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Localising Gender and Participatory Budgeting: Challenges of Institutionalisation in Penang

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LOCALISING GENDER AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING:

CHALLENGES OF INSTITUTIONALISATION IN PENANG

Introduction

In January 2012, the Penang Women's Development Corporation (PWDC) together with the two local councils in Penang, the Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) and the SeberangPerai Municipal Council (MPSP) started a three year pilot Gender Responsive Budgeting project (2012-2014). As noted in the project document, the long term goal was that the 'Penang Local Government integrate gender perspectives into its governance processes, particularly through the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). [1]

Two years have passed since the project was kick-started as a flagship programme of PWDC - a newly set up state funded women's agency established in late 2011 to promote good governance and gender equality in Penang. [2] Its two partners however, have been in existence since the colonial times, but they were re-structured in 1976, as municipal councils under the Local Government Act (LGA). [3]

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[1] In 2004, the United Nations DevelopmentProgramme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) piloted GRB in five ministries in Malaysia. Following this, three Treasury Call Circulars duly encouraged other ministries and agencies to use GRB in their programmes and activities. However, the latest call circular (2015) has a stronger wording in that it requires the various ministries and agencies to prepare their budgets using a gender analysis budget approach (*perlumenyediakanperancanganbajetmenggunakanpendekatananalisis gender*). http://www.treasury.gov.my. Penang is the only state, thus far, to initiate GRB at the state level.

[2] While registered in November 2011, PWDC only started operating in January 2012.

[3] Malaysia is governed by a three-tiered federal system. The federal government is the highest authority followed by the state government and local government.

This is the third and last year of the pilot and hence it would be instructive to evaluate the progress thus far and identify the challenges of moving this young endeavour forward. In particular, this paper discusses the nature and extent of the institutionalisation of GRB in the two local councils. [4] It specifically analyses the readiness of the two local governments in Penang to institutionalise GRB within their respective organisational milieus. The term 'institutionalisation', particularly the introduction of new practices in relation to sustained change is a complex and difficult process.

The first part of the paper attempts to briefly engage with this term. This is followed by a discussion of the process of lobbying and sensitising policy makers, as change agents, in the early stages of its formulation – an important pre-condition of the institutionalisation process. The key roles played by local authorities in creating an enabling and supportive environment to make GRB a reality in their respective bureaucratic contexts are then examined. The paper points out how competing priorities, among others, often precede actions and commitment for GRB, as political will alone might not bring about sustainability in GRB institutionalisation. The concluding comments argue that both a participatory approach as well as a commitment towards gender integration into GRB structures and processes must be the way forward - to ensure successful transformation of the mainstream towards gender inclusivity and sustainability of people-centred governments, Penang not excepted. Several recommendations are then put forward for the next phase of the project.

**Institutionalisation as Sustained Change**

Levy (1996:1) in citing Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1988) defines institutionalisation as a 'process whereby social practices become sufficiently regular and continuous to be described as institutions'. These 'social practices that are regularly and continuously repeated are sanctioned and maintained by social norms, and have a major significance in the social structure'. As she correctly points out the term has two important concepts: 'that of the room for manoeuvre which individuals and organisations have to generate change, and that of the notion of sustained change'. Levy further stated that the idea of 'sustained change' could bring about conflict between the regular practises of organisations with their own set of interests, and how they respond to change which also reflect other power relations and interest dynamics and patterns. Levy then propounds a rather intricate web of institutionalisation, with thirteen (13) elements as conditions towards such sustained change.

Other authors have similarly pointed out the need to define the different rules, norms and practices – both formal and informal - in the process of institutionalisation. For example, Helmke and Levistsky (2004: 727) define informal institutions as 'socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels' as opposed to formal institutions which are 'rules and procedures, that are created, communicated and enforced through channels widely accepted as official'.

But how does organisational change happen? Kelleher and Rao (1999) provide a useful framework in understanding organisational changes, particularly when introducing gender issues into organisations. They point out that there are four interrelated clusters of changes that need to be made. The top two clusters are individual while the bottom two are systemic. The cluster on the right is of formal institutional rules while the left is the informal rules and cultural practices that maintain inequality in everyday practises. Each quadrant has its own

challenges with connections between them. The formal is visible while the informal is less visible, at times invisible (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: What are we trying to change?
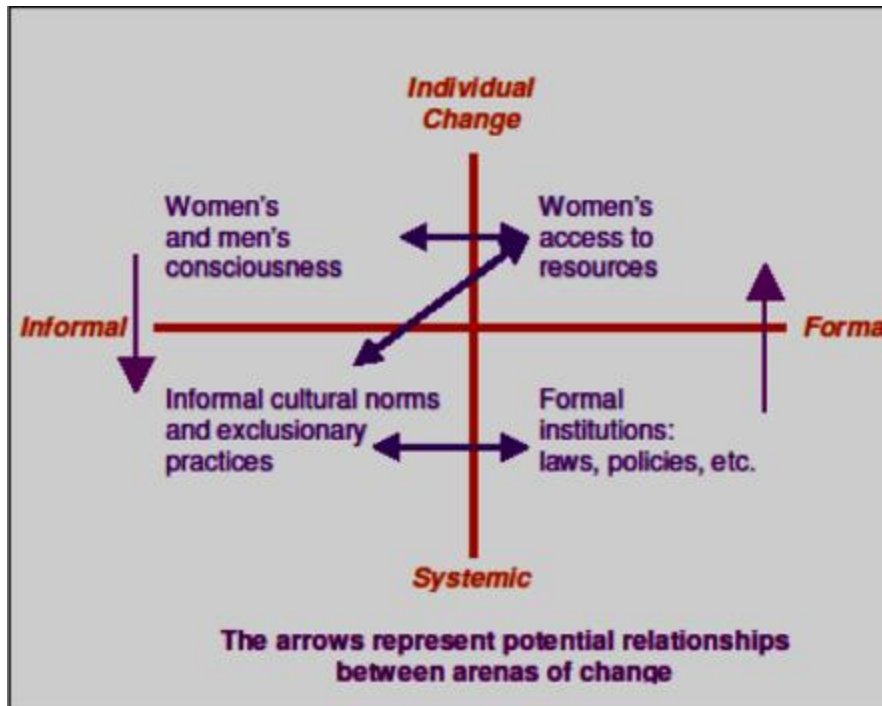
What is clear is that change needs to happen at many levels, that it has to happen 'holistically' across different quadrants or layers or spheres, and that it will take time. Furthermore, taking off from Levy (op.cit), they argue, quite succinctly, that there is a web of five spheres in which one can move an organisation towards transformation (See Diagram 2 below). In summary, these are:

