

Gendered Budget Work in the Americas: Selected Country Experiences

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Foreword

This study draws on the experiences of Ford Foundation grantees in Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru and the United States. In addition to general research, I met with numerous individuals throughout Latin America who were committed to gendered budget analysis. The bulk of the field research was conducted in June and August of 2001. Since the aim of the study was to highlight civil society experiences with gender budget analysis, the United States example, which highlights a city government initiative, is covered in a more limited fashion. The experiences from Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Peru are not meant to be models or representative examples of gendered budget work in the Americas; rather they provide several examples of gendered budget advocacy by civil society.

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1. Introduction

In the last few years, there has been a growing movement to examine governmental budgets with a gender lens: that is, to examine the impact of government policies as expressed through the budget on women and girls and men and boys. Early innovations in Australia and then South Africa and the Philippines led members of both government and civil society to consider the possibility that integrating gender into the budgetary debate could not only yield better information and analysis of the budget's impacts, but also serve as an analytical tool to advocates of more equitable public policies. Now, "women's budgets" or "gender budgets" have spread to the Americas.

This report first explains the concept of gendered budget analysis and why it has become a popular strategy for women's rights advocates. The report then presents case studies from projects in Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Chile. In each of these countries, researchers and advocates have attempted to influence a debate around policy priorities and to assess the impact of government spending on men/boys and women/girls. Their methods have varied: some have participated in the budget process, others have analyzed municipal expenditures, while still others have used the media to highlight the "invisibility" of women in the budget. The last section of the report outlines some early lessons from these country experiences and highlights the opportunities and barriers to future work in this area.

2. Why the Budget?

It is common to view governmental budgeting as a straightforward, administrative exercise and budgets themselves as technically driven, *neutral* documents. While all governments do follow administrative procedures in developing their budgets, these documents are not neutral but rather are infused with political content and reflect particular governance practices.

Governmental budgets say a lot about a country's political culture and its relationship with its citizens. They do so by demonstrating the extent of the state's responsibilities to its citizens. Whether government should provide universal health coverage, privatize social security or invest in new industries can be highly contentious issues. The different ways in which countries have addressed these issues reflect in part their different political norms and values. As such, budgets are value-laden.

Budgets also are essential tools for understanding the government's key policy priorities. For instance, does the government spend more on social security, military readiness or education? The relative importance of these issues can be understood through budgetary analysis (that is, analysis of the level of expenditures for each area) and political analysis (an examination of the policy players). In some countries, the budgetary process also structures political debates since budget negotiations provide windows of opportunity for intervention.¹ From its drafting to implementation, the budget reflects the political preferences of various actors, including presidents, members of Congress and the bureaucracy. When budget drafts are available to the public, budgetary analysis by civil society allows for a "check" on political rhetoric; in other words, civil society can determine whether policymakers' stated priorities really coincide with priorities in the budget.

Given the central importance of government budgets, it is not surprising that budgeting is capturing international attention among scholars, activists and international organizations. Some organizations, such the International Monetary Fund and Transparency International, have advocated greater transparency in budget documents and processes. Foundations such as Mott and Ford have supported civil society efforts to conduct budget analysis as a means of improving governance, accountability and citizen participation. In countries that are seeking to consolidate democratic transitions, the budget can be a crucial mechanism to ending clientalistic practices. In countries whose governments have clung to anti-democratic practices, civil society organizations have used budget advocacy to press for broader democratic changes, such as greater transparency and citizen participation.

2.1 Gender and Budgets

Just as advocates of good governance have begun to focus on the budget, so too have advocates for gender equity. Since the budget reflects spending priorities, values and social norms, they argue, it shows how the government has framed its responsibilities toward men/boys and women/girls.

An underlying assumption of gendered budget work is that men/boys and women/girls do not fare equally when it comes to the budget. Because gender bias remains

¹ See John W. Kingdon. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* Boston: Little Brown, 1984; Aaron B. Wildavsky. *Budgeting: A Comparative Theory to Budgetary Processes*, Boston: Little Brown, 1975.

an obstacle to women's equality, it is reasonable to examine whether government spending priorities either reflect or reinforce this bias. This can be true in the case of spending that pertains specifically to women (such as research on cervical cancer) or spending that affects both genders but does so unequally because men and women occupy different social positions. For instance, childcare can be understood as having gendered effects in societies where women bear the brunt of the responsibilities for childrearing.

In order to conduct gendered budget work, analysts examine their social context to understand how men and women's roles differ. This is an important step in analyzing policies to determine whether current programs combat or reinforce inequality and the subjugation of women. A gendered budget analysis is far more than a comparison of how much women versus men receive as a share of government spending. Rather, it requires an analysis of the social status of women/girls and men/boys, how public policies affect the two sexes, and government spending priorities.

An underlying belief of gendered budget work is the importance of making the gendered impact of public policies and budgets more visible. This will help decision-makers become better informed and lead to better policy. It also will enable advocates to monitor and critique government performance more effectively.

As with any budget analysis, gender budgets should be understood as part of a political process, where definitions of "gendered" and "equitable distribution of public resources" will be open to debate. Women's rights advocates from around the world will disagree on what constitutes a woman's issue. For example, does the design of a child vaccination program affect fathers and mothers differently? This question would likely yield different answers in different contexts.

While there is no single model of gendered budget analysis, Diane Elson, a leading researcher in the field, has developed a comprehensive approach to gender budget analysis that has been widely disseminated; see Box 1 for a summary of her approach.

To assess the gendered impact of government spending, according to many practitioners, one also must ask how the economy and the budget are structured along gendered lines. For example, some advocates argue that national budgets ought to recognize women's reproductive, household, care-giving, family and community responsibilities. Although this type of work is non-remunerated and thus untaxed, feminists like Virginia Vargas argue it is a major part of a country's wealth. Furthermore, when governments

design social services that rely on women's gendered roles, the accounting for these programs should reflect the overall level of resources, including unpaid labor. For example, social services for the elderly that requires family members to perform additional services can impose an extra burden on women; the gendered distribution of un-paid family work helps lower governments' costs. While it may not be possible to compensate women for their extra work, many gender budget advocates argue that governments should explicitly acknowledge women's contributions. If one pursues this line of thinking, conducting gendered budget analysis is more complicated than it first appears.

Box 1: Tools for Gender-Responsive Budget Analysis

Tool 1: Gender-Aware Policy Appraisal. This evaluation asks, "In what ways are the policies and their associated resource allocations likely to reduce or increase gender inequality?"

Tool 2: Beneficiary Assessments. This is an assessment of the degree to which public spending is meeting the needs of actual or potential beneficiaries.

Tool 3: Gender-Disaggregated Expenditure. This estimates the distribution of budget resources (or changes in resources) among males and females by measuring the unit cost of providing a given service and multiplying that cost by the number of units used by each group.

Tool 4: Gender-Disaggregated Analysis of the Impact of the Budget on Time Use. This is a calculation of the link between budget allocation and its effect on how household members spend their time, using household time use surveys.

Tool 5: Gender-Aware Medium-Term Economic Policy. This is used to assess the impact of economic policies on women, focusing on aggregate fiscal, monetary and economic policies designed to promote globalization and reduce poverty.

Tool 6: Gender-Responsive Budget Statement. This government report reviews the budget using some of the above tools and summarizes the budget's implications for gender equality using indicators such as the share of expenditures targeted to gender equality, the gender balance in government jobs and the share of public service expenditure used mainly by women.

Source: Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt and Tanni Mukhopadhyay. "Gender Budgets Make Cents: Understanding Gender Responsive Budgets," Commonwealth Secretariat (London, UK: January 2002) and adapted from Diane Elson, ed. Progress of the World's Women: UNIFEM biannual report, New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women 2000.

To promote more gender-balanced public policy, some women's rights organizations have adopted a "think tank" organizational model, conducting technical budget analysis and using the results in direct advocacy with policymakers. Another approach has been to work at the grassroots level to bring more women into the budgetary process, such as by participating in local budget assemblies. This bottom-up approach is an important, although

often overlooked, example of the intersection between budget analysis and gender advocacy.²

3. The Worldwide Emergence of Gendered Budget Analysis

The strategy of using gendered budget analysis as a tool to address gender inequality has caught on among governments and civil society organizations. Two international factors have contributed to this development: the wide dissemination of models and lessons from initial efforts in Australia and South Africa, and support from the international development community.

