Name

To Umer Hussain, Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture; Gezahegn Kebede Gebrahana, Oxfam Country Director – Ethiopia

Policy Memo: Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Ethiopia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many countries have attempted to address the disparities between male and female access to agricultural ventures. In areas where agriculture comprises a majority of the economy (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa), women are essential contributors to economic growth, as they perform a great quantity of agricultural labor. Governments, NGOs, and interest groups have proposed a variety of ways to combat the inequalities women face in agriculture and offer them more agency in their work. One of the most effective has been the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) by local and national governments across the world. While other governments have succeeded in incorporating GRB into their existing economic policies and in ensuring that these policies are carried out with proper governance, the Ethiopian government's effort to introduce GRB has been ineffective, largely due to misconceptions about the real obstacles women face on a daily basis to accessing agricultral resources, as well as poor budgetary planning practices that result in funds stagnating in government accounts. Instead, local and national governments must create widespread, prompt implementation of GRB to offer women the same agricultural opportunities as men, rather than failing to recognize the disparities between male and female farmers' access to resources and treating gender matters as inconsequential "women's matters".

EVIDENCE

Gender-responsive budgeting spans many areas of the economy – health, education, commerce, transport, and agriculture; its purpose is to fund programs designed to address women's disadvantages in a field and provide them financial support and training to help overcome them. For example, in agriculture, this might include budgeting for an extension program that works with female farmers, or budgeting for conditional subsidies that may only be granted to women. The effects of GRB have been studied across the world with positive results. Researchers have found that it results in skewed outcomes for women versus men and contributes to further inequality (Burn 2017). Despite this, only 2.36 percent of Ethiopia's agricultural budget was approved to fund administrative programs (including those that would support women) and only 2.87 percent of the agricultural budget was actually used for these programs. The disparity between male and female farmers in plot size and region of production is 24 percentage points (Taye et al. 2021). If there is to be any real change in Ethiopia's economic success, there must be a concerted effort to restructure or increase the agricultural budget to provide for *women's* economic success, since they are half of a population on which 83 percent rely on agriculture as a livelihood (Taye et al. 2021). Understanding the agricultural needs of a population and attempting to meet them will bolster economic activity and trust between the people and the government.

GRB policies have been analyzed in countries near Ethiopia with generally strong results, although they are still being studied around the world. While there remain challenges to fully integrate gender into agricultural policies, GRB offers a promising future for Ethiopia's East African neighbors. Koda and Mtasingwa (2021) found that Tanzania – a country in which women constitute 90 percent of the agricultural labor force and produce 70 percent of the country's food – allocates 10 percent of each district's revenue towards a specific "marginalized groups" fund that grants land to women, youth, and people with disabilities; it also improves infrastructure to help them access resources for social and economic activities at a local level. While Koda and Mtasingwa indicate that this percentage must be increased in the future to help more women and other marginalized groups, as well as inviting more members of these groups to take part in the budgetary process, they also express that it is a progressive move to include and empower disadvantaged groups in Tanzanian society, encouraging more economic activity and growth.

If Ethiopia were to create such a fund and address some of the concerns these researchers convey in their study, the fund could encourage more women to participate in the economy through commerce and consumption. Ethiopia has a strong track record of pro-poor budgeting to improve access to healthcare, education, and agricultural inputs for its citizens, but this budgeting system must be conducted alongside GRB, extending the relevance of pro-poor budgeting to also account for the inequalities women face and their ability to use inputs and services.

Since the agricultural sector is such a large part of the Ethiopian economy, it is important that as many people as possible have opportunities to participate in it to encourage growth. Some other countries have already piloted different ways to accomplish this, with varying degrees of success and with regard to their specific political contexts. Bangladesh has been one of the greatest success stories thus far, specifically because of its efforts to identify and reduce the scale of issues that affect women's ability to participate in the economy. Siddique (2013) found that the clear, well-formatted, and well-developed Gender Budget Report proposed by the Finance Minister in 2009 helped raise awareness among government officaisl about the multifaceted nature of the problems women face that affect their autonomy in agriculture. As Siddique also found, by a ratio of 70.7:1, programs aiming to improve education and health in Bangladesh are targeted at women and children.