1. **Politics** – whether there is a women's constituency that is advocating for gender issues which will be taken up by the organisation?

2. **Organisational Politics** – whether these external gender advocates are able to negotiate with the powers that be (i.e. the senior bureaucrats) within the organisation to adopt these issues? The outcome of bureaucratic buy-in could be a stronger policy

or increased resources, including the possibility of an alternative organisational culture.

3. **Institutional Culture** – organisations have an institutional culture with its own values, history and ways of doing things and this culture might facilitate or impede gender equality work. The question is to what extent is there a culture of opennes, dialogue and understanding for new directions - in this instance regarding gender issues and programmes, such as GRB?

4. **Organisational Process** – Are there sufficient resources and sufficient skilled and knowlegeable people to lead the change, particularly in terms of learning new ideas and creating new programmes, policies, services and structures? For example is gender analysis required as a key component in all projects? How does this translate to work on the ground?

5. **Programmatic Interventions** – Are there new methodologies/applied research developed to ensure that gender equality work is appreciated and supported by those in the organisation? Can these new methodologies make a difference? This is the test whether the organisation delivers value or not and whether it is supported by other parts of the organisation

Diagram 2: Organisational Likelihood of Promoting Gender Equality

Organizational Likelihood of promoting gender equality

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE
Is there a culture of openness and dialogue?

PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTION
Requires applied research continuous learning and attention to power dynamics

ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS
Requires:
- Access to power
- Clarity of analysis
- Skill at negotiation
- Alliances
- Networks

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS
- Policy
- Procedure
- Knowledgeable people
- Women in senior positions

PRESSURE
Women's constituency (inside & outside), senior leaders, donors, accountability structures and incentives

This paper picks up from some of the above concepts, particularly the framework of the five spheres of power/influence to examine the challenges faced in institutionalising a new strategy – that of GRB in Penang, Malaysia. In similar vein, Illo et al (2010:7) provide some useful insights in their evaluation of the Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy. They point out how gender budgeting is a triple process – a political process, a technical concern under gender mainstreaming and a part of broader governance change.

The next section starts by documenting the initial stages of the project and the steps taken to obtain buy-in (including obtaining the funds) from the authorities. Indeed this can be categorised as the first and second sphere of influence where women advocates engaged in dialogues from mid-2010 with the leadership at state and LA before they agreed to adopt GRB as a pilot in late 2011.

Following this, the third part of the paper discusses the relevant outputs of the pilot, highlighting the importance of the community pilots and the innovative methodology

embarked upon such that GRB became accepted in terms of 'bringing value' to both LAs –
the last sphere of influence. Embedded in this section are the challenges faced in
institutionalising GRB in local government in relation to leadership and staff acceptance, as
well as the role of capacity building in raising the awareness of individuals to accept GRB in
their work i.e. cultural and behavioral change. Another challenge is the setting up of new
structures (systemic change) to support GRB – both at the level of local council and at the
community – all these relevant to the third and fourth spheres of power configurations.

Laying the Foundation

For Penang, there was no underestimation of the challenges involved in introducing GRB to
the state. Nor was there a rush to push through a GRB proposal. Far from it. There was
considerable effort put into doing preliminary groundwork by gender advocates, especially
from women's groups and those in the academe, particularly with the openness of the newly
formed state government under the opposition Pakatan Rakyat. A starting point was the
conference on 'Gender Mainstreaming: Justice for All', organised in 2010 by the newly
formed non-government Gender Equality and Good Governance Society, Penang (3Gs) [5],
together with the Women's Development Research Centre (KANITA) based in the
UniversitiSains Malaysia. This was the first time a specific call for GRB was made. One of
the Conference recommendations called upon the government of the State of Penang to adopt
and implement GRB, linking institutionalising GRB processes in the state to the overall
promotion of gender equality and good governance. Thus the involvement of women's

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[5] While non-governmental in nature, 3Gs registered in late 2009, was actually financially supported by the State
EXCO of Women, Family and Community Development to facilitate education and awareness on gender
equality. The idea was then for 3Gs to morph into a state women's body once it received sufficient traction and
visibility. Thus the ground work was already laid for cooperation between women leaders from the state
government, academia and women activists in Penang.

organisations and the academia was a critical catalyst for the GRB project in Penang (Good Governance and Gender Equality Society, 2011).