3.1 Brief Descriptions of Initial Experiences

Australia, the first country to develop a women's budget, did so in the mid-1980s. At one point, governments at all levels in the country — federal, territorial and state — assessed public sector spending for its gender impact. This effort was coordinated through the women's agency of the Australian government and involved collaboration across other ministries. Notably, the Australian analysis went beyond those expenditures that were earmarked for women and girls to include all spending.³

With the change in Australia's government in the mid-1990s, however, interest in gender budgets declined. In addition to the changed political climate, other factors created obstacles to gendered budget work, such as the limited policy impact of the analysis and the lack of civil society input. By 1997, only the Victorian, Northern Territory, Tasmanian and Queensland governments had women's budgets in place.⁴

In South Africa, the Women's Budget Initiative (WBI) began in 1995 as a collaborative effort between a parliamentary joint-committee and civil society organizations. Similar to the Australian analysis, the WBI has examined aspects of public spending by conducting yearly analyses. Each year analysts focused on specific sectors. After three years, the WBI has analyzed all national departments/ministries, including areas not traditionally considered gendered, such as transportation and the criminal justice system. Analysis of

² There are several excellent resources on methods for gendered budget analysis, see Appendix A for suggestions.

³ In 1996 Australia's new government ceased its program at the national level.

⁴ For more discussion on the Australian experience, see: Rhonda Sharp and R. Broomhill, "Women and Government Budgets," *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 25, No. 1, February 1990.

each sector's spending includes a study of the public policy and of whether and how the policy would affect women. Because of South Africa's history of institutionalized discrimination, researchers also have analyzed the intersection of gender and other factors, such as race and disability.

While today there are numerous other examples of women's budgets or gender budget around the world, the early experiences of Australia and South Africa have provided important models for new efforts.

3.2 International Development of Gendered Budget Analysis

More than 50 different examples of gendered budget analysis exist worldwide, produced by governments and/or civil society. This remarkable diffusion is in part due to interest by the international development community. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) began supporting gender-responsive budgets in 1996 in South Africa and has expanded its work to Eastern Africa, South East Asia, South Asia, Central America and the Andean Region.

In addition, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been a key player in promoting gender equity within the Commonwealth. The *Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development*, started in 1995, includes gender-responsive budgeting. From the outset, one of its aims has been to create a set of analytical tools for budgetary expenditure analysis that could be used by governments. With the collaboration of AusAID (the Australian government's overseas aid program), the organization also commissioned a training manual to apply these tools.⁵

In addition to disseminating information, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been a strong international advocate for gender budgets; one example is through its meetings with ministers responsible for women's affairs. In 2001, UNIFEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat joined with Canada's International Development Research Center to support government and civil society organizations in analyzing national and/or local budgets through the Gender Responsive Budget Initiative. The initiative has four objectives:

⁵ Debbie Bundlender, Rhoda Sharp with Karri Allen, "How to do a gender-sensitive budget analysis: contemporary research and practice," Commonwealth Secretariat and AUSAid, 1998.

- To strengthen the capacity of governments to incorporate a gender analysis in planning and evaluating the impact of revenue raising and expenditure allocation at all levels in order to fulfill their commitments to promote rights and gender equality;
- To support strategies for women's participation in economic decision-making through their engagement in budgetary processes;
- To enable women to hold governments accountable for their commitments to women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action; and
- To advocate for and support the information of gender into economic governance and leadership in order to increase women's participation in decision-making processes that shape their lives and to respond to the challenges of a global world.⁶

While international organizations such as UNIFEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat are not the sole reason for the diffusion of gendered budget analysis around the world, these organizations' efforts have certainly legitimated gendered budget analysis. The new Gender Responsive Budget Initiative will undoubtedly contribute to the further development of gender budget work worldwide.⁷

4. Gender Budget Work in the Americas

With democratization and the emergence of a capable civil society, there is great potential for gendered budget analysis in the Americas. While efforts are relatively nascent, there are examples of gendered budget work in Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and the United States. This study draws mostly from the experiences in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru and focuses on efforts by civil society. The efforts in the Americas reflect the diffusion of ideas and models from other countries as well as homegrown opportunities for advocacy.

⁶ UNIFEM/Commonwealth Secretariat/IDRC, Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives. See <http://www.gender-budgets.org>

⁷ Projects currently underway or in the planning stages in South America include: Women's Budgets: Social Control and Gender Equity, Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria, CFEMEA, Brazil; Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, Consolidating Affirmative Action Programmes; Ministry of Agrarian Development/National Institute for Settlement and Agrarian Reform (MDA/INCRA), Brazil. Public Expenditure and Citizenship of Women and Men: A Comparison of Intention (budgets) and Actions (realized) in Selected Municipalities, IBAM (Brazil); Public Policies with Equity in Race and Gender, Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher (CNDM), Brazil; "Capacitating Public Employees on the Incorporation of a Gender Perspective through the Program of Management Improvement" Servicio Nacional de la Mujer - SERNAM (Chile); "Analysis of the Incorporation of a Gender Perspective on Chilean Municipalities" Asociación Chilena de Municipalidad - AchM (Chile); "National and Local Budget - Women's Citizenship" Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres - REPEM (Uruguay).

4.1 Mexico

The July 2000 presidential elections in Mexico marked the first defeat in 71 years for a candidate from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The election of Vicente Fox from the National Action Party signaled a turning point in Mexico's transition to democracy. It also marked the beginning of a new mode of governing in Mexico, where no party holds an absolute majority in either house of Congress. This change was not spontaneous, but rather emerged from electoral reforms begun in 1989, party reforms in the mid-1990s and decades of civil society pressure for reforms.

In addition to changes in the national political arena, Mexico has undergone significant changes at the sub-national level. In the mid-1990s, political decentralization was underway, with state governorships going to opposition candidates. There have also been institutional changes, including the "new federalism." This has entailed: 1) reforms to raise revenue-sharing allocations to the states; 2) limited expansion of the states' capacity to raise revenue locally through taxation and other mechanisms; 3) allocation to the states of the lion's share of funds assigned for regional and social development; 4) strengthening of the administrative capacity of municipalities; and 5) clarification of administrative functions among federal, state and local authorities.⁸ Decentralization of spending in areas such as education, health and direct assistance to impoverished areas has created new opportunities for local officials and citizens to participate in the budget-making process. Unfortunately, real opportunities for direct citizen participation in local budget-making remain very limited.

Within this context, two non-governmental organizations, *FUNDAR: Centro de Análisis e Investigación* (FUNDAR, Center for Analysis and Investigation) and *Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia* (Gender Equity: Citizenship, Work and Family) joined forces to conduct budgetary analysis of public sector spending in relation to gender. FUNDAR was founded in January 1999 by a group of civil society leaders from diverse sectors, with the aim of supporting Mexico's transition to democracy. The organization's work emphasizes research, training, dissemination of information and direct action to improve citizen participation in areas such as public spending. *Equidad de Género* (Equidad), founded in 1996, brought to the partnership extensive experience in gender advocacy, a large

⁸ Peter M. Ward and Victoria E. Rodriguez with Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, *New Federalism and State Government in Mexico: Bringing the State Back In*, U.S. Mexican Policy Report No. 9, Austin: LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, 1999, p.58.

network of women's organizations throughout Mexico (*Foro Nacional de Mujeres y Políticas de Población*) and the opportunity to work with women leaders from the organization's Mexican Women's Leadership Institute.

Equidad's assessment of national spending related to women began in 1998, when the organization launched its first workshop on public budgets. Equidad's aim was to monitor the government's commitment to the Program of Action of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). In particular, leaders in the women's movement wanted to determine whether Mexico was complying with the requirement that two-thirds of funding for "human development" originate from within the country.

Equidad's first study focused on reproductive health. Although the study was fraught with technical difficulties (including bureaucratic hurdles for access to information and difficulties in accessing actual expenditures for specific budget categories), the findings were presented at Equidad's second workshop. Gisela Espinosa and the other authors of the study found that between 1993 and 1996, federal expenditures on reproductive health dropped by 37 percent.⁹ While these results were discouraging for advocates, the study provided an essential tool for further advocacy.

At the same time, Mexican feminists were wary that although some public policies appeared to reveal improvements for women — such as the national health plan, a law against family violence, and training programs for women in non-traditional sectors — these policies often lacked specific targets or even budgetary allocations to support new initiatives. This fact highlighted the need for civil society to develop an awareness of the dynamics of government budgeting.

