

CONFERENCE REPORT

ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING NARRATIVES: Transforming Institutions, Empowering Communities



Penang, Malaysia
February 24th and 25th 2014



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1. SETTING THE SCENE:

1.1 The Context of the Conference

This Conference was planned in the context of the on-going interest and increasing use of gender responsive budgeting around the world, not least within the Asia-Pacific region. As the Conference Programme background states:

'GRB has become established at the regional and global level as a major initiative to help realise gender mainstreaming and gender justice in the overall policy planning and implementation of governments. GRB projects have ranged from mainstreaming gender at the macro level to the implementation of pilot projects at the local/provincial level and have helped deepen understanding of the differential impact of budgets on women and men, girls and boys

At the same time, some initiatives have moved beyond the particular institution to working with other stakeholders in order to transform the actual budget process. Importantly for this Conference, these include initiatives which seek to include and empower women and men in communities, whereby they themselves are directly involved in the budget process and help decide on how resources can be allocated according to their different priority needs and potential. Thus the integrated notion of Gender Responsive and Participatory Budgeting (GRPB) has emerged.'

The Conference brought together GRB practitioners and experts from within the Asian region and beyond to share and review stories of GRB and GRPB. From these stories, it was hoped that the aims of the Conference would be realised: to identify good GRB practices in relation to fiscal policy and participatory budgeting, to identify the roles of different stakeholders in implementing GRB and GRPB, particularly at local and state levels, and to share the experience of Penang's GRPB project.

The last of these objective arises because Penang has been implementing a GRPB project since 2012. This has been a flagship project under the Conference lead-organiser, the Penang Women's Development Corporation (PWDC), in partnership with the Penang State Government and the two Penang Municipal Councils.

The programme (*see Appendix*) divided the Conference into seven sessions, after the Opening. This Report presents a summary of Sessions 1 and 2 below, and thereafter weaves the narratives and discussions of the remaining sessions under five headings, viz. Institutional Approaches to GRB; Outcome Based Budgeting and Opportunities for GRB; The Role and Potential of Data; Community Empowerment; and Challenges and Ways Forward.



1.2 Opening Addresses

The Conference opening addresses were extended by the Chief Minister of Penang, YAB Lim Guan Eng (YB Prof. Dr. Ramasamy, Deputy Chief Minister II, presented the speech on his behalf), YB Chow Kon Yeow, Chair of the Conference Coordinating Committee and Penang State Exco member, and Roberta Clarke, Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Among them, they made it clear that there was both significant commitment locally and meaningful experience regionally of GRB.



In welcoming Conference participants, Chow Kon Yeow noted that an impressive number of countries were represented, including Austria, Bhutan, China, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Thailand, and Timor Leste. He also acknowledged the support and presence of officers and colleagues from the Penang state government and the two municipal councils of Penang: the Municipal Council of Penang Island, and the Municipal Council of Seberang Perai. He

welcomed this opportunity for sharing experiences of GRPB, and stressed Penang's interest in developing understanding and effective implementation of GRB, given its present commitment to the GRB project under PWDC.

In presenting the speech of the Chief Minister, YB Ramasamy reiterated Penang's interest and commitment to GRB. He linked the state government's commitment to the GRB initiative to Penang's wider ambition to become an intelligent and international city. This, he declared, included '*committing to good governance and gender and social justice*'. He linked GRB and gender mainstreaming to the building of human resources, a vital concern to ensure a vibrant future for the state. "*These (human resources) need to be built without discrimination, indeed with a commitment to ensure that our women, men and children have the opportunity to participate in local and national affairs in whatever way they choose, without hindrance or obstacle.*"



He stressed that the Conference was a wonderful chance to share and learn about how GRB can not only contribute to the technical aspects of budgeting, but also to the aspects of human development. He wished the Conference every success.



Roberta Clarke then set the wider scene for the conference discussions by asserting that '*GRB work in the region is at a critical juncture*', that gender has now become central to discussions in our post-millennium world and that there is still much work to be done not least because of '*an abiding bias against women*'. She pointed out that GRB is increasingly being adopted and accepted as part of government planning and budgeting, but asked: to what effect? She asked the key Conference questions about how this is transforming the institutions of government and how far it is moving processes to become participatory. The role of GRB in '*opening up democratic*

spaces' was noted as important. She also mooted the questions about how GRB can help us move from processes to results, and from mainstreaming gender in budgeting to mainstreaming gender and social justice.

1.3 Introducing GRB

These comments were echoed and elaborated upon in the first session, a dialogue between the chair, Professor Datin Dr Rashidah Shuib, and three distinguished international GRB practitioners: Yamini Mishra from UN Women in New Delhi, Elisabeth Klatzer from Vienna, and Sunny George from Kerala, India.

Yamini traced the initial formulation of GRB back to a government-inspired initiative in Australia some three decades ago. Since then, as Klatzer also indicated, it has been taken up or extended not just by various international and regional agencies, governments at various levels, and non-government groups, but also by macro-economists analysing how overall budgets affect people on the ground. It was agreed that we are still assessing whether it has resulted in better allocations of budgets, the uncertainty resulting from there being still a long way to go before budgets can be adequately tracked. But at least the questions are being asked about impacts and links to wider gender equality and social justice goals.

Klatzer stressed the crucial arena of macroeconomics, and hailed the contribution of feminist economists like Diane Elson who analysed how overall budget planning and allocations differently affect different groups on the ground, particularly its differential impact on women and men, girls and boys. She noted the important contextual work for GRB done by academe, non-government groups and organisations like UN Women and Commonwealth Secretariat, in documenting budget impacts on specific areas like health, childcare, and pensions.