With positive feedback from the state government to this initial suggestion, three workshops focusing on GRB were then co-organised by 3Gs and KANITA in 2011. These workshops were endorsed by two key Penang State Executive – one in charge of Local Government and the other in charge of Women, Family and Community Development (and Youth & Sports). The participants specifically included key personnel from state and local governments. The first workshop was held in February 2011 and was opened by the Deputy Chief Minister of Penang (representing the Chief Minister who was away then). This workshop, which was attended by 42 participants, introduced the concepts, tools, methodologies, and international experiences of GRB. It led to the formation of a GRB Task Force, [6] the first step in an explicit 'formalising' of the Penang GRB initiative into structures involving State and local government partners. Indeed it was during this workshop that one of the local governments set up an ad-hoc Gender and People with Disabilities Committee. [7] The second 'Advanced GRB Workshop' was conducted by world renowned GRB expert, Professor Rhonda Sharp, in June 2011 and was attended by 29 participants, while the third workshop was in November 2011, focusing on the officers from one LA in Penang.

These workshops were seen as crucial in building understanding of GRB as well as convincing state and local government representatives about the benefits of introducing GRB

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[6] The GRB Task Force at this time comprised a representative (the Finance Director) from MPSP, councillors from MPSP and MPPP and representatives from KANITA and 3Gs. Visits were also made to MPPP and MPSP to learn about their budget cycle and to meet up with the leaders of the two LAs to brief them about the potential of GRB.

[7] After a year of lobbying, this Committee was later separated into two Committees; with the Gender Committee (a new structure) being set up in January 2013.

as part of local government practice. The workshops helped build capacity in gender issues, generated greater awareness and interest in GRB, and allowed key officials (including local government-the policy makers) to emerge who would help champion GRB in partnership among local government, 3Gs and KANITA.

After the workshops, there was now optimism that GRB could merit serious attention if proposed to state and local governments. The GRB Task Force started the process to develop a proposal (finalised and presented by a consultant in November 2011 as the project document or PRODOC) to be put forward to the government. At the same time a Scoping Exercise was conducted from July to October 2011 to look into the feasibility and challenges of introducing and implementing GRB into local government. As noted by the report:

The Scoping Exercise took into central consideration the fact that the approach to mainstream GRB is about two major things. It is about making sure that the assessment of needs and service delivery is made with equal concern about women and men. This means, among other things, that the design, collection and use of data is appropriately institutionalised into the budget cycle to ensure the different needs and uses of women and men are equally acknowledged and valued.

Secondly, it is an approach which insists that the processes of government, including budget planning, is opened up to include input from women and men at all levels of our society. This places GRB squarely in the context of the search for good governance. (Lochhead, 2011: Executive Summary)

As mentioned earlier, simultaneous lobbying was taking place to have the Penang state government establish a state-funded body to take charge of 'women's affairs'. The green light was finally given by the Chief Minister in mid 2011 and in November 2011, the Penang

Women's Development Corporation (PWDC) was established, although it was only in January 2012 that PWDC began operations (Ng, 2012). Upon approval from the Board of Directors of PWDC and members of the MMK [8] Women, Community and Family Development, a proposal was then sent to the Penang state EXCO to approve PWDC working with the two LAs in this project. Hence the GRB pilot project, in partnership with the two LAs, became its first flagship project. Funds were provided form all three organizations. Again, the understanding was that as far as possible the state and local governments should be full partners from the beginning, as an essential prerequisite for a successful acceptance and institutionalisation of GRB.

There was still no underestimation of what it would take to translate a GRB pilot project into a fully institutionalised gender mainstreaming effort. A number of potential obstacles were highlighted. But there was optimism, and this was based on 'a conjunction of factors and events (which) have rendered the State and Local Governments of Penang receptive to both the prospects of enhanced service delivery and inclusiveness that GRB offers' (PWDC: PRODOC:1).

> Part of this optimism was based on the change in State government that had occurred in Penang in March 2008: a momentous change that reversed trends of the past 50 years and found Penang with an opposition-controlled state government. Its statement of intent included its ambitions to attain International City status and commitments to such concepts as people-oriented government and democratic participation, respect for diversity, equal opportunity and prohibition of discrimination. In addition it speaks of achieving 'social cohesion and inclusion which results in a shared society that allows democratic participation, respect for diversity and individual dignity, equal opportunity and prohibition of discrimination', and

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[8] MMK or *MajlisMesyuaratKerajaan*, the State Executive Council Meeting.

'the building of reciprocity, reputation and trust through civic education and communication for a strong civil society' (PWDC; PRODOC:1)

The time was then ripe for the GRB project to kick start.

Implementing GRB in Local Government: Challenges of Institutionalisation

The care and time taken in lobbying and laying the groundwork for the pilot GRB project in Penang meant that the chances of local government acceptance and 'institutionalisation' of GRB were considerably increased. Two stages were important: acceptance first, and then, if that is successful and over a period of time, its institutionalisation. To re-iterate, through the workshops, the GRB Task Force, and the Scoping Exercise, key officers within the state and local governments had become aware of GRB, and by late 2011 were willing to commit financial support to a pilot project. This was a huge step forward. And at the same time, the lobby for a Penang state-funded body to take care of 'women's issues' had borne fruit with the set up of the Penang Women's Development Corporation with funding from the Penang state government.

In a comprehensive matrix for a three-year pilot project, the PRODOC set out five Outputs which would govern the pilot project. These were

1. An enabling and supportive environment within Penang Local Government (MPPP & MPSP or LAs) for GRB implementation and institutionalisation

2. GRB implementation of community pilot projects

3. Sex-disaggregated databank developed and established [9]

4. Capacity development in GRB methodology and tools

5. Increased public awareness and participation in budgeting processes

The PRODOC made clear that each of the five outputs was intrinsically linked to the other. They set out how work must occur both within the 'formal' structures and processes of local government, as well as the more 'informal' and community settings. To create this enabling and supportive environment for the GRB project to take off, new structures had to be created and new awareness and attitudes about gender had to be understood and internalised. GRB tools had to be learnt and applied to the current budget planning and processes. The 'new' participatory methodology introduced in the community pilots had to be internalised and accepted by local council and the community as well. Thus there was a need for a process of organisational buy-in and capacity building of council staff working hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder with the PWDC project staff. [10] What were the issues and challenges? The matrix below depicts the lessons learnt since 2012 in relation to the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis put together by the Project Director. For the purposes of this paper some of these lessons will be discussed in the following sections, particularly in relation to the notion of institutionalisation.