FUNDAR and Equidad began collaborating in 2000 to understand precisely how resources were being distributed across different priority areas and to train women leaders in budget analysis and advocacy. In addition to analyzing national-level budgets, the organizations worked with four teams at the state level (Coahuila, Chiapas, Puebla and Querétaro). The states were selected based on their contacts with women leaders and their interest in mapping, monitoring and researching state and municipal level budgets with a gender perspective. In Coahuila and Puebla, the teams worked on poverty, with a focus on

⁹ Gisela Espinosa, Lorena Paz Paredes and Veronia Rodriguez, *Salud Sexual y Reproductiva en México: los Programas, los Procesos, los Recursos Financieros*, Mexico City, México, March 1999.

the education, health and nutrition program PROGRESA. In Chiapas and Querétaro, teams focused on reproductive health within *Programa de Ampliación de Cobertura* (PAC), which is designed to expand access to basic health services for the most marginalized groups. The kinds of activities conducted by FUNDAR and Equidad included budget analysis, advocacy, workshops, training sessions and technical assistance to state partners.

These organizations benefited from their prior work analyzing spending in the reproductive health sector (Equidad) and advocating greater fiscal transparency (FUNDAR). Analysts also learned from other examples of budget and fiscal analysis, such as the work of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (US), and gendered budget analysis, such as the work of the Women's Budget Initiative (South Africa). While these examples provided a frame of reference, the initiative ultimately developed a methodology for budget analysis that would work best in Mexico.

Researchers were particularly aware of the need to produce highly credible findings that would be persuasive to the government and media. Two initial challenges were the lack of gender-disaggregated data and the invisibility of gender in the Mexican budget. Since researchers did not want to base their analyses on population estimates, their initial study highlighted the federal spending earmarked for women. It found that only 0.03 percent of all spending was dedicated to women.¹⁰ FUNDAR and Equidad used this finding in a successful media campaign, arguing that since women clearly benefit from more than 0.03 percent of the budget, there should be better budgetary information, gender and age-disaggregated data, and more useful information on the range of programs that affect women but are not identified as such. FUNDAR and Equidad also used this analysis in their work with members of the legislature who are committed to increasing transparency, accountability and gender equality.

Since then, FUNDAR and Equidad have produced analyses of poverty alleviation programs (according to official figures, 26 million Mexicans are poor) and health sector spending. These initial experiences also gave FUNDAR and Equidad leverage to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to develop an official publication and run workshops.

¹⁰ In 2002, this figure increased to 1 percent of all spending.

4.2 Chile

In Chile, efforts to integrate gendered analysis into the budget are being conducted separately by the government and civil society. Within the government, officials at the *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM), one of the most reputable women's government agencies in Latin America, is responding to political and administrative opportunities to work across agencies and insert gender into the budget process. Within civil society, researchers at Hexagrama have also found that decentralization has brought an opportunity for analysis of municipal budgets.

SERNAM, an autonomous agency of the Chilean government, is among the largest women's agencies in the region; in 1999 it reported 150 staff members and a budget of \$8.9 million, including funds from domestic and international sources.¹¹ Part of the agency's prestige lays in the executive's commitment to women's rights; its director is appointed by the president and has the rank of a cabinet minister. In addition to its strong national presence, SERNAM has offices in 13 regions of the country and has established local relations and accords with over 400 municipalities.

In 2001, SERNAM introduced the idea of incorporating a gendered impact analysis of public policies into the budget process. Working with the finance ministry, SERNAM helped establish new administrative rules for analyzing programs with budgetary impacts. For the first time, agencies were required to submit a gendered impact analysis to comply with the executive's equality of opportunity instructions (*Igualdades de Oportunidades*, No. 018, 2000). To make such an analysis possible, SERNAM designs indicators and trains budget officials; in addition, agencies that have not been collecting gender-disaggregated data will begin to do so. While SERNAM officials view their work as a series of small steps, they also express enthusiasm for the potential to develop something similar to a women's budget and hope that these efforts will lead to more gender-equitable public policies over the long term.

Within civil society, two researchers at Hexagrama Consultoras, Alejandra Valdés and Elizabeth Guerrero, initiated a study in 2001 on gender and municipal budgets. Their aim was to analyze and highlight gender inequality in government spending at the local level. Several factors made their study timely. Chile is undergoing a process of territorial decentralization, which is creating new regional governments and strengthening

¹¹ Cepal. *Directory of National Organizations Dealing with Programmes and Policies on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*, December 1999.

municipalities (*Reforma a la Ley Organica Constitucional de Municipalidades* No 18.695, 1999). Additionally, the establishment of municipal women's agencies (*Oficinas Municipales de la Mujer*) has created an opportunity to examine the gendered impact of public policies at the municipal level.

Valdés and Guerrero's report is a pioneering study for Chile; it includes a discussion of municipal revenue (sources and changes in revenue over time), as well as municipal spending patterns (across program areas), and a discussion of constraints related to a large and inflexible operating budgeting. The experience of assessing municipal spending and revenue with a gender lens provided them with several important lessons. First, Valdes and Guerrero found that the manner in which information was presented in budgetary documents impeded their analysis. For example, municipalities lacked data about their jurisdictions and program beneficiaries; they also used budget categories that were too broad and thus impeded the researchers' ability to identify policies that affect women. Second, municipal officials were unaccustomed to providing budgetary information to civil society. Third, electoral politics and upcoming municipal elections also impeded the researchers' access to officials and information. In order to initiate a meaningful dialogue between civil society and government, Valdes and Guerrero offer a series of recommendations and guidelines for developing gender-sensitive indicators for municipal spending and revenue collection.

While Valdes and Guerrero's work is a crucial starting point for gendered budget analysis, it also reveals how challenging budget analysis can be for civil society organizations. Working independently of government affords researchers greater flexibility to monitor and critique governmental policies and practices. However, without a minimum level of information or budgetary access, budget analysis is extremely difficult to conduct.

4.3 Brazil

Budget analysis as a tool for civil society advocacy is not new in Brazil. Following the country's democratic transition, NGOs have developed strategies to monitor governance through budgetary analysis. In the late 1980s, a few municipalities also began participatory community forums for citizens to articulate spending priorities. Within Brazil, there are various budget organizations at the local level — for example, *Centro de Assessoria e Estudos Urbanos* (CIDADE) in Porto Alegre and *Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas*

(IBASE) in Rio de Janeiro — as well as general budget-monitoring organizations at the national level, notably INESC in Brasilia. There is also a strong tradition of women's rights advocacy at both local and national levels. *Centro Feminista de Estudos e Assessoria* (CFEMEA), one of the most established feminist organizations in Brazil, has worked on feminist policy analysis and advocacy and collaborates with women's forums in the government.

CFEMEA started examining budget issues that affect women in 1995, with the primary aim of monitoring progress in areas outlined by two United Nations women's conferences: the Cairo conference, which focused on health and reproductive rights, and the Beijing conference's Platform for Action. CFEMEA has worked directly with the congressional women's caucus (*bancada feminina*) to advocate changes to the three-year development plan and the annual budget. It also has also commented on specific budgetary impacts on women. After two years of examining budget expenditures, CFEMEA shifted its focus to areas where it had strong contacts in government, including the health sector and the National Women's Council.

Subsequently, CFEMEA decided to shift its advocacy strategies once again, from focusing on the drafting of the budget to the budget's implementation and the delivery of programs. CFEMEA made this shift after realizing that certain gains in budgetary allocations and women's rights were not translating into actual program implementation. For example, while domestic violence legislation had progressed at the national level, states were slow to expand their domestic violence services. CFEMEA's research revealed that the lack of specificity in the federal budget regarding funding for domestic violence shelters allowed states to reallocate these funds to other areas.

CFEMEA is currently planning a more in-depth project on gendered budget analysis that will track not only spending in crucial areas for women, but also program implementation at the municipal level. In order to assess the quality of local-level programs, researchers will work with non-governmental organizations that operate locally.

Brazil's transition to democracy and new constitution have created an opportunity for renewing local democracy through municipal governance. With the federal transfer of funds to local governments and increased responsibility for social policy, Brazil's more than 5,000 municipalities have become laboratories for innovative practices. One innovation that has garnered considerable attention worldwide is Participatory Budgeting (PB) policy, which facilitates citizen engagement in decisions pertaining to the allocation of resources (usually

for infrastructure-related projects). Participatory Budgeting started in a few municipalities in 1989 under the administration of executives from the Worker's Party. The use of PB in Porto Alegre, which continues today, is the best-known case. Since 1989, PB has been replicated in over 100 municipalities and in five states, and has received recognition from Brazilian and international agencies.