There was also a good exchange on how, with the adoption of GRB within government planning, there is the need to find an appropriate relationship between *'finance'* and *'gender'*. This often plays out, as both Yamini and Klatzer related, as a *'pass the buck'* between the Ministry of Finance on the one hand, and, for example, the equivalent of a Ministry for Women. As governments have increasingly taken up GRB, there are increasing examples of initiatives moving GRB beyond just a *'technical project'* to initiatives to institutionalise good governance, to include a more participatory process, to include goals of gender equality and social justice. In addressing this, Sunny George related some of the aspects of how this has developed in Kerala, India (*elaborated in the discussions below*). He noted the importance of building female leadership as an essential component of GRB extending to participatory budgeting. In conclusion, the discussants of this Session encouraged us to remember the wider history and contexts as well as the specific challenges of moving GRB into a process of transformation and empowerment, both within institutions and local communities.

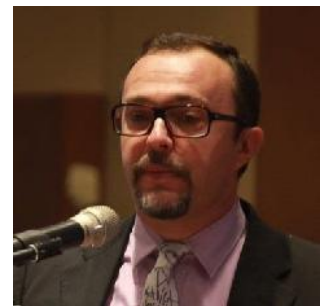


1.4 The Relationship between Participatory Budgeting (PB) and Gender Responsive Budgeting

To further set the scene, questions arising from the relationship between participatory budgeting (PB) and gender responsive budgeting (GRB, sometimes abbreviated to GB) were explored in Session Two through the presentations of Giovanni Allegretti and Regina Frey.

Many of the ideas raised in this Session were to be echoed, practically substantiated and/or developed by inputs in subsequent sessions. The PB-GB relationship is relevant to the two major themes of the Conference. It relates to how institutions (not least governments) have increasingly embraced a participatory approach to budgeting, which may or may not be explicitly GRB. So, has this meant transformation? And the relationship between PB and GB is relevant to the whole question of how and who in communities are becoming empowered (or not) by GRB.

Allegretti's lively presentation gave the Conference an insight into the many forms of PB. He noted that some examples, especially those in Latin America, most notably in Porto Alegre, are framed in a particular political context that is driven 'from below' and is concerned to challenge existing state structures and processes. Giovanni described these as '*PB by irruption*', and contrasted this to '*PB by invitation*'. This form of PB is where there the state has accepted the concept of '*participation*' usually as part of a commitment to principles of good governance, and is working with local communities and groups to find the best form of such '*participation*'.



Both Frey and Allegretti noted that this latter form of PB was where GRB is most likely to be located, and that we should be aware of the political implications of the distinction between the first form of PB, which is calling for an '*open budget*' process with power to decide significantly in the hands of the people, as opposed to a '*government budget process*' which may be becoming more participatory but which is still government-led.

This makes any easy definition of the relationship between PB and GRB difficult - since PB varies so considerably in its political motivations and goals with no single model or defining criterion.



But one crucial point made by both speakers, and emphasised by Regina, was that "*PB is not necessarily gendered and GB is not necessarily participatory*". This makes the connection between the two '*an ambiguous relation*', as Allegretti put it. He also was at pains to highlight that "*PBs rarely put gender issues at the centre of their concern while shaping their goals and methodology*". Indeed, PB in and of itself may actually reinforce existing (gender) hierarchies and exclusions. Allegretti went on to warn us of any easy assumptions about the word '*community*', especially if we think there is an automatic 'progressive' element in 'involving communities'.

He urged us to be aware of the many dynamics that exist within communities, not least the ascribed roles for the different genders, and how this plays out in terms of who in the community is being empowered and how. He stressed that existing disparities at the community level are not easily

challenged, let alone overcome, and that we need to positively control any PB process to make sure that participation and collective actions do not continue the reality “*as something belonging to [the] male world*”, to the point that men continue to feel “*naturally empowered to deal with politics, exert power, occupy public space...*” and women similarly disempowered.

Both Frey and Allegretti argued that by linking PB and GB, there are clear opportunities for transformations. Allegretti presented some research evidence of the effect of PB in terms of gender. Up to now, it is ambiguous, with negative or uncertain results put alongside more positive ones. One example where positive outcome was evident was a PB project in New York, where it emerged that:

- 1) Women were more likely to participate in all the stages of PB; in 2012-2013 women made up 66% of neighbourhood assembly participants, 60% of budget delegates and 62% of voters in the PB process (as for the previous year).
- 2) Women were also active in their participation: 92% of them declared that they “*spoke*” during the different phases of PB community organisation and during the small group discussions at neighborhood assemblies.
- 3) The detailed analysis of results from 39 Districts revealed that community-based institutions have been key resources in building trust and engaging women in civic participation.

But this is not necessarily replicated elsewhere. Frey talked about the ‘*limits and opportunities*’ of a participatory GRB. She noted through research references that evidence did point to the fact that participatory processes have all too often been ‘*gender-naïve*’ - they have not dealt well with the complex divisions and power relations within communities. She made the important distinction between Gender Equality *in access to* Participatory Budgeting (picking up on the limits and opportunities of a ‘PB by invitation’ where representation of different social groups of women and different social groups of men is sought in the government budget process), and Gender Equality *in control over* the Budget (a ‘PB by irruption’ where the whole process is transformed to ensure the empowerment of women and men).



Frey argued that because of the different political genesis of PB and GB, GRB operates within a context of a ‘*management of budgets*’, ‘*a responsibility of government*’ rather than an overly politicised process. The opportunities might then be an increased empowerment of marginalised groups, including women, through inclusion in good governance initiatives which cover greater participation, accountability and transparency. On the same theme, Allegretti noted that if our concern is to ensure that PB helps us achieve goals of gender equality and social justice, this will almost certainly mean that ‘*participation at times leads to separation*’, as separate initiatives/ events/meetings/skilling are needed to help women, girls and other marginalised groups in the community achieve the potential for parity. He quoted a study in Recife which concluded ‘*gender inequalities create different conditions of participation*’, and that we must be ready to introduce multi-layered approaches to ‘*plural and convergent exclusions*’.

This Session was vital in highlighting the significant differences between PB and GB, not least in terms of their politics and their gender sensitivity and inclusiveness. A key question is the context of participation: on whose terms, how is it gendered, and what does it need to ensure that everyone can take part?

2. INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES to GRB

With the scene set, subsequent sessions of the Conference then looked at more specific examples of how GRB is (or not) transforming institutions and empowering communities. We heard narratives from several speakers about how specific governments have embraced GRB and have sought to transform its own structures, regulatory environment and policies to create the right framework for a successful implementation of it. The link between GRB and good governance was a recurring theme. The increasing use of performance budgeting (outcome based budgeting), with clear stated goals providing a direction for policy and KPIs for monitoring was also introduced (see Section 3 of this Report).

2.1 Government Regulations on Gender Mainstreaming and GRB

In presenting the experience of Kerala in India, Sunny George highlighted the explicit commitment of the Kerala government to principles of good governance, including good local governance, people's participation, participatory budgeting, and transparency and accountability. He noted that the principles of participatory budgeting/planning in Kerala included Autonomy, Subsidiarity, Complementarity, and Uniformity. Subsidiarity was defined to mean that, for example, the village committee can decide 'what is in its reason to decide'. Further, the development of six stages of PB in Kerala was (again explicitly) put in the context of Local Economic Development, Social Justice, Enhancing the Quality of Public Services, and Good Governance.

The Penang GRB project also highlighted how the support from its two local government partners had arisen from the change in a State government, with the incoming state government committed to ambitions to attain International City status and such concepts as people-oriented government and democratic participation, respect for diversity, equal opportunity and prohibition of discrimination. Further, one of the local councils was also going through a '*transformation*' process which included seeking to open up processes of government to include better dialogue and input from its residents. These contexts were seen as crucial for both the adoption and the possibilities of success for the GRB project.

Agus Salim from Indonesia outlined how gender mainstreaming has been part of the development process ever since the enactment of Presidential Decree No.9/2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development. He mentioned some of the regulations and structures that had subsequently been introduced. These included the Instructions on Preparation and Review of State Ministries' Work Plan and Budget in the Ministry of Finance and the Implementation Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming at sub-national levels within the Ministry Of Home Affairs. He also described the adoption of gender analysis using the GAP method (*Gender Analysis Pathway*) and the structures established for implementation. Here the Sub-National Planning & Development Agency had been designated the lead agency, with the Office of Women's Empowerment as the secretary and the Head of Government Working Units as members. In each Working Unit there were also designated gender focal point(s).

Agus stressed that such regulations and structures had played a key role in the institutionalisation of GRB. He also emphasised the importance of a number of Ministries buying into GRB, rather than just having one Ministry carrying the bulk of the responsibility. Policy directives can set the framework, but he noted that a number of other factors need to be activated. As well as the political support from a range of ministries and sub national government leaders and agencies, the availability of effective sex disaggregated data and information systems is also essential. Capable human resources with strong skills, knowledge and understanding of gender mainstreaming, development planning and budgeting are further necessities to make possible the task of effectively institutionalising GRB.



These commitments are to be seen in governments around the region. Purusottam Nepal gave further examples of regulations in Nepal which attempted to guarantee women's involvement. For example, Nepal has set a mandatory representation of 33% women in committees such as the Integrated Plan Formulation Committees, Supervision and Monitoring Committees, Ward Citizen Forums, and User's Committees. It has also made a mandatory provision of allocation of 10% of budget for women, 10% for children and 15% for disadvantaged groups in the annual plans of local bodies. This is set within the more general gender equality legislative framework such as equal wages for men and women.

Sunny George also noted that in Kerala there are specific provisions to support the inclusion of women, including also setting quotas for women's representation. He also described the special project Kudumbashree which was instituted to focus on issues relating to women and the family.



Kim Kyeong Hee described the Korean government's initiatives from the early 1970s in addressing the concerns of women and issues of gender. She noted such milestones as the Framework Act on Women's Development (1995), the Framework Plan for Women's Policies (1997), the introduction of Gender Impact Analysis Assessment (2005), and Gender Responsive Budgeting starting in 2010 based on The Financial Act (2006) with the implementation of GRB in Local Government (2013) based on the Local Financial Act Amendment. These are crucial contexts for the establishment of the institutional framework for Citizen Participatory Budgeting (CPB), introduced in 2011 and the main subject of Kim's paper.

These initiatives were also found in Timor Leste. In a short presentation to the National break-out session, Santana Soares described how the government of Timor Leste approached establishing GRB using the framework of Article 17 of the Constitution which establishes the principle of equality between women and men. A major GRB workshop was conducted in 2008, and gender focal points were established the same year (these have subsequently been replaced by Gender Working Groups). A National Parliament Resolution on GRB was passed in 2009, there was a Gender and Culture Budget Statement 2009-2010, and the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) participated at the Budget Review Committee in 2012.

Several narratives highlighted how their respective governments had committed to both a more devolved structure of government and a commitment to gender. As a case in point, Nepal pointed out that the Interim Constitution of Nepal has accepted state restructuring, decentralisation and devolution of power as a national policy framework to address the issues of gender mainstreaming and inclusion in the national development. He recounted how the procedures and processes of budgeting in Nepal have been adapted/transformed to include such laws as the Local Self-Governance Act, 1999 under which women's participation in governing bodies of local governance institutions has been mandated. Further, the Local Body Gender Budget Audit Guideline was adopted in 2008 and GRB related indicators stipulated in Minimum Conditions Performance Measures (2008). More recent regulations include the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy and Strategy for local level (2009) and Gender Responsive and Social Inclusive Budget Formulation and Audit Guidelines (2012).

In terms of structure, Nepal has set up Women's Development Offices at district level with a Gender Focal Person in all the line agencies, established a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Unit in 2009 to mainstream gender and social inclusion in all relevant plans, programs, and activities, and has formed a GESI implementation Committee in all districts.

These speakers, together with contributions from the floor, presented the degree to which many governments in the region have reacted to GRB and the demands it poses. Many of the narratives described the changes which governments had instituted, concentrating on the internal adjustments and innovations they have made with regard to laws, structures, and budget policies. Questions still remain (and were posed during the Conference) about how much this has been accompanied by a change in 'organisational culture', and of course how all the new laws and guidelines have actually been successful in transforming both the institutions and the lives of people.



