

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AT NATIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS

Joint Programme: From Rhetoric to Reality – Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: UNFPA (lead agency), FAO, PAHO/WHO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP.
Government agencies: Nicaraguan Women’s Institute (INIM), Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), Ministry of Health (MINSa), Ministry of Labour (MITRAB). Other key stakeholders: Parliament, regional and municipal governments



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme “From Rhetoric to Reality:” Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting (the Programme) fostered significant advances in gender-responsive budgeting and planning in Nicaragua, by developing methods and tools for integrating a gender perspective in the National General Budget (PGR) and the Planning and Budgeting Municipal System (SPPMDH), as well as by promoting the inclusion of projects aimed at women’s empowerment in the local budgets of the 15 municipalities participating in the Programme.

2. Initial Situation

The Nicaraguan government has acknowledged gender equality as a strategic component to further representative and participatory democracy and to construct a more fair and equitable society. It has also recognized that integrating a gender perspective in policy-making implies, among other things, promoting redistribution of public resources, power, positions of authority and recognizing the value of women’s work.

3. Strategy

The strategy adopted by the Programme aimed at integrating a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of municipal results-based development plans and budgets in 15 municipalities in the country. Furthermore, the programme supported the integration of a gender perspective in national policies and budgets, with a focus on key ministries such as the Ministry of Health (MINSa) and the Ministry of Labour (MITRAB). The overall goal was to guarantee the exercise of human rights in these spheres, women’s economic autonomy and the reduction of gender-based violence.

The Programme supported the strengthening of the network of local gender advocates by training them on the methodology for

integrating a gender perspective in municipal planning. This led to an increase in women’s participation in local consultation processes and, as a consequence, the incorporation of a gender analysis in the discussions around the improvement of the Municipal Planning System.

In order to achieve the integration of a gender perspective in the PGR and the Mid-Term Budget, the Programme worked to guarantee the high-level commitment of the participating institutions.

4. Progress and Results

- Approval by the Ministries of Finances and Public Credit, Health and Labour of a methodology to integrate a gender perspective throughout the process of formulation, implementation, monitoring and accountability of the PGR and the Mid-Term Budget.
- Approval of the [Law 786](#) of Reform of the Law of Municipalities, which introduces the principle of parity in the election of local authorities and the integration of a gender perspective in the elaboration of local budgets.
- Creation of gender units in nine national-level institutions and seven local governments. These units are placed at high-level and are equipped with qualified human resources.
- Creation of Municipal Investment Funds for Gender Equality in 15 municipalities, which have co-financed 32 projects aimed at women’s empowerment.
- Women’s participation in the process of elaboration of municipal plans and budgets largely exceeded the expected targets: a total of 113,814 women participated in the 15 municipalities, against the 66,000 expected. This participation took place through community assemblies, and through meetings with technical teams and lobby groups.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- On the Caribbean Coast, the Programme was adapted to the political, cultural and ethnic characteristics of the region. Yet, these elements and their linkages with gender equality need to be further considered.
- The practical and strategic needs identified by women in the municipalities should be included in the National General Budget. This would be possible through the integration of these demands in the annual budgets of institutions providing essential social services such as health and education, by formulating these budgets at the local level.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Programme provided the participating institutions with a wealth of methodologies, tools and capacities to integrate a gender perspective in their structures and services. It also promoted the creation of gender units and commissions charged with the coordination of the different departments. Finally, the Programme introduced significant advances at public policies level, which will modify institutional actions at central and regional level.

Furthermore, the improvements, from a gender perspective, in the Law of Municipalities have made gender analysis mandatory for the approval of municipal projects.

7. Main Sources

Evaluación Final Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, “De la Retórica a la Realidad: Hacia la Equidad de Género y Empoderamiento de las Mujeres a través de la Participación y Practicas de género en los Presupuestos Públicos,” Celso Asensio Flores, Maria Hurtado Cabrera, Ana Maria Sanchez Barquero, Consultores, mayo 2012. (Final Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, “From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting,” Celso Asensio Flores, Maria Hurtado Cabrera, Ana Maria Sanchez Barquero, Consultants, May 2012.)

Evaluación de medio-término Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, “De la Retórica a la Realidad: Hacia la Equidad de Género y Empoderamiento de las Mujeres a través de la Participación y Practicas de género en los Presupuestos Públicos,” Françoise Coupal, Consultora, agosto 2010. (Mid-Term Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, “From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting,” Françoise Coupal, Consultant, August 2010.)