ACTION KIT

ENGAGING PARLIAMENTS IN GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

8-step process in programming for gender responsive budgeting work with parliaments

The more thoroughly GRB is institutionalized across the government, the more effectively parliamentarians and other key players can advance gender equality through their work. State actors and development partners can follow an eight-step process for designing programmes to support parliamentarians' application of GRB.

STEP 1 Context analysis

Any work with a political institution, such as a parliament, must start with a detailed and comprehensive context analysis of the institution. All development work should be based on this kind of analysis, but for development work that is political there is a requirement for an understanding of the political circumstances under which the proposed work will be implemented.

At this stage, it is essential to understand the types of information required as part of such analysis. This includes:

- Formal structures under which the parliament operates
- Informal power dynamics that impact the functioning of the parliament
- Gender analysis of the parliament with a focus on:
  - Legal framework promoting gender equality;
  - Formal and informal power structures as they relate to gender equality; and
  - The gaps in capacity and rules that are preventing the parliament from acting in a gender responsive manner
- Legal framework of the parliament
- Resources available to the parliament, parliamentary groups, women's cross-party caucuses, and MPs to engage in gender responsive budgeting
- Relationship between parliament and other actors and their role in working with parliament to promote effective GRB, including:
  - Civil society;
  - Executive branch;
  - Judiciary; and
  - Independent commissions.
- Potential champions for GRB work

Having this information before designing a project or programme will allow for a more complete understanding of the dynamics within a parliament, as well as external stakeholders, and the capacity support required to promote the work of parliament specifically on GRB. However, this analysis cannot be seen as a technocratic activity. There needs to be a certain amount of political acumen or a political lens through which the analysis and subsequent programming is implemented.

STEP 2 Defining the development challenge

Once the context analysis has been conducted, the next step is to define development challenge(s). This is an important step in the GRB programme design as it supports a clear definition of the challenge to be addressed. Once this has been defined, it will ensure that the programme can be checked and monitored for whether it is continuously working to address such a challenge/set of challenges.

Taking the analysis as a whole, it should be possible to identify the deep-rooted challenges that have impeded the economic and social development of a jurisdiction. These "root causes" of current development barriers should then draw a line to the current political circumstances, such as the broader gender equality picture in a country and, specifically, the parliament and its role (or lack thereof) in the GRB process.

STEP 3 Defining a theory of change

Having conducted the context analysis and defined the development challenge(s), the next step is to determine the *Theory of Change*. There are several models to produce a theory of change. The key is to ensure there is some thought and analysis on how a programme or project will intervene to address the development challenge(s).

At one level, the Theory of Change is a simple sequencing of the work of a programme. At a deeper level, the process should support thoughtful consideration of the assumptions and risks associated with all programmes. It should allow for the challenging of preconceived assumptions and perceptions to ensure a well-designed and results-oriented approach is embedded into the work of the proposed programme.

STEP 4 Identifying entry points

Based on the previously articulated analysis, defining the challenge(s) and change process, it is important to next identify the correct *entry points for programmatic support*. Further, determining the appropriate entry point(s) for work on GRB will depend on a number of variables, but the most significant of these will be the state of GRB in a given jurisdiction's budget process and PFM systems. These range from no GRB practice to full GRB institutionalization:

- Where there are no GRB system and tools, the parliament's primary role will be advocating for adoption of specific tools and the endorsement of GRB as part of the budget process;
- Where there is an initial introduction of GRB, but it is not yet routinely applied, the parliament can continue to advocate to ensure it is fully implemented and promote transparency in the budget process, as well as ensure compliance with implementation and identify opportunities for improvement;
- Where GRB has been implemented somewhat regularly, but not entirely institutionalized, parliament can start to assume routine monitoring and build capacity to conduct an independent analysis of the budget based on GRB principles;
- Where GRB has been fully adopted and institutionalized, the parliament should be conducting oversight to ensure the system is working appropriately and leveraging the system to promote gender equality.

STEP 5 Test and try new approaches

Previous work with parliaments has shown that the best means of achieving institutional reforms is to support parliamentary staff and MPs to "learn by doing." New approaches to the work of the parliament to ensure an effective role in GRB should be ***designed and tested*** on a small scale.

For example, work to support stronger oversight by committees can start with support to one committee conducting one oversight inquiry that includes gender impact analysis. This may be expanded to other inquiries by the same committee to build their capacity to conduct such work through its real-world application, backstopped by technical assistance from a programme.

STEP 6 Evaluate results

Once there has been piloting of new approaches, it is vital to ***evaluate***. An evaluation at this stage does not have to be formal or include independent analysis, but it should ensure that lessons learned from the piloting stage are captured. It should consist of the analysis that can allow for extrapolation of the results that can be replicated throughout the parliament. Using the example of a committee piloting gender analysis as part of an oversight inquiry, the evaluation of such piloting should result in a clear set of parameters under which all committees can do the same work.

STEP 7 Share results

Once an evaluation has been conducted and results, lessons learned, and parameters for future work have been defined, the next step is to ***share the results*** with the political leadership and stakeholders. This is key as it allows for the results to be shared with decision-makers in the parliament and beyond and should build political momentum for change.

Once the political actors see that the piloting of a new approach resulted in added value and, perhaps, political benefit, they will be more likely to support replication of the pilot work throughout the entire parliament.

Again using the committee example, sharing results of how a pilot committee used gender impact analysis and that there were better recommendations or changes to policy and legislation as a result of the application of the new tool, is critical to their acceptance of the reform on a larger scale.

STEP 8 Institutionalize reform

The goal is to support the ***institutionalization of the reforms*** that will address the original development challenge sustainably. This may require changes to the legal framework or rules under which the parliament operates. It may be a matter of changing funding or resource allocation or it may mean a behavioral change amongst MPs and staff. But the key is to work with the parliament leadership to support the required transitional work that will result in the permanent change.

Again using the simple pilot committee example, once there is a consensus that there has been added value from the gender impact analysis to the oversight work of the committee, it may result in a change in the rules of procedure of the parliament or a change in standard operating procedures for committees to allow for such impact analysis to be applied routinely by all committees.

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