However, the relevance of these initiatives extend beyond the fields of education and health. Women who receive education, agricultural training, and are in good health naturally make for better farmers, while having children in school receiving an education frees up time that is normally spent on childcare to instead engage in productive economic activities. Under GRB policies that provide training for birth attendants, the maternal mortality rate in Bangladesh has decreased from 2.9 per thousand births in 2007-2008 to 1.8 per thousand births in 2011-2012, a 62 percent decrease. With quality healthcare, women are able to spend less time worrying about their own survival, as well as that of their families, and more time engaging in activities like agriculture to benefit themselves and the economy.

While GRB has achieved great success overall, there is still one major obstacle to effective implementation: transparency. Often, resources are allocated to objectives, but there is little to no direction as to where specifically the funding should go or in which programs it might be best utilized. Instead, it stagnates in government accoutns and is not used at all. It would be wise to rectify this issue in future GRB policy implementations. Mirwoba (2013) found that though Rwanda has had success in recent years with nationally sanctioned and well-funded GRB policies, the national government plays a role in ensuring that clear and realistic standards are set for regional governments to follow – 32 percent of the national Ministry of Agriculture and Resources Allocation budget was devoted to GRB policies, as well as 13 percent in the

Ministry of Health, 4 percent in the Ministry of Infrastructure, and 5 percent in the Ministry of Education. However, because of poorly planned resource allocation, some regions of the country were advantaged or disadvantaged at the district level, leading to some areas enacting GRB programs that others lacked the resources to maintain. Nyaruguru district allocated 24 percent of its agricultural resources to GRB programs, but Ruhango and Huye districts only allocated 1 percent, revealing that the expectations set by the federal government faltered at the individual district level.

Like Rwanda, Ethiopia has a disconnect between policy in the federal government, which utilizes program budgeting with different budgeting "themes" such as awareness creation and support activities, and local governments, which utilize line-item budgeting that focuses on individual wages, goods, and services (Taye et al. 2021). This research suggests that the national government must carefully oversee lower-level policy implementation to avoid wasting resources and respond to regional differences in budgetary planning, rather than allowing an unbalanced range of implementation across local governments. Ethiopia could benefit from this approach, because the federal government's funding and political power would allow it to oversee district governments without interfering in their resource allocations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the potential that GRB has to improve growth in the agricultural sector and grant more autonomy to female farmers, I advise that Ethiopia pursue transparent budget restructuring within its agricultural spending to direct more funding to programs and approaches that center women, such as extension programs aimed at women and conditional subsidies granted only to women. In addition, these recommendations extend to infrastructure, healthcare, and childcare issues that are creating further accessibility difficulties for women. The current situation of minimal funds being appropriated to GRB causes, and then the government deviating from the set budget anyway, is a trend that could cause budgeting problems when implementing future policies. The scale of government operations can make it difficult to have clarity in the actual direction of funds, but because GRB and agriculture policies are inextricably linked to greater economic activity and productivity (as shown above), it is essential that the utmost care be taken to ensure that women's agricultural interests are protected for the benefit of the economy.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

In the short term, local governments must recognize that women feel unheard in council meetings and seek to rectify this by including more women in the budgeting process and understanding that cultural attitudes play a role in women's discomfort at voicing their opinions. While it is difficult to change cultural norms and behaviors about women that are entrenched in Ethiopian society, the current efforts to introduce GRB demonstrate that government officials are appreciating the struggles women experience between public life and home responsibilities. To do this, I suggest including more seat quotas for women at budgetary meetings, council meetings, and all levels of government to allow for better representation of female voices and opinions.

