
Methods to Link Local Governments' Gender Budgeting to Participatory Budgeting System

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The budget system of local governments, which is based on program budgeting, operates together with participatory budgeting, gender budgeting and performance budgeting. Performance budgeting focuses on achieving budgetary efficiency and performance management, while gender budgeting concentrates on attaining not only the management of budgetary performance by setting performance goals, but also fairness and fiscal transparency. On the other hand, participatory budgeting is a process which functions to enable citizens' voluntary participation in the budgeting process and increase government transparency than achieve fiscal and economic efficiency. Taking into

consideration the common objectives of gender budgeting and participatory budgeting, the two systems can be operated in connection with such shared goals. Such linkage will allow each system to complement the problems or limits pertained in one system. Thus, this study sought to find a method of linking the operation of gender budgeting and participatory budgeting.

Aligning gender budgeting and participatory budgeting has the benefit of supplementing the limits of each budgeting system. The potential effects of such linkage can be summarized into four points. First, it can bring the effect of budget allocation through the drafting of gender budget statements. Budget for the implementation of participatory projects are usually included as new budget items. By drafting gender budget statements for these new projects, analysis of gender inequality of the project as well as the inclusion of new budget items becomes feasible. Second, performance management of participatory projects is possible through the preparation of gender budget statements. The biggest limitation of the current participatory budgeting is the absence of performance management. Gender budgeting will help fill this absence by enabling partial management of performance, and thus meet the requirement for a possible budget increase for participatory projects. Third, gender-sensitive execution of participatory budgeting can be realized. This entails that not only the gender composition of the Participatory Budget Committee but also the potential effects of the project themselves will be subject to gender-based assessments. Such budgeting process will help contribute to the fairness of the budgeting system. Fourth, the selection of gender budgeting projects reflecting local characteristics can be expected. Currently, gender budgeting projects selected by local governments are similar to each other, and the portion of those that reflect the uniqueness of each region is relatively low. As participatory projects are selected by local citizens, it is more likely that projects which are most vital to the community and reflect local characteristics will be chosen. Thus, the inclusion of such projects to gender budgeting projects will lead to the

increased portion of projects catered to the needs of local regions.

Although there is a slight difference in the ways local governments operate the budgeting system, for the purpose of linking gender budgeting and participatory budgeting, this study presented a way to link the two from the perspective of budgeting process, system operation, target project and performance management.

First, from the perspective of budgeting process, while gender budgeting follows the overall process of allocation-execution-evaluation- settlement-feedback, participatory budgeting is mostly associated with the allocation phase. Thus, a possible way of linking the two budgets would be by drafting gender budget statements after the budget allocation for participatory projects, and later executing and settling the gender budget accounts.

Second, from the perspective of system operation, the alignment of the two budget systems can be reviewed from two aspects. One aspect is the gender-sensitive operation of the Participatory Budget Committee. The participation of women in the Committee will play an important role in assessing the inequality of the project, and help resolve the issue of distributing power to women. The other aspect concerns the cooperation from relevant government departments. For the conjunctive operation of participatory budgeting and gender budgeting, government officials exclusively responsible for such operation must be assigned. Various incentives should also be offered to the government officials for the evaluation of its operation.

Third is the perspective regarding target project. From the perspective of target project, the linkage of the two budgeting system is contingent on the project size and the project selection criteria. Currently, gender budget statements are drawn up with the focus on specific projects. The same goes for participatory projects. Therefore, there would be no issue of drawing up gender budget statements regarding the selected participatory projects. Nonetheless, as the necessity of increasing the unit size of the project is currently under

deliberation, further discussion on the adjustment of the unit size is paramount. Next, regarding the selection of participatory projects, standards for evaluating the level of gender equality and gender impact should be included. The performance of the budget should be managed so that selected participatory projects are also assigned as gender budgeting projects.

Fourth is the perspective of performance management. Currently, the performance management of participatory projects lack documentation. If gender budget statements regarding participatory projects are compiled, it would naturally lead to their performance management. Thus, attention should be paid first to compiling gender budget statements for participatory projects continuing for two consecutive years. Regarding one-year-long projects, a separate record of performance should be prepared.

Of course, various differing opinions regarding the above mentioned method of linking the two budgeting systems can be raised. However, the most pressing would be to induce the acceptance from government officials. Thus, it would be advisable to identify administrative problems that might occur in the process of aligning the two systems through a test-run, than to enforce their immediate linkage.

It must be acknowledged that there is a difference in the operation of participatory as well as gender budgeting among local governments. As it is realistically difficult to formulate a method of linking the two budgetary systems that satisfies all the different characteristics of local governments, providing an umbrella guideline regarding the linking of the two systems, and allowing each local government flexibility to operate the system would be desirable.