

Taking Forward Gender Budget Analysis in Ireland
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In this talk, I will look at what we are currently trying to develop in terms of gender budget analysis, in the context of what has already been achieved with regard to promoting gender equality. This will include:

1. Gender Mainstreaming
2. Gender Budget Analysis: related work
3. Gender Budget Analysis: developments so far
4. Opportunities and Challenges

1. Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is a requirement under the National Development Plan 2000-06. The NDP is a €55 billion investment plan, comprised of six Operational Programmes covering infrastructure, employment and training, regional development, the productive sector and peace. Gender mainstreaming is a requirement for almost all measures under the programmes; this includes gender impact assessment, collecting gender disaggregated data and reporting on these to two twice yearly Monitoring Committees. Positive action projects are also funded, under the Equality for Women measure. The NDP is currently undergoing a mid-term evaluation.

2. Gender Budget Analysis: related work to date

National Women's Council of Ireland

I. Pre-budget submissions

- Submissions to the National Budget representing a gender equality perspective
- Post-budget analysis in terms of NWCI recommendations

II. Partnership Negotiations

- As Social Partner, provides recommendations on how 'Equality and Social Inclusion' budget should be spent

Issues: How Equality and Social Inclusion budget is defined

Tracking spending in specific areas

(Very important to learn from this experience for future gender budget analysis)

III. Research reports

- *A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform*
- *Valuing Care Work*

3. Gender Budget Analysis: developments so far

In April, the Gender Equality Unit held a meeting between researchers working on gender budgeting in Belgium, and interested researchers and equality workers in Ireland. This resulted in two proposed actions: running a gender budget pilot, and conducting a gender audit of salaries in the public sector. We thought that it would be most effective to run a fairly small-scale pilot, that could be subsequently circulated as a model. Since the meeting, I have been investigating the possibility of running a pilot in both a Local Area Partnership and a County Development Board (LAPs are local partnerships funded under the NDP to promote local development, employment and social inclusion; County Development Boards are responsible for the delivery of ten-year County Development Strategies). There has been interest from all three Local Partnerships approached, as well as from one County Development Board. The next step will be to put the work out to tender, envisaging that it will take the following structure:

- I. Preliminary work, identifying the budget systems in place; devising an appropriate methodology
- II. Working with the organisation to analyse the current budget practices and resource allocation with regard to gender equality
- III. Working with the organisation to incorporate gender equality considerations into future budget practices and resource allocation

The proposed gender audit of salaries in the public sector is also looking promising; we are currently discussing the information-gathering system that is used in the Civil Service, and the practicalities of carrying out this kind of analysis.

4. Opportunities and challenges

Opportunities: there appear to be willing organisations, and funding is available to undertake the work

Challenges: lack of engagement with gender mainstreaming by many key departments and organisations (eg GIAs)

Challenge in getting to the heart of resource allocation in public spending

Embedding the work into future practice

References

NDP Gender Equality Unit, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Website: www.ndpgenderequality.ie

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National Women's Council of Ireland. *A Woman's Model for Social Welfare Reform*. NWCI. Dublin, 2003

National Women's Council of Ireland. *Valuing Care Work*. NWCI. Dublin, 2003

Website: www.nwci.ie