In Porto Alegre, city officials engage annually with citizens through the mayor's office to discuss the fiscal outlook and prioritize spending for the city's 16 districts. Initially, participatory budgeting focused on setting priorities among infrastructure projects, but more recently, discussions also have been held on thematic topics related to social policy (e.g., health care, housing or transportation). PB in Porto Alegre has been instrumental in redirecting resources to previously excluded communities, which has been a political commitment of the city's Worker's Party mayors. It has also been an important mechanism for helping to develop engaged citizenship. These two components are especially necessary ingredients for democratic practice because of damage caused under the country's military regime.

The NGO *Centro de Assessoria e Estudos Urbanos*, CIDADE, has played an important role as an independent monitor of Participatory Budgeting. CIDADE has followed the PB process since its inception and has collected data on participants, run surveys and produced numerous studies on the effects of PB. While PB's goal is not directly related to women's empowerment, CIDADE studies suggest that the PB has positive effects for women. Using gender-disaggregated data, CIDADE has traced the increase in women's participation in PB in Porto Alegre. While women have historically constituted over half of the participants in the general meetings, they formerly were underrepresented as district representatives and representatives in the citywide Budget Council. Over time, this has changed. For the first time in 2000, women constituted half of the Budget Council delegates.

The level of women's involvement through participatory budgeting is significantly higher than that found in electoral politics. In interviews with women who have represented their districts, women reported that their experience has brought them other benefits. For example, they have developed the skills to seek and win other competitive positions in city government that are open to civil society representatives.

Box 2: Gendered Budget Work in the United States

As in Latin America, gendered budget analysis in the United States is relatively new and is centered around principles of women's rights and gender equality. The United States is one of the few countries in the world that has not ratified the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, this has not prevented local governments from addressing women's rights and incorporating CEDAW principals in their municipal governance.

In April 1998, San Francisco became the first city in the United States to recognize the importance of the convention by enacting its own ordinance to implement CEDAW locally. The city established a task force consisting of representatives from city government and the community, which works with a local commission and city departments to identify discrimination and implement human rights principles. The ordinance requires that each city department undergo a gender analysis in three areas: 1) budget allocations, 2) service delivery, and 3) employment practices. Thus far, city and county administrators have produced gender analysis reports in six areas: Adult Probation Department, Department of Public Works, Juvenile Probation Department, Arts Commission, Rent Board, and Department on the Environment. Administrators also have developed guidelines for gendered budget analysis.

Source: City of San Francisco, California. See: <http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/cosw/cedaw/index.htm>

As the first generation of municipal participatory budgeting, Porto Alegre's experience has provided lessons for cities in Brazil and worldwide. One lesson is that unless the budget process is designed to promote discussion of the gendered impact of the budget, those discussions will seldom occur. For this reason, new efforts from municipalities such as Villa El Salvador, Peru explicitly incorporate gender as a category of analysis for community discussion. Under the new municipal administration in Villa El Salvador, city officials who work with the community on PB are designing a participatory process that will facilitate discussion of the gendered effects of the budget.

The unique, bottom-up experience of Participatory Budgeting in Brazil differs from some other "think-tank" analysis-oriented projects in this study. While PB has not sought explicitly to address gender inequality, many women argue firmly that the effects of PB projects are particularly important for women, since they often must compensate for the lack of basic infrastructure by performing double and triple roles. CIDADE's work will support women's empowerment through its assessment of the gendered impact of PB on participants.

4.4 Peru

Peru's transition to democracy has been tenuous. Its first presidential election, in 1980, marked the beginning of Peru's democracy, but through the 1980s the country was burdened with numerous difficulties: the rise of narco-trafficking, internal violence and hyperinflation. During the 1990s, the government brought inflation under control, installed neoliberal economic reforms and captured members of the Shining Path. But President Fujimori's reforms came at a high cost for democracy. In 1992 he dissolved Congress because of its opposition to his reform efforts, revised the Constitution and called for new congressional elections. These interruptions to democratic practices continued until 2000, when Fujimori sought a constitutionally questionable third term and a bribery scandal hit the national and international stage. Fujimori eventually fled the country, and newly elected President Alejandro Toledo took office in July 2001.

Despite improvements in budget transparency, national political turbulence has limited opportunities for civil society advocacy on budget matters. Budget and fiscal analysis in Peru has thus been limited to a few experiences: researchers at the *Centro de Investigación de la Universidad del Pacífico* participated in a Ford Foundation-funded three-country study on military, environmental, youth and women's spending, and the feminist organization Centro Flora Tristán published a study entitled "Mujeres y Gasto Publico" ("Women and Public Spending") in 1998.

Advocacy around policy priorities has found a more receptive audience at the local level. Peruvian feminist Virginia Vargas is currently directing gender-sensitive budget reviews in the Andean Region (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru) for a UNIFEM project on Economic and Social Rights of Andean Women. An important component of the project is the identification of a government willing to participate in a gender review, along with researchers and community leaders. Some of the criteria for selection were:

- Degree of openness of municipal authorities to address gender equity in public policies and government programs, including the budget.
- Presence of women in Executive positions in municipal government
- Municipal government policy toward citizen participation, especially that of women, in development of municipal institutionalization.
- Degree of municipal institutionalization, which makes it possible to gain access to consistent information and to interact with the working team.

- The existence of women’s organizations interested in becoming involved in the whole process, from the description of funds, the discussion of local priorities, and budget allocations to the monitoring of compliance.¹²

In the Peruvian case, the municipality of Villa El Salvador was selected for the project. Villa El Salvador is located in the greater metropolitan region of Lima, the capital. The municipality has unique history. It was established in 1971 through an organized land-invasion. Despite the difficult desert terrain, residents established a highly organized city composed of self-help housing. In 1983, Villa El Salvador became an independent municipality; its current population is around 350,000. Over the years, residents of Villa El Salvador have maintained their strong tradition of community empowerment through self-help strategies and activism. This is especially true of women’s organizations, which engage in activities such as community kitchens, community banking, job training, and leadership development courses for girls and women. Given the strong presence of civic associations, it could be expected that once the municipality determined to initiate a Participatory Budgeting process, there would be considerable interest.

City officials in Villa El Salvador established Participatory Budgeting in August 2000 after holding a conference to evaluate several different PB models from Brazil (Porto Alegre, Santo Andre), Uruguay and Venezuela. Although officials picked a model that was similar to Porto Alegre’s, they modified the process for their community, for example by including gender as one of the central themes for discussion when setting budget priorities.

The PB project, supported by UNIFEM, comes at an opportune time for Villa El Salvador. The city is interested in assessing the gendered impact of its budget and researchers Bethsabe Andía and Arlette Beltran can benefit from greater access to municipal information. Their study is forthcoming.

5. Early Lessons from Selected Country Experiences

The above cases demonstrate a diverse array of experiences in advocating gender equality through the budget processes. The diversity of approaches is not surprising, since in each country civil society organizations face different barriers to participation in budgetary

¹² Virginia Vargas, “Towards Gender Responsive Budgeting,” presented at high-level conference hosted by the government of Belgium to launch a global vision to strengthen economic and financial governance. October 16-17, 2001.

debates around policy priorities. Some groups engage in participatory processes at the local level. Others have taken advantage of decentralization to focus on sub-national or local budget priorities. Still others have operated on the national level to analyze their government's commitments to international agreements.

There is clearly no single model for gendered budget analysis. What unites these experiences is their commitment to examining budgetary priorities and addressing historical gender inequalities. Although many of the experiences in the case studies are nascent, they offer important lessons for those researchers and organizations that want to start working in this area.

5.1 Opportunities for Gendered Budget Work

While the projects profiled in this study differ significantly with respect to methodology, strategy and level of institutionalization, most of the organizations are responding to similar opportunities; these trends include: greater democratic opening, political decentralization, new forms of direct citizen participation, better integration of gender concerns in governmental practice, and the civic advocacy by organizations dedicated to women's rights and budget analysis.