2.2 Institutionalisation of GRB Projects

All this feeds into one of the essential questions of the Conference: how do you move GRB from a 'project' to an integrated, institutionalised process, where the civil service takes ownership of GRB, and GRB is integrated into overall government processes and procedures? Is it enough for governments to take some steps with regard to operations such as policy and budget design, implementation and evaluation? To adjust resource allocations, issue some guidelines for quotas, implement more sophisticated data gathering systems and analysis? Or does something else have to change?

These were questions at the heart of the presentation made by Puan Maimunah binti Mohd Sharif, the President of one of Penang's two municipal councils. She reflected on the experience of the Penang GRB project. The GRB project had set out to get 'institutionalised' by the end of its three year pilot project period (December 2014). Maimunah related how the project had defined for itself the tasks of not only transforming structures and procedures, but also changing attitudes and mind sets within and between local government and the community.

The presentation referred to writings by Levy, Hill & Turner, Helmke & Levitsky, Kelleher & Rao, and Illo et al, and argued that in order to successfully institutionalise the project, transformation had to happen at both formal and informal levels.



Maimunah noted that attempts had been made to lay a foundation for GRB before the project actually started. This had been done through two GRB training workshops, the establishment of a GRB Task Force which include local government and other partners, the conducting of a Scoping Exercise and the agreement on a Project Document, which set out the five project Outputs with associated activities, timelines and budgets.

The five outputs demonstrated the ambitious nature of the project, encompassing the different arenas in which change had to happen. Output 1 explicitly asked for '*An enabling and supportive environment within Penang Local Government for GRB implementation and institutionalisation*'; Output 2 committed the project to also work with communities via Community Pilot Projects, Output 3 covered the appropriate design of data systems. Output 4 highlighted the need to build capacity across stakeholders, and Output 5 set the goal of '*Increased public awareness and participation in budgeting processes*'.

Maimunah presented the progress of the project in achieving the goal of '*institutionalisation*'. She noted that there had been progress in terms of appropriate structures being introduced within local government, and in increased understanding and response to GRB from within local government departments. This was not least related to the benefits of working with communities. Further, she noted the commitment to devise the right data systems to help local government budget effectively, incorporating gender indicators as key. Scorecards were presented to show the 'percentage achievement' for each of the Outputs, which varied from 50% to 80%. What is clear is that the challenges of effecting transformations at formal and informal levels are immense: Maimunah talked of how '*every stakeholder at every level*' had to change! But progress has been and can be made where, and this was stressed by Maimunah, there is a '*spirit of openness*' and a '*readiness to learn*'.



3. OUTCOME BASED BUDGETING and OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRB

One recurring reference in describing governments' adaptations to incorporate GRB was that many governments have changed the budgeting process to now be based on outcome-based (performance based) budgeting. This is generally seen to provide a much more conducive budgeting framework for the inclusion of GRB.

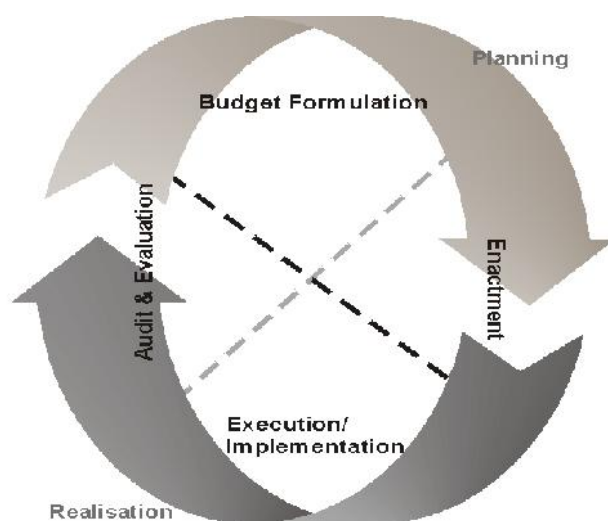
In briefly describing the history of GRB at federal level in Malaysia, Anita Ahmad from UNDP noted that there had been an initial pilot project as early as 2004, involving five Federal Ministries and with the support of UNDP. It had been backed by various call circulars, a manual, workshops and official commitment in the Malaysian Five Year Plans and elsewhere. But little had developed, until the project was resurrected in 2013. This followed a Ministry of Finance proposal that Outcome-Based Budgeting (OBB) be adopted by all government Ministries and agencies throughout the country. A toolkit is being developed to provide guidelines on how GRB can be included in OBB.

The presentation by Koshy Thomas from the Malaysian Ministry of Finance confirmed the possibilities for GRB in this OBB process. His presentation set out in detail how the new system would transform structures, impact processes and open opportunities to GRB. He talked of a five year framework for the outcome based budget, but with yearly targets. Constant monitoring was therefore needed to ensure shorter-term targets are being met for the longer-term (five year) vision. The understanding and use of tools like programme logic, problem tree analysis and demands analysis are valuable parts of this process.



His presentation detailed who would be responsible for what, and how structures would link different Ministries and stakeholders together. He talked of the need for a strong commitment to a client-needs-outcome triangulation. He also showed how the new system would mean new linkages among and within Ministries, with each Ministry budget broken down into programmes and activities, with outcomes, outputs and inputs all defined.

The presentation by Elisabeth Klatzer picked up on this background - of the possibilities for GRB in the budget process, not least OBB. Klatzer explained that the budget process is ripe for GRB exploitation in that it presents a 'series of opportunities'. She broke the budget process, down into four distinct stages - formulation, adoption/enactment, execution and implementation, and audit and evaluation. She argued that each of these stages offers GRB practitioners possibilities for (extra) initiatives and actions. These would help transform the process even further, to make the overall goals of mainstreaming gender closer to reality.