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[9] This was later amended to 'sex-disaggregated data used as an integral tool to better policy analysis and budgeting allocation'. A mapping of available sex-disaggregated data was conducted in July-August 2011. The consultant revealed that not all departments included the gender variable in their data collection. Another concern was the lack of specific and concrete data on the number of men and women users of public facilities (e.g. gyms, swimming pools and libraries). The officers in both local councils were only able to give an estimate of the number of men and women who utilise the various services. Another requirement for the purpose of GRB is more specific gender disaggregated budget data. The researcher encountered problems in obtaining such data, for example on the operational costs of specific services.

[10] The first year saw a three person PWDC GRB project team of two project officers, headed by a Project Director and supported by two consultants and a GRB Advisor. In 2013 the PWDC team comprised a Project Director, four project staff, a consultant and the GRB Advisor. Contact persons were appointed in the two LAs to support the GRB pilot. There was no dedicated LA GRB staff as such.

Table 1: A 2013 SWOT Analysis

LESSONS 2013	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
MPPP/MPSP	-FINANCIAL COMMITTMENT -HIGH TOP MANAGEMENT BUY-IN	-THEORETICAL COMMITTMENT -VARYING LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	-STEERING COMMITTEE SUPPORT -KRA/KPI DRIVEN -OBB	-TIME CONSTRAINTS -WORKLOAD -COMPETING PRIORITIES
COMMUNITY	-OPENNESS -EAGER TO LEARN -WILLINGNESS TO TAKE OWNERSHIP	-PERCEIVED "GENDER" DILUTION -OWN PRIORITIES	-CAPACITY BUILDING -WIDEN ACTIVITIES -MULTIPLE PARTNERSHIP -COMMUNITY CONTRACTS	-VARYING LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION
TEAM	-GREAT TEAM SPIRIT/TEAMWORK -HIGH LEVEL COMMITTMENT	-SUBSTANTIVE UNDERSTANDING -YOUNG IN EXPERIENCE	-CONTINUOUS CAPACITY BUILDING -INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE	-HIGH EXPECTATIONS -WORKLOAD

PWDC-DRB December 02 2013

Organisational Buy-in

In the beginning there were varying levels of acceptance and buy-in between the two LAs. As Kelleher and Rao (op cit) noted, while an outside constituency is important (in this case PWDC and the GRB team), the inside bureaucratic voice and strength is just as, if not more important, to ensure that new social practices are accepted. The top management was very supportive. In one LA, GRB made an almost seamless entry, if not synergy, into its newly adopted 'Transformation' (*Transformasi* in the Malay language) programme which aimed radically to change the way the organisation was to behave. The *transformasi* journey indicated willingness by the Council to 'listen and respond to the people'. And it importantly included a change of a previous line budgeting process to an output-based budgeting thrust, defined and driven by six Key Result Areas (KRAs), with accompanying strategies, actions

plans, activities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Similarly the other LA also worked on their KRAs/KPIs based on key strategic thrusts namely "Safer, Cleaner, Greener and Healthier".

Although the leadership in the other LA was initially more skeptical later became more accepting of the project partly due to the commitment and support shown by three active councillors who supported the GRB team in penetrating a community deemed 'difficult' by council staff. This was a low-cost council owned and managed flats where the low-income and underprivileged communities there had difficulties paying-up their monthly rental.

Understandably, the first year was rather slow as the relevant implementers were just getting used to this new idea. GRB programmes and activities were competing with the existing priorities of council staff, with some seeing them as conflicting with their already busy schedules. Council staff was also not used to the participative methodology of GRB which meant going to the ground to work in and with the community. However matters began to change slowly with the visible openness and eagerness from both communities to take ownership of their own stated priorities, under this innovative process. This in turn influenced the LA officers to be more accepting of GRB despite their already busy schedule . More financial resources were pumped into one of the low cost flats when the LA saw with their own eyes the mind- set change in the community.

The increased awareness towards gender-based needs have further prompted the LAs to take positive actions on meeting the different needs of different people. These include doubling/tripling of public toilets for women, setting up of baby changing & lactating rooms, specially designed and designated areas for people with disabilities at public parks,

