensitive budgeting initiatives succeed when they are supported by the Government and the civil society.
- 3) Transparency and participation - budget transparency is an essential prerequisite in order for gender sensitive budgeting initiatives to be successful. Men and women, budget experts and gender equality experts should participate equally in the budgetary process. The gender perspective must be considered on all levels of budgeting. Increased competence by the participants in the budgetary process is necessary in order to have an effective partnership.

([www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/ce074/ce07420040324en07460751.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/ce074/ce07420040324en07460751.pdf))

### **Methods for integrating the gender sensitive perspective into the budgetary process**

Each state and organization is unique and, therefore, it is advisable for each to approach its activities using own policies, work practices, possibilities, capacity and methods in compliance with the government's terms.

The Nordic countries have concentrated on three areas: directing the state economic sector, decision-making information as foundation for economic policies, and gendered statistics. In the opinion of the European Commission's Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women released in June 2008 on the future EU budgeting, it is recommended that a step-by-step approach be used, starting with a narrow item and gradually increasing the number of items while working out a uniform method. A simple gradual model is offered as an example, which can be implemented in both a multiple-year framework as well as in annual budgets in the analysis of a particular budget category or expenditure item.

- A. Substantive - how much is expended on a concrete activity? How many men and women are in the activity's target group?
- B. Activity - what kinds of activities are pursued? Are these activities directed toward men or women, or for both? How does the activity affect women/men?
- C. Results - what is the activity's result or expected result? How many women or men are affected by the results?
- D. Effect - did the activity have expected effect? Did the activity help to advance gender equality? What criterion would measure success?

## Examples of gender sensitive budgeting promotion in the Nordic countries

In order to implement and popularize gender sensitive budgeting, many countries' governments have made concrete decisions and taken actual steps:

**Finland:** The Finnish Government adopted in July 2008 a new gender equality action plan 2008-2011. The programme is initiated by the Government and, as a result, all ministries have to take into consideration the gender perspective when drafting their budgets, starting with the 2008 state budget. A method for the evaluation of gender effect has been developed and evaluations are made in the process of drafting legislation as well as in the drafting of the state budget. Each ministry has to conduct at least one significant project's effect under its jurisdiction on men and women. In the directives for drafting the state budget, the requirement for evaluating the gender effect is included.

**Sweden:** The implementation of gender mainstreaming in the governmental offices 2004-2009 concentrates mainly on the budgetary process. Several methods have been worked out for the analysis of gender equality and the evaluation of gender effects. The best known of these is the 4R method. The Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee issued in 2007 a handbook on gender equality mainstreaming, applying Sweden's practices.

**Norway:** The Government's decisions in 2005 and 2006 require all ministries to carry out gender equality analyses and to present them as addendums to their draft budgets. The use of the 3R method conforms to the budgetary structure. The Gender Equality Act adopted in 1978 was broadened in 2002 to include the private sector. According to this Act employers have to describe their gender equality work regarding personnel policy in annual reports.

**Denmark:** The Danish Gender Equality Act states that public agencies are to strive for gender equality within their areas of responsibility and incorporate gender equality into all planning and administration. Several gender sensitive budgeting implementation methods have been worked out, such as gender equality analysis upon the presentation of new legislation, gender effects evaluation method, compiling and developing of statistics broken down according to gender. The lead group of the inter-ministry gender equality mainstreaming project adopted in 2007 the 2007-2011 action plan for gender equality mainstreaming.

**Iceland:** The Icelandic gender Equality Act states that all official statistics must be disaggregated by sex. A department for gender equality works with the central government administration as a whole, and gender equality coordinators are appointed at each ministry.

Source: "Now it's about the Money", Catharina Schmitz



PROJECT: Creating and Expanding Gender Budgeting Network in the Baltic Sea Region and Belarus

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