

## Gender Budgeting in the Philippines

Gender equality is not just a fundamental human right: achieving gender equality also brings *tremendous socioeconomic benefits*. Several studies have shown that reducing gender inequality has many positive effects and leads to higher growth rates, healthier children, improved labour productivity and a more responsive government. Thus, gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive policies, are observed to not only contribute to gender equality but also simultaneously improve the population's welfare and lead to *more sustainable and inclusive growth and employment*.

One of the tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming is *gender budgeting* - a strategy to achieve equality between women and men by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent. The Council of Europe defines gender budgeting as a '*gender-based assessment of budgets incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures to promote gender equality*'.<sup>18</sup>

### Background to the intervention

Over the last two decades, the Philippines has engaged in gender budgeting, at the national and local levels, for over two decades wherein *five% of the total budget* is mandated to be allocated for gender and development purposes. The five% quota, which serves as a *benchmark, enforcement mechanism and tool for negotiation*. Key elements of gender budgeting in the Philippines are its *institutionalisation* (evident through legislation and the establishment of a gender architecture in the form of "gender and development" focal points), *capacity-building* of government and non-government entities, and *monitoring and accountability*.

### Details of the intervention

Gender budgeting in the Philippines was introduced with the 1989-1992 Philippine Development Plan for Women which specified the *allocation of resources to initiatives targeting women*. Currently, the primary government entities with "gender and development" responsibilities – the Philippine Commission on Women, the National Economic and Development Authority and the Department of Budget and Management – issue annual Joint Circulars instructing government agencies in the *preparation of "gender and development" plans and budgets* for the coming year, as well as reports of the year to complete.

An additional pivotal element in the institutionalisation of gender budgeting in the Philippines is the *Magna Carta of Women* (Republic Act No. 9710), issued in 2010. In its application of the provisions of both the Beijing Platform for Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the national context, the Magna Carta of Women *confirms gender budgeting (with the associated minimum five% budget allocation) as a fundamental gender mainstreaming tool* through which gender equality is to be achieved in the Philippines.

*Technical support and capacity-building assistance* are provided to agencies to assist them in producing their "gender and development" plans and budgets. The Philippine Commission for Women is a key resource in this respect, providing training, workshops, advice and written guidelines. Annual "gender and development" plans, budgets and "accomplishment reports"

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<sup>18</sup> Quinn, S. (2008). *Gender Budgeting: Practical Implementation*. Council of Europe.

are submitted to the Philippine Commission on Women for review and endorsement. The Department of Budget and Management also reviews gender budgets.

### **Impact**

While there were individual differences across the Local Government Units, application of gender budgeting has resulted in (a) *increases in gender budget allocations*, possibly associated with the increased visibility of women (b) *greater awareness of and ability to mainstream gender*, (c) *the creation of gender databases*, and (d) *greater participation of women and other civil society actors* in the work of the Local Government Units.

**Source:** *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2013). Empowering Women Economically: Illustrative Case Studies.*