introduction of expressed lane and special counters for the elderly and those with disabilities
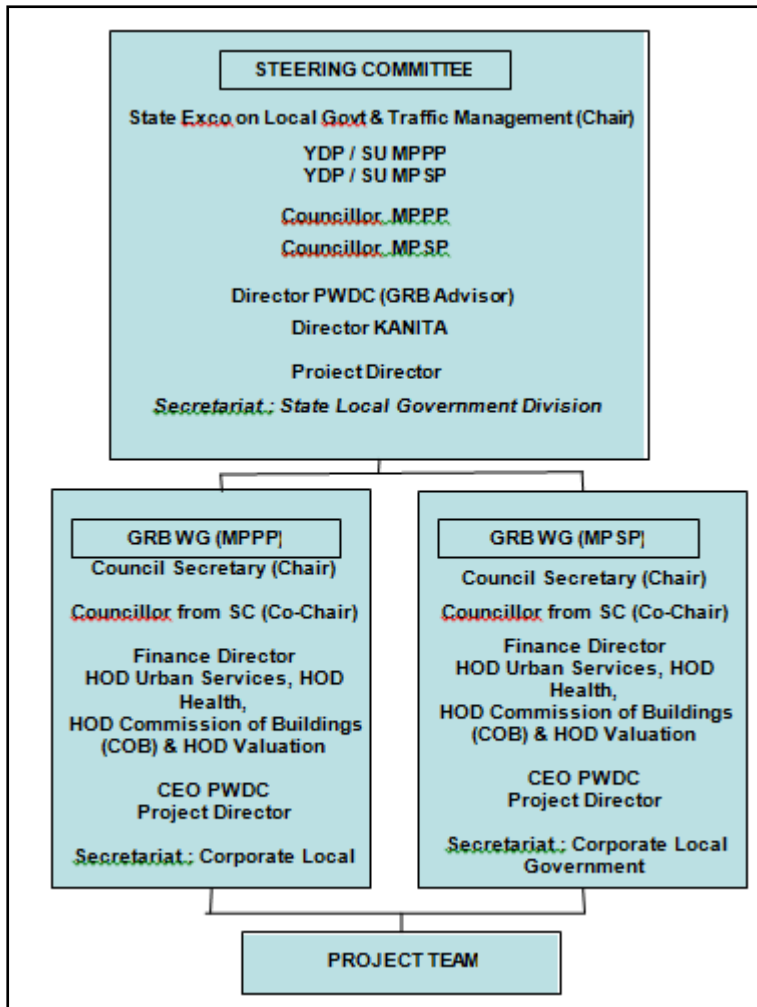
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Creation of New Structures and Processes

New structures had to be created to direct and manage the project and organisational processes needed to be invented. How could this new 'kid on the block' be accepted as part and parcel of the organisational structures of local government? How could both PWDC and LA staff be imbued with new knowledge, skills and resources to ensure the successful implementation of GRB? For all this to happen, three (new) aspects were introduced. First was the creation of new GRB relevant structures, secondly the conduct of several capacity building workshops and thirdly the implementation of the two pilots at the community level.

GRB structures

The new structures were the establishment of a GRB steering committee at the highest level, GRB working committees in the two LAs and community structures in the two pilot communities (see Diagram below).

Diagram 3: GRB Steering Committee and Work Groups

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            ┌──────────────────────────┐                   │
│            │   STEERING COMMITTEE     │                   │
│            └──────────────────────────┘                   │
│    State Exco on Local Govt & Traffic Management (Chair)  │
│                    YDP / SU MPPP                           │
│                    YDP / SU MP SP                          │
│                    Councillor MPPP                         │
│                    Councillor MP SP                        │
│              Director PWDC (GRB Advisor)                   │
│                    Director KANITA                         │
│                    Project Director                        │
│        Secretariat : State Local Government Division       │
│                                                            │
│  ┌──────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────┐     │
│  │   GRB WG (MPPP)      │    │   GRB WG (MP SP)     │     │
│  │  Council Secretary   │    │  Council Secretary   │     │
│  │      (Chair)         │    │      (Chair)         │     │
│  │ Councillor from SC   │    │ Councillor from SC   │     │
│  │     (Co-Chair)       │    │     (Co-Chair)       │     │
│  │   Finance Director   │    │   Finance Director   │     │
│  │ HOD Urban Services,  │    │ HOD Urban Services,  │     │
│  │     HOD Health,      │    │     HOD Health,      │     │
│  │ HOD Commission of    │    │ HOD Commission of    │     │
│  │  Buildings (COB) &   │    │  Buildings (COB)     │     │
│  │    HOD Valuation     │    │  & HOD Valuation     │     │
│  │     CEO PWDC         │    │     CEO PWDC         │     │
│  │  Project Director    │    │  Project Director    │     │
│  │ Secretariat :        │    │ Secretariat :        │     │
│  │ Corporate Local      │    │ Corporate Local      │     │
│  │                      │    │   Government         │     │
│  └──────────────────────┘    └──────────────────────┘     │
│            ┌──────────────────────────┐                   │
│            │      PROJECT TEAM         │                   │
│            └──────────────────────────┘                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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The GRB steering committee was chaired by the Exco of Local Government and Traffic Management who had been very supportive from the start. The other members included the Presidents of the two LAs, the CEO of PWDC, the GRB Project Director, the GRB Advisor cum PWDC Director, as well as a councillor each from the two LAs. The steering committee met twice a year and its role was to monitor the conduct of the project and provide guidance and direction to the project team at the strategic level. This structure worked well and proved to be important in legitimising GRB in both state and local government.
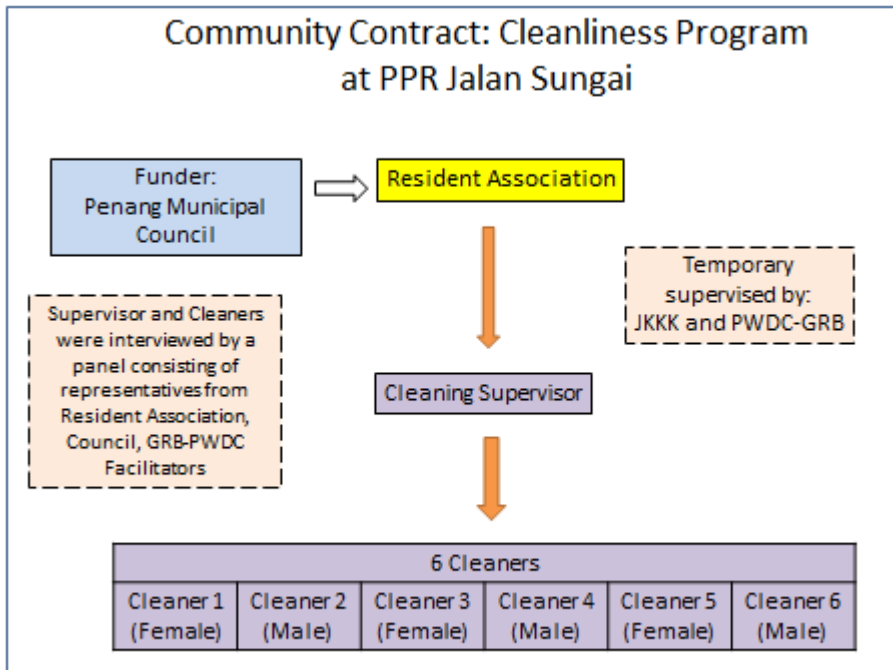
On the other hand, quite often the LA GRB working groups comprising mainly heads of department found it challenging to juggle priorities. Given the constraints as an alternative,