Klatzer presented a number of country/city-specific examples for each of the stages. For example, at the planning stage, she related how in Austria, each ministry had to submit five 'Outcome Objectives' with at least one being gender-related. Two examples of such Objectives cited by Klatzer were 'Better combination of work and life' and 'Overall health of males above 50'. Each of these 'outcome objectives' was to be accompanied by relevant activities and indicators. The substantiating of objectives with clear timelines and specific goals deepens our understanding of what it takes to achieve GRB objectives.

At the approval stage, Klatzer described the opportunities for public hearings and questions, the chance to 'making debates' about 'who is getting benefits'. This stage is also an opportunity for Gender Budget Statements, as exemplified in Pakistan, India and Vienna. There was the opportunity to tie in to parliament or local councils, to encourage representatives to ask the right questions and establish the desirability of a good GRB to ensure that the wider strategic goals of gender equality and social justice are being met.

Then at execution and implementation stage, Klatzer flagged that this was where participatory processes can kick in, and also where the range of GRB tools and approaches could be put into practice. She gave the example of Voivodina in Serbia where at this stage there was analysis of labour market programmes, target groups, beneficiaries of training programme, budget allocations and results/outcomes in terms of employment. She noted that participatory approaches to capture the perspective of beneficiaries and programme implementers were used as appropriate.

Finally, at the audit stage, Klatzer noted the opportunity to consolidate effective GRB monitoring and evaluation, to include the assessment of the impact of earlier budget decisions against gender indicators and overall goals.



4. THE ROLE AND POTENTIAL OF DATA

All this of course highlights the crucial importance and potential role of data collection and analysis in helping the processes of transformation and empowerment.

Purusottnam Nepal stressed that, for Nepal, monitoring and data collection was essential to the GRB process, not least *'so that people and the government actually acknowledge the benefits'*. He argued that GRB necessitated linking GRB indicators for each sector with wider institutional outputs and indicators. He also noted the importance of analysing sex disaggregated outcomes and impacts of budgets through tracking actual spending and assessing budget allocations. From here, gaps can be identified and estimates made of the sort of expenditure required to bridge these gaps.

He pointed out that the government had adopted a form of the 3-Way Categorisation of budgeting, to track gender impacts. From such analyses, Nepal is able to claim that:

- Of the total budget spent in community infrastructure projects by local bodies in 2012/13 some 37% was spent to address the demand of targeted groups
- Of the total cost of community infrastructure projects constructed in 2012/13, about 12% was incurred in the construction of projects demanded by women, 10% to address the demand of children group and 15% in community infrastructure projects
- All local bodies are committed towards inclusive development at local level and do earmark funds to directly benefit women

- There is about 30% women's participation in different committees at District Level and about 55% at Village Development Committee level.

George talked about how, for Kerala, it was only through comprehensive data monitoring that the significance of the budget decisions on social justice could be assessed. His power-point and especially his paper contain detailed statistics related to this.

For Indonesia, Agus reported how the Gender Analysis Pathway (GAP) has been used to ensure integration of gender equity into planning. This is a tool for analysis developed by the National Development Planning Agency with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It stresses the need and importance of sex disaggregated data to capture the different experiences of men and women. Agus emphasised how subsequent monitoring has assessed the budget commitments within ministries and agencies in terms of GRB delivery. His paper documents these achievements, and also notes that to further strengthen the capacity to deliver GRB at both national and sub-national levels, four key ministries agreed in 2012 to formulate a Gender Mainstreaming National Strategy which included planning for GRB.

Nepal shared the benefits of dedicated monitoring in Nepal which included:

- Adequate budget allocation for the programme
- Improved efficiency ensuring expenditure and benefits to those who need it most
- Improved monitoring on government services to citizens including women and children
- Improved transparency and accountability and reduced corruption
- Better grounds for work with civil society to improve impact and democratic governance
- Data to inform report on progress on national and international gender commitments

4.1 The Case of Malaybalay, Philippines



Allan Ronolo presented the Malaybalay Integrated Survey System (MISS), a comprehensive and institutionalised data gathering process whose goal is to help 'bring about quality of life equities to its people'. It is an example of how a data system can be central to defining the strategic approach in delivering services, providing a basis for equity benchmarking, and facilitating responsive, transparent and target-focused programmes.

Ronolo described the uses of MISS, from the preparation of the profiles and Barangay Development Plan of the 46 barangays of the city; the preparation of the city's Ecological Profile, input for the formulation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP); gender responsive budgeting; data analysis for the Local Poverty Reduction Action Plan; Disaster Risk

Management; and monitoring the Local Government Units' (LGUs) extent of accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.

His paper amplifies the points he made about MISS as a resource management tool and as critical to Gender and Development planning. He gave several practical examples of how this worked,

including how MISS had given new skills and decision-making powers to women and men in the communities. His paper is an example of how a data project can be both transforming and empowering, although it also pointed out that a commitment to something like MISS is a major expense. There are some 231 separate data categories, which are in constant need of updating and re-assessment of relevance.



4.2 The Role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Where governments were not able to invest in a comprehensive data system such as MISS, several presentations highlighted the positive role that CSOs can play in both data gathering and monitoring of GRB impacts.

This was highlighted by Agus from Indonesia, and Kim from Korea. Agus stressed that the Indonesian experience of delivering GRPB was down to a positive partnership between government and civil society. Kim highlighted what she called the '*triangular cooperative networking among governments, experts and civil societies*' as critical to the success of integrating GRB with Citizens' Participatory Budgeting (CPB), contributing not just effective monitoring and on-going evaluation but making sure that gender mainstreaming went beyond (as she put it) '*just a procedure like budgeting paper*'. Soares mentioned how in Timor Leste civil society groups have played a crucial role in GRB, for example, using GRB as a tool to advocate for budget allocation to implement a Law against Domestic Violence.

More than data gathering, CSOs can also play a role in policy formulation (through advocacy and partnership), facilitating the implementation of GR(P)B, and ensuring accountability and transparency.