5.11 Democratization

Nearly every country in Latin America has established an electoral democracy and in many countries, democratic consolidation is underway.¹³ Indeed, through much of the 1990s, governments opened up the political process, permitted opposition parties and established mechanisms for greater transparency and accountability. For civil society to be an active commentator on public policy and to evaluate and monitor government activities, it must have a minimum level of democratic space. Budgetary analysis is difficult if not impossible if governments fail to supply civil society with the necessary information to evaluate and comment on budget proposals in a timely and accurate manner. Thus, information must be accessible and budgetary processes should allow enough time for public comment.

While Latin American countries are far from perfect when it comes to transparency, activists and scholars interviewed for this study remarked that there have been dramatic

¹³ There are a few notable exceptions, where democracy is precarious: Venezuela, Colombia and Peru.

improvements. Although they may disagree with the government's analysis of the data, scholars and activists generally find the data itself to be credible. Researchers in Brazil and Peru noted that the Internet has improved access to information; in years past, those researchers often sought to obtain information solely through personal contacts and knocking on the doors of government ministries.

5.12 Decentralization

Trends in the Americas for decentralization or devolution of responsibility over social sector public policymaking have created new opportunities and challenges for social justice advocacy. Most of the new avenues for gendered budget analysis have occurred at the local level, where experience in budget monitoring has been limited. Brazil's democratic opening coincided with the election of a few progressive mayors in the late 1980s, creating opportunities for citizens to engage directly in budget decision-making and priority-setting. In Peru, the city of Villa El Salvador, with a strong tradition of civic organizing, also decided to create a participatory budgeting process. State reforms in Chile increased autonomy at the municipal level. Mexico and Brazil both have a federal system with direct fiscal transfers from the federal government to local municipalities. Although Mexican and Brazilian NGOs in this study have a strong national presence, they have also learned that it is advantageous to work with local researchers to monitor sub-national budgeting.

Conducting gendered budget analysis at the local level can make sense for both strategic and practical reasons. In some contexts, analysis of the national budget can be politically difficult. For example, in Peru, turbulence in the national political arena has made it difficult to conduct a national analysis, whereas researchers have been able to work directly with women's associations and municipal administrators at the local level. Similarly, the United States government has been a laggard in signing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, but San Francisco was able to pass its own city ordinance to support CEDAW locally. In addition, in Brazil, advocates learned that effective budget monitoring could not end with passage of the federal budget but had to include ongoing monitoring of federal transfers to localities. These trends toward fiscal and administrative decentralization can be challenging for advocates for gender equality, but they also create opportunities to work in new venues, such as direct participation with local associations and more direct monitoring of spending practices.

5.13 Citizen Participation

In Villa El Salvador, Peru and Porto Alegre, Brazil, Participatory Budgeting processes have enabled women and men to participate directly in the budget process and promote their spending priorities. NGOs and researchers play an important role in these processes. They help monitor the process so that citizens can meaningfully engage in debates; they also provide an important check on the government's commitment to deliberative decision-making.

Even though PB is gender-blind in Porto Alegre, women say it has resulted in positive outcomes for them. For example, infrastructure projects (which are not discussed in relation to gendered impacts) affect women and men differently because of gender roles. One female representative to the budget council said that when clothes get dirty because neighborhood streets are not paved, it is women who bear the responsibility for washing the clothes. While it is clear that PB can affect women and men differently, the extent to which participation by men and women will result in gender-equitable budgetary spending is questionable. The methodology developed for citizen consultation in Porto Alegre was initially more concerned with geographic inequality than with gender or racial inequalities. Having learned from Porto Alegre and other models around Latin America, the designers of PB in Villa El Salvador introduced a gender assessment early in the process and made gender one of the central themes for citizen deliberation. As more municipalities pick up on the Participatory Budgeting model, there should be careful attention to how the process is designed and whether it can address historic inequalities, be they geographic, gendered, racial, etc.

One of the most difficult tasks for civil society organizations that engage in these deliberative programs is learning how to participate in a government-led effort without losing the independence that helps them monitor the process. They also have to learn how to use their analysis and expertise to support the process and promote citizen empowerment. These are difficult tasks, but ones that the organizations and researchers profiled have been able to achieve.

5.14 Gender Mainstreaming in Latin America

While democratization can open up channels for citizen involvement in public policy debates, democratization is insufficient to bring about gendered discourse. Indeed, debates

on women's rights in the Americas are a product both of the long-standing engagement of the women's movement and of efforts to mainstream gender into the government through the creation of women's agencies.

In most of Latin America, government adoption of national women's agencies began in the 1970s.¹⁴ By the end of the 1990s, those countries that had not already created a women's agency did so, and most other countries' agencies underwent further transformation. In general, women's agencies seek to promote women's interests through such activities as administering programs that address women's status, drafting bills to promote equality for women, training other governmental agencies on "gender sensitivity," and coordinating or commissioning research on the status of women. Some women's agencies describe their mission as related to the tracking of their country's progress on international agreements and commitments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action or the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

While women's ministries in Latin American have not yet undertaken full reviews of the national budgets with respect to gender, several efforts are underway. In Chile, the *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (SERNAM) is in the early stages of developing indicators for a gender review of the budget. In Brazil, the *Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher* (CNDM), part of the Ministry of Justice, began to develop gender indicators for its multi-annual planning budget in 2001.¹⁵ In Mexico, FUNDAR and Equidad are working with the *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres* to develop a guide for gender-budget statements, which they will be requesting from each ministry. Since most donor efforts to initiate gender budget analysis involve government collaboration, it is likely that women's agencies in Latin America will prove to be a vital link between budget agencies and gender rights advocates. A challenge that this strategy will likely encounter is that on the whole, women's agencies in Latin America are rather weak institutions that lack the authority and resources to transform governance practices without a commitment from the executive.

Another effort to mainstream gender has been through women's electoral quotas. In many Latin American countries, women, who have been underrepresented in electoral institutions, now benefit from quotas designed to increase their representation. In Mexico,

¹⁴ Two notable exceptions are Chile, which in 1949 became the first country to create a women's agency, and Cuba, which created the *Federación de Mujeres Cubanas* (FMC) in 1960.

¹⁵ This project is currently on hold as the council reorganizes under its newly elevated status as a *Secretaría* (Secretariat).

for example, the left-leaning Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) sets aside and recruits a minimum percentage of women for their party's candidate list. In Argentina, quotas are mandatory for all parties and are firmly rooted in law; this has substantially increased the number of women in the legislature.

While women elected officials have not helped produce gendered budget work, they are potential consumers of it. Newly elected women could benefit from learning about the budget process, as well as the analysis of the budget's impact on women and men. For this reason, the Flora Tristan Center in Peru is working with women elected officials and conducting training sessions on social and economic rights and budgeting in 40 municipalities in the interior and coast of Peru. In Mexico, gendered budget analysis from FUNDAR and Equidad de Genero has found an audience with several female legislative representatives who are concerned with women's rights in Mexico.

5.15 Civil Society Advocacy – Budget Analysis & Women's Organizations

Lastly, but perhaps most significantly, the Latin American countries included in this study have benefited from a civil society that is well positioned to engage in budgetary and gendered analysis. In several Latin American countries, the transition to democracy has enabled civil society organizations to join debates about policy priorities through budget analysis. For example, in Brazil, the *Instituto de Estudos Socio-Econômicos* (INESC) has monitored and commented on the federal budget process since the 1990s, and groups such as *Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas* (IBASE) and *Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais* (Pólis) have followed municipal budget issues in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, respectively. In Mexico, researchers at the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas* (CIDE) have analyzed areas such as local government finance, social policy spending, and issues of budgetary accountability and transparency. In Argentina, Chile and Peru, researchers from several universities developed a three-country budget study in the areas of the environment, women, military affairs and child and adolescent policy. One reflection of this regional strength in civil society budget analysis is the five-country study of budget transparency issued in 2000 by CIDE, FUNDAR, Equidad, Ibase (Brazil), Universidad del Pacífico (Peru), Universidad de Chile and Poder Ciudadano (Argentina).

While most of these organizations' research and advocacy efforts have not addressed gendered impacts, they have played an important role in the development of gendered

budget advocacy. In many cases, budget organizations have initiated public debates on budgetary priorities. In addition, their work has raised pressure for greater transparency by shedding light on the difficulties of obtaining information. Lastly, the expertise available at these organizations has often been invaluable for researchers getting started in gendered budget work.