At the local level, a greater understanding of women's experiences is necessary to address the structural inequalities they face at any level of governance. In the middle term, all governments must develop stronger GRB initiatives in agriculture, redirecting funds from superficial programs into physical inputs, land, and training for female farmers. In the long term, the national government must set expectations for lower levels of government by challenging the structural barriers to women's agricultural access. This includes non-agricultural initiatives, such as strengthening healthcare, childcare, poverty alleviation, transportation, and infrastructure to relieve women's burdens in these areas and provide more opportunities for them to engage in agriculture.

These goals are idealized representations of the actions that must be taken. The reality is often underscored by a lack of funding, the slowness of the bureaucratic process, and a lack of sex-disaggregated data that would better indicate the precise areas in which GRB would be most effective. However, it is important to recognize that with better communication throughout the budgetary process, some of these complications could be minimized or avoided. GRB is an extensive process that takes time and care to implement successfully alongside other initiatives, as Bangladesh has shown. Yet with diligence and sensitivity to the disparities between male and female agriculture workers, it can be achieved with strong economic and social implications.

APPENDIX[i]

- **SIDDIQUE (2013)** / BANGLADESH / + EFFECT
  - Emphasizes helpfulness of RCPG (Recurrent, Capital, Gender, and Poverty) database in quantifying gender-based advancements and using gender-disaggregated measurements that have been refined and improved over time by the Bangladeshi Ministry of Finance
  - Also discusses how the clear, well-formatted, and well-developed Gender Budget Report proposed by the Finance Minister in 2009-2010 led to successful implementations of GRB
  - Lessons Learned
    - Support from the top level is essential
    - Building understanding about the rationale of GRB among mid-level officials
    - Effective lobbying w/ government by civil society
    - Tagging GRB initiative w/ larger institutional reform in government can be useful
    - Avoid overburdening government officials by trying to do too much too soon
    - Ensure availability of sufficient technical support and training
  - Recommendations
    - Increase budget allocation for Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
    - Introduce monitoring and reviewing of completed projects from a gender perspective
    - Build capacity of gender focal points
    - Introduce gender auditing of big projects
    - Civil society needs to play a strong advocacy role

- **MIRWOBA (2013)** / RWANDA / NEUTRAL EFFECT (VERY + BUT HAMPERED BY TRANSPARENCY) - see pages 6-7 of PDF source for important information
  - Federal government (macro level) is doing extremely well with GRB; 32 percent of its annual agricultural budget from the Ministry of Agriculture is allocated to GRB initiatives (however, one potential concern is that the Ministry of Infrastructure only allocates 4 percent of its annual budget to GRB policies)
    - 80 percent of Rwandan population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods; 53 percent of population are women; 30 percent of households are female-headed
    - Agricultural sector is worked mainly by poor women (86 percent) and they have the lowest levels of schooling + highest levels of illiteracy (23.3 percent)
    - Despite the well-documented genocide in 1994, Rwanda's agriculture industry has bounced back w/ remarkable success due to the contributions of poor women; however, their contributions are so often unrecognized because they mostly do low-level subsistence farming and are culturally stereotyped as being less capable than men at farming/less competent businesspeople at selling their agriculture goods
    - MINAGRI (Ministry of Agriculture) has quickly identified these discrepancies and has been extremely proactive about implementing GRB, understanding the contributions poor women make to the agricultural sector and seeking to improve their situations
  - Province governments (mezzo level) - there is a fair amount of inequality in funding but this is explained by the fact that all 4 provinces give priority to gender-responsive political representation
    - Provinces coordinate their GRB activities frequently, so this is not that much of an issue with gender responsiveness but rather just budgetary allocations

  - District governments (micro level) - fairly large disparities in GRB allocations among the 15 surveyed districts
    - Mandatory for districts to reflect gender in their budgeting as part of oversight by national government
    - Noted challenges of distortion of information when gathering data for Gender Budget Statements
    - Large discrepancies in percentages of district agricultural budgets being allocated to GRB - Nyaruguru district allocated 24 percent of its agricultural budget to GRB, while Ruhango and Huye districts only allocated 1 percent
    - "...this study therefore has a concern on inconsistence of gender programs implemented which is not in line with resources allocated for gender at macro-level…the tools lacked consistency, harmony, and skill in their preparations"