Agus talked about how CSOs had conducted studies of GRPB implementation at national and subnational levels, and had identified, for example, the need for a strengthening of the government's Gender Mainstreaming Working Groups and the need to strengthen advocacy and technical assistance of GRPB through better sectoral approaches. Kim talked about the necessity for CSOs, especially women's groups, to ensure the gender perspective was made part of the CPB, by research and advocacy as well as direct involvement, to ensure appropriate and inclusive participation from the community.



5. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

If **'transforming institutions'** was one of the two themes of the Conference, **'empowering communities'** was the other. In focussing more specifically on *'empowering communities'*, the narratives echoed the key points raised in the discussions of Session Two - the general relationship between PB and GB.

In Korea, Kim noted the challenges of ensuring that gender goals were a part of the Citizens Participatory Budgeting (CPB) introduced by the Korean government. She described how civil society groups, not least women's groups, have had to work extremely hard to ensure gender responsiveness is a part of CPB. She described the situation, which Giovanni had also described, where, even if more women numerically 'participated', the leadership was still likely to be provided by men. This of course referred to an on-going concern of GRB generally: the fact that numerical equality does not necessarily translate to substantive equality.

Kim also talked about the need for appropriate training, for various target groups, to include training not just on budgeting but also on gender and GRB. She noted how important it was for such training to be offered at a time and place suitable for women, who might otherwise not be able to attend.

George described how devolution in Kerala had also sought to ensure community participation and empowerment. The steps of decision-making are set in stages, starting with a Ward Committee meeting and working up to 'higher' committees to make budget policy and allocations. The principle of subsidiarity was crucial in determining who was able to make decisions.

The GRB project in Penang also presented its experience working with communities as part of its GRB Project. Shariza Kamarudin reported on the two years' experience working in two low cost flat communities, aiming to facilitate a closer relationship between local government and residents in the respective communities. The framework for this was the basic principle that, if it is the people whom the government exist to serve, then should not the people be part of the process, and partners in deciding how public funds are spent? This would change their status to more than just *'beneficiaries'* to *'active citizens'* who are involved in policy formulation and decision making in key areas which affect their lives.



Shariza described the four-phased process used by the Penang project to effect this transformation. Starting with a demographic survey, a series of focus groups discussions then followed, with different groups in the community constituted according to sex, age and mobility. From these focus groups, six or seven top priority needs for the community were identified, which were then voted on (Stage 3) in an open vote open to anyone over 10 years of age. The voting was by *'monopoly'* money (5 x RM100, which could be split amongst the priorities or all going to one *'need'*). Following the vote, the municipal council were then invited to work with the community to address the top issue(s) together.

In presenting the positive outcomes, Shariza noted that immediate outcomes had been that in one community, the contract for cleanliness (a major concern) was given to a community-based group (rather than an external contractor). In the other, a Recreation Park had been designed and built with the input of residents. Generally, the positive outcomes were hailed to include the fact that councillors and officers in both municipal councils had reacted positively to this approach of including residents in defining and solving their own needs. There is a greater sense of ownership within the communities relating to their shared facilities and resources, and the visibility of women's leadership at the two communities is more obvious.

6. CHALLENGES and WAYS FORWARD

Throughout the Conference there were constant references to the challenges we are variously facing with regard to GRB and transformation and empowerment. There were many and various suggestions as to the way forward. These were encapsulated and extended by the very vibrant discussions of the Break-Out groups (Session 6) which were divided into looking at initiatives for action at three different levels: regional, national and local. The Plenary Session (Session 7) then allowed all of us to hear the report-backs from each of the groups.

These are some of the main points that were discussed and reported, by group. You are referred as always to the powerpoints and papers which have full details, available from the website.

6.1 AT REGIONAL LEVEL

The major questions this group were asked to consider included

- Is there an existing GRB regional network?*
- If not are there benefits for setting up such a grouping/network/centre?*
- If yes, what will be the grouping's role? What issues will it address?*
- Who would make up its main membership?*
- Would it operate through a google grouping or a physical Centre/office?*
- Who will be responsible for its operation?*
- What are the financial implications?*
- Where would funding come from?*

In addressing the need/possibility of a regional GRB network, it was generally agreed that there was a role for such an initiative. It was suggested that the general role might be the overall promotion of equality and non-discrimination across the region through the enhancement of GRB by **sharing best practices and technical expertise**. Best practice would include in terms of the legal framework, institutional mechanisms, key roles/actors, the scope of the national-subnational relationship with regard to GRB, different sectoral opportunities, and the way PB can work with GRB.

It was noted that initially it was likely that a network would operate via cyberspace, through a google grouping or equivalent, with perhaps an annual or bi-annual conference to bring people and experiences together in one place. As the network developed, it might be that the need for a physical office/regional secretariat would emerge.

In terms of finance, there were several possibilities for funding, if that became necessary, including ASEAN, national governments, international/regional agencies, and funding institutions.



6.2 AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The major questions this group were asked to consider included

What are the steps being taken nationally for GRB at federal agency level?

What are the positive experiences, and where are the challenges?

How can the latter be overcome?

What is the role of civil society/grassroots groups?

What are the steps being taken nationally, for state government/agency implementation?

Should we have different expectations of what can be achieved at federal/state level? (for example: is participatory budgeting possible? What might it look like for federal budgets?)

The group reported the opportunities and progress made where outcome-based budgeting had been introduced. There were already good examples from around the region of how this had been used to include gender responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming goals. One key was to understand the different stages of the budget cycle and to exploit each stage appropriately to establish GRB as an integral part of the process.

However, participants also pointed out that there remained considerable challenges in relation to (lack of) understanding of gender, budgeting and gender responsive budgeting. Building capacity and expertise is essential if GRB is to move from being merely a project (as is so often the case) to an integrally, institutionalised part of the budget process.

Further, there also remain challenges in terms of devising and being able to **use gender-related indicators and budget analysis tools**. Again, there are good examples of where basic sex disaggregated data is now available, a prerequisite for GRB. But to move to the next step, knowledge and expertise in GRB tools is needed. This is one area which the Regional Group (above) highlighted as being ripe for sharing - best practice and innovative approaches need to be circulated and encouraged where possible.