The women's movements in the countries studied have a long tradition of advocacy for women's rights. International agreements for women's rights, such as the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, often serve as a foundation for advocacy and budgetary analysis. Not surprisingly, nearly all of the civil society efforts to bring about a gendered perspective on budgeting are tied to feminist organizations or organizations that have an explicit goal of addressing gender inequality. This is because gendered budget analysis provides women's rights organizations with the tools to mobilize support and push for better public policies.

Non-governmental organizations that engage in budget and fiscal analysis can provide a complementary perspective to that of women's rights organizations. The fusion between gender rights and budget analysis has not been an easy one, particularly when building analytic capacity across organizational divides. Nevertheless, the existence of both types of organizations has been crucial to the development of civil society advocacy because it often brings together different strengths — technical and analytical capabilities on the one hand, and advocacy capabilities on the other.

5.2 Challenges for Gendered Budget Analysis: Getting Started

Every organization and researcher profiled in this study underwent an initial stage of learning. The following are some of the early challenges they faced, as well as the strategies they used to overcome them.

5.2.1 Gathering Budgetary Information

An early challenge is the same as with any type of budget analysis: researchers need to obtain and familiarize themselves with budget documents. This can be more complicated than researchers anticipate. Even in democratic societies it can be difficult to obtain budgetary information, particularly when other civil society organizations have not requested this type of information before. In the mid-1990s, researchers in Brazil, Peru and Mexico

experienced difficulties in obtaining budget information, which was not readily accessible or reliable. Since then, access has improved as governments (e.g., Brazil and Peru) have used the Internet to distribute national budget information.

However, access to information can still be difficult at the sub-national level. For example, Chilean researchers learned that despite the budget's status as a public document, they ran into difficulties in obtaining budget documents. In some municipalities, public officials had never received requests for budget data so viewed such requests from researchers with suspicion. Others informed researchers that they needed to obtain official authorization. In addition, researchers had difficulties in obtaining interviews for the study because their research coincided with campaigns for local municipal office.

Obtaining budget information, particularly at the sub-national and local level, can be both challenging and time consuming. However, there are strategies to overcome these barriers. In Chile, researchers turned to institutions such as the *Capítulo Regional de la Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades* (a regional municipal association) and the *Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional* (a department for regional development), to collect needed information. Another strategy is to turn to contacts in government, either elected officials or civil servants; elected officials who are committed to an agenda for greater accountability and transparency in government can be important allies in these initial phases. Lastly, where possible, organizations that are engaging in budget work for the first time can contact existing budget organizations for advice on how to obtain information. Organizations such as FUNDAR in Mexico and INESC in Brazil have published guides to the budget process, which can be invaluable to those researchers just starting out.

5.22 Deciding on a Methodological Approach

Once budget information is collected, another challenge is beginning the analysis. Advocates from every country in this study said they initially had difficulty making sense of the budget document itself, particularly when the budget categories were broad, lacked targets or beneficiaries, or encompassed many different programs. When researchers in Mexico wanted to identify spending on reproductive health, for example, they discovered that this spending was split among different programs and that budget categories were too broad to determine the specific allocation for that particular area. Moreover, they found that the reorganization of budget categories over the years made it difficult to track some

spending changes over time. These early lessons can be painful. For this reason, the start-up costs of budget analysis can seem high.

As discussed in section 2.1, there are many ways researchers can conduct gendered budget analysis. At one level, researchers need to determine what it means to have a “gendered” perspective. They also need to be in touch with the women’s movements in their countries to know what issues will mobilize people. Since the goal is to produce analysis that is relevant to policy debates, researchers might ask the following questions to frame their analysis: What kind of information will be most credible and useful in advocating for gender equality? Is it most important to focus on the budget as a whole, or should the focus be on specific policy areas where there is a disparity between men/boys and women/girls? Diane Elson’s six tools for gender responsive budget analysis are the most widely disseminated methodology for gendered budget work (see Box 1).¹⁶ Yet while some analysts in Mexico and Brazil cited those tools as useful, they often decided that they needed to develop a different approach.

Based on FUNDAR’s previous experiences with budget advocacy, the analysts in Mexico decided it would be problematic to rely on estimates of the number of male and female beneficiaries of a government program in assessing the program’s gendered impact because such estimates would not be credible in policy debates. Since little disaggregated data on gender was available, analysts decided to take another approach: addressing a politically popular set of poverty-alleviation programs on the basis of international commitments that the Mexican government had signed. Analysts: 1) identified specific commitments made at the Cairo and Beijing UN conferences, as well as CEDAW; 2) identified the poverty alleviation funds the Mexican government had spent since 1998; 3) categorized the relevant information for each poverty-alleviation program; and 4) developed criteria for a gender-sensitive evaluation of the programs, such as whether women’s basic or immediate needs were being met, whether women had relevant roles in decision-making, and whether there was an explicit recognition of women’s unpaid time and work.¹⁷

¹⁶ See: Diane Elson, ed., *Progress of the World’s Women: UNIFEM Biannual Report* (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2000); Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt, and Tanni Mukhopadhyay, “Gender Budgets Make Cents: Understanding Gender Responsive Budgets.” London: Commonwealth Secretariat, January 2002.

¹⁷ Claudia Vinay Rojas, Helena Hofbauer Balmori, Lucía Pérez Fragoso y Ma, *Concepción Martínez Medina*, *Mujeres y Pobreza: El Presupuesto del Gasto Social Focalizado visto Desde la Perspectiva de Género*, Mexico: Fundar & Equidad de Género, November 2001. Available at: <http://www.fundar.org.mx>

Researchers in Chile took a different approach. Valdés and Guerrero decided to focus on nine municipalities in four different regions of the country. Taking a more global approach, they included a discussion of budgetary processes at the local level, and addressed both revenue sources and spending patterns. As is true of many researchers' experiences, the information Valdés and Guerrero obtained from municipalities and their budgets did not lead to easy analysis of gendered impacts. An important lesson from the Chilean experience is that it is often necessary to be creative in adapting the analysis to the available information. Having discovered that significant portions of the municipal budgets were dedicated to public administration, Valdés and Guerrero analyzed the distribution of resources between male and female employees. They examined the type of work performed by men and women, salary differences, as well as differences in employees' educational backgrounds.

Another lesson researchers learned was that even after they had settled on a methodology, it was often necessary to adapt strategies or approaches. For instance, CFEMEA staff recognized that it was not enough to track the national budget process for budgetary allocations that were important to the women's movement; the executive's budgetary discretion meant that disbursement of funds was often delayed or did not take place at all. Women's organizations at the state and local level organizations also alerted CFEMEA to problems in policy implementation. This led CFEMEA to begin working with local partners and to examine the full budgetary process, from national priority setting to local implementation. Similarly, the Mexican groups FUNDAR and Equidad have recognized the importance of examining sub-national budgets and have begun to provide technical assistance and conduct workshops for state-level organizations to build their capacity for budget analysis. Since politics and budgeting are dynamic processes, civil society organizations should anticipate the need to shift strategies from time to time.

In nearly all of the experiences in this study, researchers began with small steps by conducting an initial pilot study. The Chilean project is one example. In Brazil, CFEMEA researchers tracked spending on domestic violence. In Mexico, the first research project focused on reproductive health. Starting small and remaining flexible in terms of methodology were crucial, particularly since researchers were not sure what kind of information would be available. This strategy also reflected the fact that funding for many projects was modest and short-term. The following section on strategic partnerships will address the types of partnerships researchers formed to strengthen their analytic capacities.

5.23 Building Strategic Partnerships

In most instances, the researchers in this study were new to the topic and needed to develop skills in either budget analysis or gendered analysis. Finding staff with the skills to integrate both is often difficult. One way organizations have increased their analytic capacity is by collaborating with other organizations or researchers on a common project. The partnership between FUNDAR and Equidad in Mexico is one example. Each organization contributed a different form of expertise and set of contacts: FUNDAR had greater experience in budget analysis, while Equidad had greater experience in advocacy for gender equity. Collaboration between organizations may extend throughout the project or be confined to one part of it, such as the publication or dissemination of a report or complementary advocacy efforts.

Another approach is to consult with other organizations or researchers in developing a strategy. For example, when CFEMEA decided to embark on a new phase of gendered budget analysis, its staff consulted widely with other researchers, including budget analysts from other NGOs that do not traditionally examine gendered issues. This is a way to benefit from the expertise of other organizations without full collaboration on a project. While many budget organizations have not used a gendered lens, they often share similar social justice objectives, such as reducing poverty and social inequality.