technical committees supported by active councilors were activated and became more viable. This technical committee was made up of officers of departments who were directly responsible to act upon decisions within their jurisdiction. The other LA, invited the GRB team into higher level decision making meetings. [11]

The third community structure was recently organised to facilitate the setting-up of a community contract between one of the local councils with the Residents' Association of one of the low income communities. It took almost six months to prepare both the institution and the community. The GRB team and the LA had to work creatively within the parameters of the standard operating procedures of local government in bringing about innovative approaches. It was very much a learning curve for all sides. This new modality meant that the residents association could now, for the first time in council history, be set up as a sub-contractor to local government as well as become "custodian cum employer" of the residents for the cleanliness programme (see Diagram 4 below).

Diagram 4: Community Contract Structure

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[11]As of February 2014, to streamline decisions, the Gender Committee has taken over the responsibilities of the GRB Working Committee in one of the LAs.

Community Contract: Cleanliness Program at PPR Jalan Sungai

Funder: Penang Municipal Council → Resident Association

Temporary supervised by: JKKK and PWDC-GRB

Supervisor and Cleaners were interviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from Resident Association, Council, GRB-PWDC Facilitators

Cleaning Supervisor

6 Cleaners					
Cleaner 1 (Female)	Cleaner 2 (Male)	Cleaner 3 (Female)	Cleaner 4 (Male)	Cleaner 5 (Female)	Cleaner 6 (Male)

Capacity Building: Changing Institutional Culture

Various capacity training workshops were organised for all quarters to help accommodate the above change in work culture and to obtain new gender knowledge and analysis. Nonetheless it was noted that council staff were open to the idea of gender equality and women's role in decision making. A research conducted in 2010-2011 found that the majority of the leadership in the two LAs concurred with the idea of gender equality and are not averse to women's leadership (Ng, 2012). Thus there seemed to be an openness to change with regards to gender mainstreaming and gender equality which would facilitate the introduction of GRB in the first instance. However it was still important that officers and councillors increase and deepen their knowledge and skills about GRB.

The workshop, held in April 2012 and facilitated by an expert from the Philippines, was titled 'Piloting GRB in Penang'. The overall objectivewas to develop the technical capacity of Stakeholders and PWDC-GRB Project staff in terms of familiarity and competency in the key areas of GRB and planning processes, gender mainstreaming, gender needs analysis for

GRB, community-level planning, budgeting and organising, process documentation and budget dialogue. The expected learning outcomes were: [12]

1. Key LA officers, PWDC Project Team and other stakeholders / participants will acquire relevant GRB skills.

2. A pool of local GRB trainers competent in providing GRB awareness-raising sessions, and in leading gender aware appraisal of LA-level policies and services and other core areas.

3. A network of GRB experts in the state of Penang developed and strengthened.

4. LA Council Management and Staff will be supportive of integrating gender perspective into the local governance processes and will acquire relevant GRB skills.

5. Targeted community groups will acquire an understanding of GRB and relevant skills to provide inputs to LA Budgets.

This was followed by nine workshops for various levels of officers and decision makers of the two local councils conducted in 2012 and 2013. The objective of the workshops was to cover basic first level understanding of gender, linking gender needs and good governance. These workshops were generally well received.

However what was missing was a workshop on GRB methodology and tools that was planned in the PRODOC. A major reason was the lack of available international and locally trained expertise in this area. The result was the inability to acquire skills to integrate gender into the budget cycle, including in administrative procedures. This slowed down the process of institutionalisation of GRB into local council planning, implementation and evaluation. As seen in the Diagram 5 below a score of 50 percent was given to this output of 'heightening

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[12]In hindsight, the organisers realized that not all of the outcomes were, or indeed,could be achieved in this rather ambitious workshop.

knowledge and skills in GRB methodology and tools'. One of the major challenges was getting the targeted decision makers to come for training. Often junior officers who came for training workshops felt planning and budgeting were beyond their decision making spheres.

Diagram 5: GRB Scorecard 2012-2013 : Output 4

Despite the number of trainings conducted it was clear that by the end of the two years, there were still uncertainties and varied understandings on the meaning of gender and GRB. Subsequently the GRB team highlighted to the Steering Committee in October 2013 that the main concern after two years of implementation was that institutionalising GRB at the LAs needed to be upscaled. A major factor was inadequate capacity building of LA senior staff often due to competing priorities as well as appointment of new councilors at the beginning of the year.

This situation was confirmed by the international consultant who came in November 2013 to assess the project thus far. She stated in her report that there were diverse views about 'gender'. To quote the report 'a typical statement was "gender is (very) new to me". Some of them were relieved when they heard that gender would not be about women against men but on other differences like age (Frey, 2013: 5)

It was thus heartening that the Steering Committee group had decided to have a compulsory workshop for policy and decision makers comprising Heads of Departments and Councillors on GRB so that all will be on the same page. This workshop, held in January 2014, emphasised the importance of acquiring gender sensitivity in their work. A session introducing Outcome-Base Budgeting (OBB) with the necessary gender lens was also conducted. Seventy percent of those who responded to the evaluation form gave an 'average to good' rating to the training. Many felt that they were able to better understand and articulate the meaning of gender pointing out the need for more hands-on tools to actually apply gender perspectives in their work.