The group also noted that the meeting of these challenges is also potentially made more difficult by the **lack of integration, communication and/or coordination** between Ministries and/or agencies. This echoes the situation to which Yamini had alerted us, where GRB is tossed back from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Women or equivalent, with others looking on as bystanders. The involvement of not just all Ministries and federal agencies, but extending such involvement and partnership to CSOs and academia, was hailed by the group as a necessary step for GRB progress.

This extends to state/provincial level too. Here the challenge is to involve state assemblies and local council/committee representatives into GRB, and to **continually link GRB to the wider goals of gender mainstreaming**. There are examples where states/provinces themselves have been able to introduce GRB, irrespective of national initiatives, and these can be the source of good practice. But the Group agreed that **good integration between national and subnational initiatives** was the way forward if GRB was to attain maximum impact and gender mainstreaming become a reality across nations and the region.

And to move a GRB initiative **from something technical to something transformative** is a major challenge!

It was also observed that GRB brought with it certain expectations, often quite high, and that the **management of these expectations** was a crucial part of any GRB initiative.



6.3 AT LOCAL LEVEL

The popularity of this topic saw this break-out group split into three different groups. The major questions the groups were asked to consider included

What have been the positive experiences of local level GRB?

What encourages participation?

What is the role of civil society organisations/grassroots in participatory budgeting?

Can we identify key factors that have made GRPB successful within local/municipal councils?

What have been the difficulties in doing GRB at local level? How do we address these?

Given the scope of these questions, it was not surprising that there was a wide range of responses.

It was reported that there have been good local examples of GRB working in communities and at the level of local government. But there are of course major challenges in making GRB a transformative and inclusive process of budgeting which extends to changing the relationship between service users and service providers. There are a series of challenges in equipping and motivating local government officials. There are then another series of challenges in equipping and involving local communities in GRB. And a number of challenges in linking the two.

With regard to equipping and motivating local government officers, it was again noted that there is still much work to be done in increasing understanding of the concepts of gender, the way budgets work, and the fundamentals of gender responsive budgeting. Strong leadership from the top can help set the example, but there was still much reported resistance from department heads and/or key finance officers. It was often uncertainty of the benefits of GRB put against the need to change established work practices that have undermined GRB initiatives. Positive examples existed where there was a willingness to change and a commitment to the principles of good governance.



Where GRB initiatives have been successfully implemented, the groups highlighted **the positive benefits** as including:

Stronger, more resilient, more engaged communities

New leadership to include leadership from more marginalised groups

Closer relationship between local government and 'the people'

Better use of facilities

A cleaner environment/city with better amenities

Wider understanding of the benefits of participatory GRB



One major challenge is to encourage as wide a **participation** as possible. At the moment there are often all too few people involved. To encourage new and especially female leadership is critical, as is to encourage processes which commit to inclusion, especially of the more marginalised groups at community level. Factors which might encourage participation were identified as:

Commitment to build awareness and capacity across groups

Motivation from stakeholders

Political will from local government, backed by appropriate structures and budget allocation

Tangible results needed to assure people their input counts

Sensitivity to times and place of meeting, and language used



With regard to the question of **the role of civil society organisations/grassroots** in participatory budgeting, the groups observed that this role was absolutely essential in securing the involvement, the relevant understanding, and the development of GRB at community level. Key roles include

Advocacy for GRB, including sharing of best practices from the region and globe

Monitoring of GRB, including demonstration of appropriate GRB tools and data systems

Mobilisation of people especially at community level to be involved in participatory GRB, including helping with capacity building

Helping documentation of narratives of women and men to show the real impact of GRB

Help extend partnerships and broaden the scope for decision making

Play the role of mediator where conflict arises within the communities and/or between communities/local government



Key factors that have made **GRPB successful within local/municipal governments** were noted to include:

Community commitment and involvement from the top via political will

Commonality of goals within community and local government

Appropriate policies, regulations, structures and allocations

Good information sharing and space for dialogues/debate

Commitment to continuity and long-term goals

Understanding of different needs

Good inclusive monitoring and evaluation

Consistency of those in any GRB team, to build trust and confidence



The groups also highlighted what they saw as **key difficulties in adopting GRB at local level**. These were various and covered a wide number of factors. Participants provided many examples and the sharing was very positive and vibrant.

Mind-set problems: patriarchy, indifference, perception that GRB is 'more work', GRB perceived as 'a women's issue' and therefore not important

Red-tape; lack of (especially female) leadership; lack of champions; conservative male-dominated decision-making; hierarchy

Clash of priorities/expectations between communities/local government

Commitment and time availability both from residents and local council representatives.

The complexity of negotiating with various local personalities and conflicting interest groups in the communities.

Lack of budget and other resources, including expertise

Frustration at pace of change, which can be slow

Lack of basic sex-disaggregated data and analysis – little information to go on



In making suggestions to **address these difficulties**, participants referred to earlier discussions as well as drew from their own experience. General areas for initiative include:

Build understanding via capacity development, data analysis, expertise

Develop appropriate structures and frameworks

Develop appropriate legislation and processes (for example, developing staff KPIs to include GRB, and develop a GRB ISO?)

Keep linking GRB to wider goals of gender equality, good governance and social justice

Raise the level of awareness through public campaigns and other public events



WIDER CHALLENGES

Throughout the Conference a number of wider challenges were referred to. They can be summarised to include:

To ensure the macroeconomic framework is gender sensitive and GRB reflective and empowering

To transform power relations to ensure gender equality and social justice and in doing so, to answer the question: What actually do we mean by the word 'gender' in GRB? Are the concerns for example of young men, of men in generally, to be given equal status, or are we concerned more to tackle the discriminations, exclusions and inequalities faced by women and girls in our societies? If the latter, does this carry implications for how we involve men in embracing and implementing GRB?

To address how GRB incorporates the concerns and ideas of intersectionality?