Lastly, many organizations cope with staffing difficulties by hiring consultants or “farming out” analytical work. This is a particularly useful approach for organizations that are just starting out.

While the above strategies — partnerships, collaboration and consulting — can address some of the costs of starting budget work, each strategy has important drawbacks. Partnerships rarely occur among equals, in terms of either organizational capacity or resource availability. Thus, it may be difficult for organizations to participate in a common partnership under equal terms, especially if they share a common budget and need to negotiate over shared resources. In addition, it can be difficult for organizations to share credit for joint work. Finally, organizations may enter a partnership with conflicting missions — one focusing on advocacy and information dissemination, for example, and the other having a greater interest in engaging policymakers directly. These two philosophies can be complementary, but can require negotiation over how to develop the analysis and disseminate its findings.

Hiring consultants or farming out research to other organizations is a practical step for the short term but is potentially problematic for the long term. Ideally, organizations that aim to integrate budget analysis into an overall advocacy strategy should look to develop capacity in-house. This will help the organization build credibility and engage with public officials on an ongoing basis. Splitting projects among several organizations or hiring consultants, in contrast, can delay the institutional growth that is one of the necessary steps for the long-term sustainability of gendered budget advocacy (see Section 4.25).

Another type of strategic partnership should also be considered: between civil society and government. Ideally, a dialogue around gender budgeting should develop between civil society organizations (and researchers) and government; the former, as advocates for gender equality, can reinforce the progressive efforts of the latter. For example, some researchers in Brazil have contracted independently with government agencies to develop a framework to evaluate the gendered impact of various program areas. Another model is for an organization to create a formal partnership with a government agency to provide technical assistance or run sensitivity workshops. In Mexico, for example, FUNDAR and Equidad are consulting for the national women's agency to design guidelines for budget statements.

There are no rules for how much collaboration between civil society organizations and government is either necessary or useful. However, civil society organizations do run the risk of losing autonomy and credibility through collaboration. Political Scientist Sonia Alvarez has noted that women's organizations in the region are increasingly providing consulting services to governments that lack "gender skills."¹⁸ While these "femocratization" efforts may have positive effects, Alvarez cautions that women's organizations that employ professionalized analysis for advocacy could end up losing touch with their base. Organizations that are considering collaborating with government will clearly have to weigh the benefits (such as supporting progressive efforts in the bureaucracy and gaining new access to information) against the possible costs (such as limited autonomy and loss of grassroots contacts).

¹⁸ Sonia E. Alvarez "Advocating feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO 'Boom,' " *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Summer 1999, Vol. 1 Issue 2.

5.24 Crossing Conceptual Boundaries

Gendered budget work combines two different kinds of work: the pursuit of women's rights/gender equality and budget analysis. The first is typically centered on a rights-based approach, which relies on a recognized human rights framework embodied in national, regional and international law; the second, a governance-based approach, includes engagement and monitoring of governmental practices to ensure that they are consistent with democratic values and norms. While these divisions are not mutually exclusive, in practice they may be difficult to integrate.¹⁹

To date, the budget analysis conducted by civil society organizations in the United States, Mexico and Brazil has not automatically produced “gendered” analysis. Most organizations that conduct gendered budget work do so from a different analytical and advocacy framework than other groups that do budget work — one that is centered on women's rights and gender equality. For some organizations, such as FUNDAR and Equidad de Genero, the rights framework is particularly important. For these groups, international agreements can provide a point from which to monitor government compliance in areas such as reproductive health. In Brazil, CFEMEA monitors the Brazilian government in relation to the Beijing Platform for Action.

Advocates I spoke with noted that although women had made significant gains in asserting greater equality under democratization, many women have not yet experienced them in practice. As such, integrating rights and governance work can advance women's status; rights work can address values, such as equality, and governance work can include ongoing monitoring of governmental performance to ensure that it lives up to its legal commitments.

For grassroots organizations, gendered budget work implies the direct participation of women in local decision-making about governmental priorities. Expanding women's access to decision-making forums and introducing opportunities for greater citizen engagement and are crucial governance issues. Experiences in Porto Alegre, Brazil and Villa El Salvador, Peru illustrate that direct participation can be crucially important for women by giving them an opportunity to advocate that municipal resources be spent in a more gender-balanced manner.

¹⁹ For information on applied budget analysis and economic, social and cultural rights, see the International Budget Project, <http://www.internationalbudget.org/themes/ESC/index.htm>

The diversity of experiences in this study illustrates that there is no single best conceptual framework for gender budget analysis. Rather, a useful approach is to integrate components of the rights and governance approaches. In practice, this can be difficult, especially for an organization (or network of organizations) that has dedicated itself to one approach over the other because of its mission or staff capacity. For instance, budget organizations may be more familiar with other budget organizations than with women's rights organizations. While there is no simple solution to these barriers, organizations can cross analytic and strategic boundaries by forming partnerships and consulting with other organizations. The early costs of setting up gendered budget analysis may be high, but they can be reduced through networking and learning from the experiences of other organizations from around the world (see Appendix for further resources).

5.25 Institutionalization

A few of the gendered budget projects included in this study are well integrated into their organizations. The collaborative project of FUNDAR and Equidad de Genero, for example, is a central component of each organization's mission. Similarly, CIDADE's efforts to encourage women and men to influence public policy processes are central to the group's general goals of supporting and monitoring participatory budgeting experiences.

Even though there appears to be growing interest in gendered budget work, many of the researchers I met were working as consultants on short-term projects; gendered budget work had not been fully integrated into their organization's mission. In other cases, their research was just one of multiple research projects the organization produces each year. For instance, the analysis produced by Hexagrama in Chile was supported by UNIFEM and UNDP, but essentially consisted of a research project. On some occasions, independent researchers have been contracted to produce an analysis without a formal organizational affiliation or even an organizational commitment to continue the work beyond the production of that analysis.

The current project-driven dynamic is not surprising; nearly every project in this survey began with a few exploratory studies. However, reliance on small projects raises concerns for organizations' capacity to build expertise and credibility over the long term. A single study of the gendered effects of health care spending, for example, will have little practical effect if the organization is unable to accompany that study with other activities,

such as evaluating budgetary implementation, participating in budget debates and monitoring changes over time. Depending on the political setting, it can take years for researchers in civil society organizations to gain recognition for credible analysis that can be influential to policymakers.

For gendered budget work to become institutionalized — that is, to become a sustainable part of an organization’s work over the long term — it should complement the organization’s overall mission. The task of greater institutionalization is one of the primary challenges for gendered budget work and represents an area where international donor funding can help organizations make important strides.

5.3 Early Impacts

It would be unrealistic to measure the success of policy advocacy by civil society organizations solely on the basis of public policy changes. While the ultimate goals of gendered budget advocacy may be the equitable distribution of governmental spending between men/boys and women/girls, the redesigning of public policies so they are sensitive to gendered roles, or the consideration in the budget of the non-remunerated work of women and men, these goals will take many years to achieve. Furthermore, it would be impossible to attribute any policy change to a single advocacy strategy or organization, since factors such as elections, social movements, and international financial institutions all influence the direction of public policy. Given the complex policymaking environment, it is important that both donors and civil society organizations have realistic expectations of what gendered budget advocacy can achieve in the short and long term.

Researchers and non-governmental organizations may require a few years to develop the necessary skills to conduct gendered budget analysis and advocate more equitable budgetary policies successfully. As discussed above, there are obstacles to getting started, including gathering information, developing the skills to prepare a credible analysis and forging strategic partnerships. This early phase can take time, particularly since the entire budget process — from drafting to implementation — often takes a year.

While most of the projects in this study are in the early phases of development, they already have made important contributions. First, many of the researchers have begun to reconceptualize their own advocacy in terms of the budget’s formation and implementation. Feminists throughout Latin America have stated that while they have won important rights

on paper, their countries have failed to respect those rights in practice. This shift toward examining budgetary politics is particularly significant for those organizations that came to budget work from a women's rights or equality rights perspective. Since many of the organizations that engage in gendered budget analysis are also linked to other projects and networks (e.g., Equidad de Genero, CFEMEA and Flora Tristán) this lesson can have wider impacts. For example, pre-existing programs that train newly elected women at the local level in Peru and leadership programs for women in Mexico are now including training on budget politics.