Ensuing trainings for the rest of 2014 would cover more technical areas such as skills to interpret and integrate gender into the budget cycle, including GRB tools and analytical techniques especially for this group of policy and decision makers. Hopefully all these capacity building sessions would lend to a change in institutional culture in relation to mainstreaming gender into the structures and processes of the two LAs.

Community Buy-In: Programmatic Interventions

An important 'output' was the implementation of community pilot services. Two themes driven by two external consultants were selected – that of cleanliness and safety. The pilot on

cleanliness was meant to collaborate with the bigger picture of LA21 by MPSP in a selected community on the 3R (Recycle, Reuse and Reduce) activity while that of safety was to be conducted in two low cost flats. A lot of effort was spent in the first year on these two pilots. This paper focuses on the learning experiences in the two low cost flats.

What was unique was the four phase participatory methodology introduced by the external consultant which resulted in the community buying into the GRB project – but not without of course, initial resistance and conflict among various parties at the beginning. [13] A demographic survey was conducted as part of the first phase after which the residents were divided into five focus groups of different ages representing the adult men and women (separately), those with disabilities, and young boys and girls (separately as well) to discuss their needs and concerns. The needs and concerns of the focus groups were priortised after which a voting exercise using paper money was conducted over a period of three days. The result was that one community voted for cleanliness while the other voted for recreation, the implementation of which formed the fourth and final phase of this methodology. Other community and women's programmes were also conducted in between these phases (which lasted for nearly two years) to create solidarity among members of the community. To ascertain the impact of such activities, GRB tools such as Benefit Incidence Analysis and Beneficiary Impact Assessment were then undertaken together with the community, including women, to assess their reactions to the pilot.

It was basically this participatory methodology and the ensuing visible outcome which clinched the GRB deal so to speak. The fact that concrete results emerged was a happy

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[13] See the paper presented by SharizaKamarudin in Session 3 which details the safety pilot in the two communities.

journey, if not surprise, to the project team who were not sure how, for example, the recreation park - designed together with the resident and local council - would be negotiated and built. In the other low cost flat, despite bureaucratic red tape, a cleaning contract was negotiated with the residents themselves who have now taken over the cleaning contract (and hopefully security later on) of their own community. All this led to further acceptance of GRB by the two LAs.

Concluding Comments

It can be seen that in the span of two short years much has been achieved by PWDC and the two LAs. The Project Director presented the following score card to the Steering Committee articulating the success rate of each output (Diagram 6). The score card on the first output - institutionalisation - ended up with a 50 percent achievement. The following Diagram 7 provides further details in relation to its specific outcomes and achievement.

Diagram 6: GRB Scorecard 2012-2013

GRB SCORECARD 2012-2013

	OUTPUTS	%
1	Creating a supportive and enabling environment for implementing & institutionalising GRB at the local authorities (LAs) in Penang	50
2	GRB implementation of community pilots	80
3	Use of sex-disaggregated data to better policy planning & budgeting	50
4	Capacity building in GRB tools & methodology at the LAs & community	50
5	Increased public awareness & participation in budgeting processes	80

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Diagram 7: Output 1: Outcomes and Achievement

GRB SCORECARD 2012-2013

OUTPUT 1	OUTCOME	ACHIEVEMENT	% SCORE	FLAG
Supportive & Enabling Environment to implement GRB	• Increased understanding and acceptance of GRB at all levels of Local Government, among the Councillors and within the community • Supportive structures established within the LAs & the implementation of GRB over the long-term sustained	• Management Steering committee formed • GRBWG formed • Gender Committee at MPSP formed • Top Management commitment at LAs • Top Management participation • GRB exhibit at IWD/Hari Majlis (ownership-taking) • Budget Dialogues conducted by MPSP • Budget on-line surveys conducted (gender incorporated) by MPPP	50	

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The medium rating on institutionalisation was however not unexpected. Other countries have taken several years to firmly establish GRB in their planning and implementation processes. For Penang, the first two years saw major efforts put into Output 2 and 5 to bring about a participatory approach that would translate into high- impact - one which would be both tangible and visible to the LAs and the public at large. Traditionally 'change' is usually initiated from 'inside' the organisation. However the project team added another synergy – change from the 'outside' which then articulated in a dynamic and oftentimes uneven, if not risky manner with structures and processes within the institution. The happy end result was the successful implementation of the recreation area and the community contract. The latter was a breakthrough of sorts that spoke volumes for this participatory approach. A lot of interest was garnered and GRB easily became a buzzword despite the lack of a real understanding of the term (Frey: 2013).

Given this wave of change and empowerment from the outside, institutions are challenged to move in tandem. To strengthen this move, work has now to come from within the formalised institutional and organisational spheres. Structural changes need to be instituted through policy and procedures. Greater emphasis on instilling ownership needs to be forged and stronger political will must come into play to impact the next wave of change to fashion a truly supportive and enabling environment.