To encourage more research into GRB and its impact, building at the same time a pool of people with GRB expertise, bearing in the mind (from Allegretti's presentation) *"The studies on participatory democracy look blind to the gender differences and women's participation" at the same extent that "feminist studies on women and/in politics seem everyday more focused in the presence of women in representative institutions, and not in the participatory ones"* (Cecilia McDowell Santos, 2007, p. 240)

All presentations and papers are available for download from the website. They contain extended discussions and information and are well worth reading. Go to: www.grb-pwdc.org.my

Acknowledgments

This report was written up by James Lochhead with thanks to all on the GRB team

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APPENDIX: CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Day 1 Monday 24th February 2014

9:00am Opening Session

Welcoming Address by YB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow, Chair of Conference Coordinating Committee and State EXCO for Local Government, Traffic Management and Flood Mitigation

Welcoming Address by Ms Roberta Clarke, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Opening Speech and Conference Launch by the Chief Minister of Penang YAB Tuan Lim Guan Eng *(delivered on his behalf by YAB Prof Dr Ramasamy, Deputy Chief Minister 2, Penang State government)*

Video on 'GRB in Penang'

9.50am Coffee Break and Press Conference

10.30am Session 1 GRB: Critical Reflections - An Interactive Dialogue

Chairperson: Professor Datin Dr. Rashidah Shuib, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Ms. Yamini Mishra, GRB Specialist for Asia-Pacific, UN Women, New Delhi

Dr. Sunny George, Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) Professor, Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Kerala, India

Dr. Elisabeth Klatzer, Project Leader, Research Project on Gender Budgeting/ Mainstreaming in Uganda, Vienna University of Economics and Business Institute for Institutional and Heterodox Economics, Vienna, Austria

11.30am Session 2 Gender Responsive and Participatory Budgeting: Narratives of Change

Chairperson: YB Fuziah Salleh, Member of Parliament, Kuantan

Dr Regina Frey, Head of Gender Bureau, Berlin, Germany

Interlinking Gender Responsiveness and Participation in Public Budgeting Processes: Limits and Opportunities

Dr. Giovanni Allegretti, Architect and Senior Researcher, Centre of Social Studies, Faculty of Economics, Coimbra University, Portugal

Women in Budgeting: A Critical Assessment of Empowering Effects, Limits and Challenges of Participatory Budgeting Experiences

1.00pm Lunch break

2.15pm Session 3 Community Participation and Empowerment

Chairperson: YB Steven Sim, Member of Parliament, Bukit Mertajam

Shariza Kamarudin, GRB Project Officer, Penang Women's Development Centre, Malaysia

Gender Responsive Participatory Budgeting in Penang: The People Oriented Model

Sunny George, Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) Professor, Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Kerala, India

Community Participation and Empowerment – The Kerala Experience of Participatory Budgeting and Planning

Dr. Kim Kyeong Hee, Co-representative Korean Women's Association United, Seoul, Korea

Strategies for Gender Mainstreaming in Korea: The Case of Gender Responsive Participatory Budgeting (GRPB)

3:45pm *Coffee Break*

4.15pm Session 4: Linking GRB Tools and Gender Equality

Chairperson: Ms. Yumiko Yamamoto, Programme Specialist, Asia-Pacific regional centre, UNDP

Elisabeth Klatzer, Project Leader, Research Project on Gender Budgeting/Mainstreaming in Uganda, University of Economics and Business Institute for Institutional and Heterodox Economics, Vienna, Austria

Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Budget Process: A Survey of Entry Points and Practical Examples

Mr. Herculano S. Ronolo, City Planning and Development Officer, Malaybalay City, Philippines

The Malaybalay City Integrated Survey System: A Tool for Gender Responsive Budgeting

Mr. Koshy Thomas, Project Team Chief, Office of Outcome Based Budgeting, Ministry of Finance, Malaysia

Incorporating Gender into an Integrated Results Based Management Model

5.45pm *End of Day 1*

8.00pm **Conference Dinner**, with welcoming by YB Chong Eng, Chair of PWDC

Day 2 Tuesday 25th February 2014

9.00am Session 5 Institutionalising GRB in State and Local Governments

Chairperson: Ms. Anita Ahmad, Programme Manager, UNDP, Malaysia

Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Dato Hajah Patahiyah Ismail & Ms. Aloyah Bakar, GRB Project Partners, Penang, Malaysia

Localising Gender Responsive Budgeting: Challenges Of Institutionalisation In Penang

Mr. Agus Salim, Director Division of Public Services, Pattiro, Banten Province, Indonesia

Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) Institutionalisation in National and Sub-National Government in Indonesia

Mr. Purusottam Nepal, Under Secretary for the Local Government and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) and Program Support Unit, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD), Kathmandu, Nepal

Institutionalising GRB in National and Local Governments in Nepal

10.45am *Coffee Break*

11.15am Session 6 Strategies for Action for GRB (Break Out Groups)

Regional

Lead Facilitator Dr. Cecilia Ng
Co-facilitator Ms. Yumiko Yamamoto
Presenter Ms Yamini Mishra
Rapporteur Ms. Kim Khaira

National/State

Lead Facilitator Dr. Noraida Endut
Co-facilitator Ms. Sunitha Bisan
Presenters Ms. Anita Ahmad (Malaysia) and Ms. Santana Soares (Timor Leste)
Rapporteur Ms. Rubini Maheswaran

Local/Municipal

Lead Facilitator Dr. Prema Devaraj
Co-Facilitator YB Lim Siew Khim
Presenter Tuan Sr. Haji Rozali Mohamud, Seberang Perai Municipal Council, Penang
Rapporteur Ms. Shariza Kamarudin

1.00pm Lunch break

2.15pm Session 7 Our Way Forward (Plenary)

Chairperson: Professor Datin Dr. Rashidah Shuib, Universiti Sains Malaysia

4.00pm Closing Ceremony

Mayor of Penang Municipal Council (MPPP) Dato' Patahiyah Binti Ismail

Mayor of Seberang Perai Municipal Council (MPSP) Puan Maimunah Binti Mohd Sharif

4.30pm Conference Close