Another impact of these projects is expanding budget literacy and gender literacy among advocates and researchers through training sessions, workshops and meetings. Participants in the UNIFEM-sponsored Latin American Workshop on Gender Sensitive Participatory Budgeting training, for example, included economists who had previously been unfamiliar with gendered analysis. These training sessions are not limited to members of civil society but often include public officials at the local, sub-national and national level. As a result, an increasing number of people in both civil society and government can now engage in applied gender-budget work.

Lastly, these projects are increasing civic awareness of gender inequality and informing the public debate. The early CFEMEA analysis was disseminated through the group's monthly journal *Fêmea*, which is sent to researchers, women's rights advocates and every woman elected to local, state or national office. CIDADE, whose gender-disaggregated analysis of participatory budgeting revealed that there were barriers to women's representation in citywide budget councils, is working directly with female members of those councils, providing them with a forum to discuss the opportunities and barriers they face.

In Mexico, FUNDAR and Equidad have published magazine articles about women's invisibility in the budget. Journalists writing on budget priorities relating to poverty and programs for women have also relied on the organizations for credible information. In addition, progressive elected officials have used their gendered budget analysis to advocate gender equality. FUNDAR and Equidad also are developing closer relationships with agencies within the federal government and are looking to work more directly with the Ministry of Health.

The policymaking process can be messy, and policy changes can take many years to achieve. However, researchers and organizations that are conducting gendered budget analysis can encourage budgetary and policy changes by providing new analysis and informing the public debate. The accomplishments of gendered budget work will only increase as researchers and organizations gain experience and credibility.

6. Conclusion

Gendered budget analysis is a burgeoning area of work for civil society organizations in the Americas, as highlighted by the experiences in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru. The international development community has demonstrated an important commitment to this line of work by funding efforts in both civil society and government.

It is important to acknowledge the challenges civil society organizations may face as they move ahead with this work. It can take a few years for organizations to develop the skills and the credibility to participate effectively in budget debates. Donors should recognize that it will take time to build credibility, institutionalize these approaches within organizations and create linkages for political advocacy.

Nevertheless, assessing the gendered impact of government spending can be a powerful tool for monitoring government compliance with international agreements and advocating changes in policy design and spending priorities. It also can create opportunities to increase citizen participation in the policy-making process, with the goal of re-prioritizing government spending according to community demands.

There is merit for the enthusiasm that gendered budget analysis has generated. It has the potential to transform public discourse around policymaking and gender equality, as well as to empower civil society. Connecting gender budget analysis with issues that bring people “out into the streets” is a way to support both policy advocacy and grassroots organizing.

The projects profiled in this study have demonstrated that they can have important effects on their organizations and on wider public debates. There are multiple approaches to gendered budget work in the America, but the idea of incorporating gender advocacy with budget analysis has clearly caught on.

Appendix A

Selected Resources

General

The Commonwealth Gender Budget Initiative by the Commonwealth Secretariat. See <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender/index1.htm>

Assists governments to integrate gender into all their activities, primarily through the development of the Gender Management System (GMS) concept. It focuses on integrating gender into the national budget through the application of the policy tools developed by the Secretariat; collecting and using sex-disaggregated data; strengthening dialogue between stakeholders.

Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives: (UNIFEM/Commonwealth Secretariat/IDRC): <http://www.gender-budgets.org>

GRBI is a collaborative effort of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), The Commonwealth Secretariat and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to support government and civil society in analyzing national and/or local budgets from a gender perspective and applying this analysis to the formulation of gender responsive budgets. This site includes a document library.

Hazel Reeves and Heike Wach. "Women's and gender budgets: an annotated resource list" BRIDGE (briefings on development and gender). Prepared for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). January 1999. Available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/bridge/budgets.pdf>

This document includes an annotated bibliography on women and gender budgets, as well an overview of country and institutional initiatives.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), "Progress of the World's Women 2000." See Chapter 5, available at: <http://www.unifem.undp.org/progressww/2000/index.html>

This biannual report examines the progress of the world's women from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. It concentrates on the economic dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of globalization. Chapter 5, "Accountability for the Progress of Women: Women Demanding Action," includes a discussion of holding governments accountable for budgets.

Digital Libraries

INFOPOLIS: Thematic Digital Library. Available at: <http://www.infopolis.es>

An on-line library with a variety of electronic sources on gendered budget analysis; available in English and Spanish.

International Budget Project. Related Websites by Topic Area:

http://www.internationalbudget.org/resources/sites/gender_youth.htm

The International Budget Project of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities assists non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers in their efforts both to analyze budget policies and to improve budget processes and institutions. The project is especially interested in assisting with applied research that is of use in ongoing policy debates and with research on the effects of budget policies on the poor. The website includes a comprehensive library of electronic resources on budget analysis, and includes information on gender budgets.

Methodologies

Debbie Bundlender, Rhonda Sharp with Kerri Allen. "How do to a gender-sensitive budget analysis: contemporary research and practice." Commonwealth Secretariat and AUSAid.

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender/index1.htm>

This comprehensive guides includes sections on what is a gender-sensitive budget and seven tools for sensitive budget analysis. The report includes both theoretical discussions and examples from experiences from around the world.

San Francisco CEDAW Taskforce/Commission on the Status of Women. *Guidelines for a Gender Analysis: Human Rights with a Gender Perspective*. July 2000. Available at:

<http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/cosw/cedaw/guidelines.pdf>

These guidelines were developed by the City of San Francisco to monitor compliance of its municipal CEDAW ordinance, including gendered budget analysis for municipal administration.

Helena Hofbauer and Claudia Vinay, with Adriana Estrada. *Presupuestos Sensibles al Género: Herramientas Metodológicas: Experiencias Internacionales y de México*. Mexico: Fundar. December 2002. Available at: <http://www.fundar.org.mx>

This manual includes methodological tools for gender-sensitive analysis of public spending. It draws on experiences and examples from around the world and suggests tools that can be used in the Mexican context. (In Spanish.)

Examples of Gendered Budget Analysis

The South African Women's Budget, at: <http://www.case.org.za/htm/wbi.htm>

The South African Women's Budget Initiative (WBI) began in 1995, soon after the first democratic elections in South Africa. It is a collaborative project of national parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations. Over the years WBI has produced multiple publications for various audiences.

CIDADE, "Quem é o público do Orçamento Participativo: seu perfil, por que participa e o que pensa do processo, 1a Edição, Porto Alegre, Brazil: Centro de Assessoria e Estudos Urbanos, 1999.

Study on participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil. It includes survey data on the demographics of participants, detailing who participates and what they think about the process. It includes gender-disaggregated information on participants.

Alexandra Valdés and Elizabeth Guerrero. "Género en los Presupuestos Municipales." Hexagrama Consultoras. Available at: <http://www.pnud.cl/pnud/5.htm>

A study on Chilean municipal budget practices with a gender lens. It addresses issues of transparency, revenue-raising and spending practices in nine municipalities in four different regions in Chile.

Claudia Vinay Rojas, Helena Hofbauer Balmori, Lucia Perez Fragoso y Ma. Concepcion Martinez Medina. "Mujeres y Pobreza: El Presupuesto del Gasto Social Focalizado visto desde la Perspectiva de Género." Mexico: FUNDAR & Equidad de Género. November, 2001. Available at: <http://www.fundar.org.mx>

A study of Mexico's poverty programs from a gender perspective. It includes a discussion of why poverty programs should be examined with a gender lens and an evaluation of a range of poverty programs in areas such as human development, labor and basic social infrastructure.

On Participatory Budgeting

Abers, Rebecca, "From Clientelism to Cooperation: Local Government, Participatory Policy, and Civic Organizing in Porto Alegre, Brazil," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 26, No.4, 1998 (511-537).

This article discusses participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil and how it has increased neighborhood activism and improved the quality of life for many. It addresses the attendance at budget assemblies and argues that the residents of the poorest neighborhoods have proven to be the most active in forming budget policy.

Baierle, Sérgio, “The explosion of experience: The emergence of a new ethical-political principal in popular movements in Porto Alegre, Brazil,” in Sonia E Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar, Eds. *Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures : Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1998.

This book chapter discusses participatory practices in Porto Alegre, Brazil within the context of new social movements.

Brian Wampler. A Guide to Participatory Budgeting. Conference paper presented at Third International Budget Conference, Mumbai, India, October, 1999. Available at: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/resources/library/GPB.pdf>

A practical guide to participatory budgeting, the guide introduces its historical origins, how it works, and whether it can be applied outside of Brazil.

Appendix B

Regional Contacts

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