

Certificate Course in Women Empowerment and Development (CWED)

Part-5

Women's Studies and Research Centre, R.D. University, Jabalpur

Dr. Jaya Singh

1. What is gender budgeting?

Definition Gender budgeting is part of the gender mainstreaming strategy. Gender budgeting focuses on a gender-based analysis and an equality-oriented evaluation of the distribution of resources. These resources are mainly money, time as well as paid and/or unpaid work. Gender budgeting seeks to achieve a gender-equal distribution of resources. Such a comprehensive understanding of gender budgeting is necessary

- because the focus is not limited on money only. To make sure that there is a really gender-equal distribution of resources amongst women and men, it is necessary not only to include the “official” monetary economy (money flows, income, paid work) but also private, unpaid reproduction work (care, child care, care for the elderly, voluntary services). The most important resource that clearly shows the genderrelevant interactions of these two areas is time;
- because this is the only way to discover the indirectly discriminating implications of the shift of tasks between the state, the private industry and the private care sector. As a consequence of such changes, we often witness two-fold privatisations: one part of the tasks is assigned to the market-oriented services industry, while unpaid work is left to the private sphere. One effect is – whether intended or not – that, due to the still prevailing gender-specific division of labour, the lion's share of the shifted burden falls to women as unpaid work;

- because decisions that are not related to the budget may also have a major impact on the distribution and use of resources. Therefore, gender budgeting does not only have to be implemented in the budgetary sphere but also in a whole series of other activities and specialised areas as well as in the context of existing methods. In addition to the budgetary sphere, this mainly includes areas such as allowances and contributions, taxes / income, labour, economy, family, social and civic commitment as well as the methods of (law) impact assessments, effectiveness analysis and evaluation;

- because gender budgeting not only addresses public institutions but also industrial enterprises, associations and NGOs. It is not enough to understand gender budgeting merely as a gender-differentiated analysis of the use of certain public funds. This is only a small, yet necessary part. But this alone neither qualifies for implementing a gender-equality-related evaluation of the total budget, nor does it make statements on gender-related interactions of expenditures with other resources possible.

2. Starting points

Seemingly neutral resource-efficient decisions do not affect all people in the same way.

Women and men are not homogenous groups.

Men and women differ in their different living circumstances, age, origin, physical and mental dispositions, education etc. and are affected in different ways by resource-effective decisions. The implications of these decisions may have an extremely different impact on women and men.

The distribution of resources in a society is a decisive factor for the participation of individuals in social decision-making processes, and for their

esteem within the social fabric. The public budget clearly reflects the value-related decisions and priorities of a government.

Gender-related effects of resource-effective decisions on the private division of labour need to be taken into account.

Perceiving families as an economic unit conceals the internal, often gender-differentiated division of labour. Consequently, the implications of resource-effective decisions must not only be referred to private households as economic and consumer units. Only an analysis that takes individuals (i.e. children, women and men) into consideration can perceive gender-differentiated consequences.

Unpaid work is an important part of the economic performance of a society.

The traditional concept of an economy does not take unpaid work like child care, household work, care for the elderly and also voluntary civil society work into account when paying benefits. The work of the unpaid sector plus the work of the monetary economic sector result in the total economic output of a society. Unpaid work is a payment in kind for society. This is especially apparent in the case of tasks that had been carried out by the state but it also affects any kind of non-profit work as well as “traditional” household and family work. Consequently, unpaid work needs to be considered as an invisible contribution to the community. This contribution is made, but has not yet been included in economic calculations.

Unpaid work and private division of labour can only be reasonably mapped by taking the time factor into account.

In this context, there should be a call for the time factor to be taken into account when performing economic calculations. This would make it possible to account for the fact that the time that a person spends on child care, for instance, is not available for gainful employment. Thus, the overall objective is to counteract gender-based exclusion from gainful employment and social decision-making processes.

The introduction of the time factor into economic accounting also facilitates a much more realistic impact assessment of austerity measures that have to be compensated by unpaid work. If more and more tasks are provided by private people, less time is available for individual private care tasks (e.g. child care). It is therefore unavoidable that the quality of provided services (e.g. child care) frequently suffers. Follow-up costs will arise because of insufficient care. Short-term savings may thus cause higher long-term costs

3. Gender budgeting as part of gender mainstreaming in the case of financially effective decisions of the public sector

In the current discourse, gender budgeting is often understood as a procedure for the systematic analysis and development of public budgetary policies which aims at focusing on gender equality. In doing so, all budget-related political decisions, measures, programmes and laws as well as budgets are reviewed with regard to their consequences for different women and men. On the basis of the results of this analysis, the entire budgetary procedure is redesigned in order to implement a gender-equitable resource distribution. This includes the necessary restructuring of revenue and expenditure procedures.

There are three reasons why public budgets are the focus of attention:

1. It is mostly political entities such as states, federal states or municipalities that have committed themselves to applying the strategy of gender mainstreaming. In these entities, the decision concerning how financial funds are used is a decisive means for political control and must therefore be included in a comprehensive gender equality strategy.
2. Public budgets are of major national economic importance and have significant implications on the framework conditions of individual decisions. Consequently, they must be included in a gender mainstreaming strategy in the area of economic policy.

3. Public expenditure and revenue can more easily be politically shaped and influenced than the financial money flows of private industry.

The overall goal of gender budgeting is to achieve a gender-equality-oriented resource distribution on all areas of resource allocation. With regard to financially effective political decisions, this implies gender-equitable budgetary policies that encompass public revenue and expenditure as well as regulations and measures pertaining to economic policy. The gender perspective should be integrated into every phase of budgetary decisions and into the drawing up of budgets. This implies a change of priorities that focuses on the implementation of gender equality of women and men.

While focusing on public budgetary policies, it is important to note that major parts of the budget law and the budget of a certain entity are predetermined by other financially effective decisions (laws, resolutions, programmes, etc.). Thus, the gender-related analysis and gender-equality-oriented use of resources should refer to all financially effective decisions. It is a decision within the implementation strategy of the political entity involved in terms of whether the financial consequences of a new law (e.g. on child care) are assessed under the name 'gender budgeting' or by using other tools of gender mainstreaming (e.g. impact assessment with the tool "Arbeitshilfe Rechtsetzung" of the Federal Government) for the purpose of gender equality.