The Way Forward

Changing practices, rules and procedures and internalising new values, visible or invisible, towards a gender responsive and participatory type budgeting is a long term endeavour. For Penang, such changes were facilitated by external advocacy in the earlier stages, which were then supported by an empathetic leadership (who provided the resources) and an open

institutional culture. The innovative participatory methodology, although a long process, showed the two LAs the possibility of community engagement and empowerment. This was facilitated in the context of a new state government which looked towards good governance and civil society participation as part of its reformist credo. The Penang pilot thus argues that a good, sustainable and inclusive GRB programme needs to have both critical aspects/hands at work - the community to be involved as well and for GRB institutionalisation to take place in government. The main and critical gap to fill now is the need for further institutionalisation of GRB to achieve the overall goal of good governance and gender equality (Diagram 8)

Diagram 8: Transforming Institutions through GRB
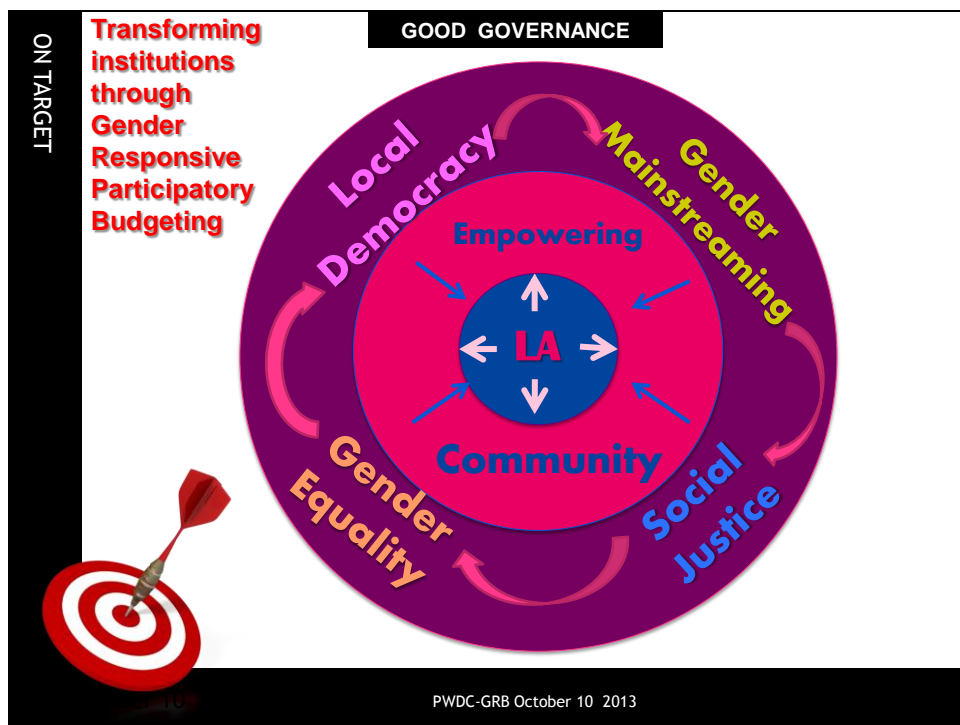
Indeed as noted by the international consultant:

In the short span of two years the GRB team has done very well. GRB is well known to many stakeholders with the local administration and there are formal and informal networks and bodies to implement GRB. Since GRB is a process which requires transforming procedures and cultures within organisation, it is not something that can be implemented in two years (Frey, 2013: 17).

Much remains to be done in terms of institutionalisation of gender in the local authorities; but the wheels have been set in motion and with continued commitment from both LAs and the state it will certainly achieve its due success. What is the way forward then? What can the next cycle look like and how does one move the wheels further? Several recommendations are suggested to deepen the institutionalisation process.

Firstly it is important to have a policy framework so that GRB will be a legitimate strategy of the state and local government. [14] PWDC is in the midst of finalising a gender policy for the state which if accepted, will mark the stamp of approval of gender mainstreaming the state, including GRB processes. Thus with GRB legitimised through state (and LA) policy, the integration of gender into the budget cycle can be further enhanced and deepened. To be sure, a policy framework will facilitate a holistic approach and commitment toward gender mainstreaming of policies and practices of good governance. Without a clear policy, GRB will remain as an added-on activity and on the fringe of discussions. It can be easily sidelined due to competing priorities. Thus the danger of GRB remaining only a pilot project continues. At the moment the funds provided to PWDC are more like a separate, if not isolated, women'sfund, making it difficult for gender to be integrated in a holistic manner

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[14] In 2009, under Article 13(3) of the Constitution, Austria made gender budgeting legally binding (Klatzer et al., 2010). See also papers from other countries presented in this conference.

into the planning and implementation of policies and budgets. In this context, budget speeches at year end need to include such a GRB statement to enable a smoother integration in the next project cycle.

Secondly, is the commitment of funds and human resources towards GRB and for the two LAs to take more ownership of GRB in their respective programmes.At the moment PWDC basically facilitates the GRB-related projects for the LAs. What is critical now is the more arduous journey of transforming administrative and standard operating procedures and work cultures. These would include the gathering of systematic and holistic sex-disaggregated data to support these transformational processes. Thus the extended organisational buy-in is imperative in the next stage. It would be good if a dedicated gender unit can be set up and entasked with gender related, including GRB planning and implementation in partnership with the PWDC project team. All in all this means that the two LAs should continue their financial commitment to the next three year cycle and provide the necessary human resources to move GRB forward.

Thirdly, such institutionalisation needs to be accompanied by increased capacity building for staff. A comprehensive strategy on capacity development needs to be developed so that regular trainings and workshops can be organised to enhance the technical skills and knowledge of LA staff about gender and GRB. The GRB Steering Committee has agreed that capacity development on GRB will form part of the compulsory annual seven days training for LA staff. With this knowledge, GRB Indicators can be included into the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of LAs.

Only through such steps will Gender and participatory budgeting be a recognised and legitimate strategy, contributing towards gender inclusivity and sustainability of a Penang people-centred government. Only long term political will and sustainable commitment will ensure the best supportive and enabling environment to transform the mainstream in achieving gender equality and social justice in Penang.

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