- **BURN (2017)** / SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA, UGANDA, SENEGAL, MAURITIUS, MOROCCO / + EFFECTS BUT DEPENDENT ON OTHER ECONOMIC FACTORS
  - Discussion of how budgets are formed not by human rights means necessarily but by desires for economic gain - can lead to disadvantaging of women across a variety of fields
  - Not highly quantitative, more qualitative analysis, but argues that GRB must be implemented in the context of a larger financial reform (PFM reform - Public Financial Management)
  - Explains that civil society advocates and activists must continue to keep GRB initiatives on track and stop them from being derailed by extremist groups and reticent government officials/departments
  - "GRB has been credited for uncovering the paltry and insufficient sums allocated to ministries with gender-equality mandates. But it also provides a rich, varied seam of knowledge about how fiscal consolidation together with the drive to prioritise state support to trade and economic liberalisation, promote competitiveness, business and investment facilitation, can work to weaken state institutions"
  - "Progressing along the three GRB goals will be shaped by the capacity to reconfigure the international and domestic financial architecture as well as prise open democratic, policy and fiscal space to do so"

- **AMPAIRE ET AL. (2020)** / UGANDA + TANZANIA / - EFFECTS (BAD IMPLEMENTATION)
  - Summary: gender issues still interpreted as "women's issues", disharmony in gender mainstreaming across governments, budgeting for gender not fully embraced by these governments, allocations to gender at sub-national level remain inconsistently low w/ sharp differences between estimated + actual budgets, gender activities do not address any structural inequalities
  - Study proposes some implementation ideas that seek to address these issues and attempt to better develop GRB policies
  - Argues for mainstreaming of gender policy
  - Discusses obstacles to successful implementation of GRB
    - Lack of technical capacity in gender
    - Lack of skills and expertise in planning/monitoring/evaluating budgets of GRB initiatives
    - Limited or no resources allocated to gender activities

        - Inadequate research/gender-disaggregated data
        - Negative cultural practices
        - Presence of gender-blind sectoral policies (especially those that influence local budget initiatives)
    - Statistics Provided
        - National budget: Uganda - 11 percent / Tanzania - 0 percent of budget includes programs with targeted gender aims and specifically allocated resources
        - District budget: Uganda - 65 percent / Tanzania - 11 percent of budget includes programs with targeted gender aims and specifically allocated resources
        - Sub-county/ward budget: Uganda - 13 percent / Tanzania - 0 percent of budget includes programs with targeted gender aims and specifically allocated resources
    - In Tanzania, only 0.015 percent of the district budget was allocated to gender over the years - root of the problem rests in allocation and actual spending not lining up, as actual spending is frequently seen to be even less than the allocated budget
    - In Uganda, the root of the problem rests in the fact that the "themes" within their gender-responsive activities do not seek to challenge the status quo and are somewhat performative/not actually useful/vague ("celebrations" being one category)
    - Characterizations of women and men in policy and development plans - women are characterized as vulnerable and marginalized (56 percent for Uganda and 55 percent for Tanzania in official documents)
    - Demonstrates "high level of variation in how gender is understood and integrated in policies and development plans in the two countries"
    - Both countries "lack a harmonized approach on how gender is prioritized in policy planning, integrated in policy documents, and implemented at a local level"
    - Gender is considered a "women's issue"
    - Emphasizes importance of intersectionality w/ other social divides and not oversimplifying "gender" or "women" as a monolithic concept
    - "Insufficient integration of gender in policies, small gender budget allocations that fluctuate over time, and commitment of budgets to superficial gender activities are perceived to be a result of failure to prioritize gender in policy planning and intervention delivery. Even when guidelines for gender mainstreaming are in place, we still observe failure to sufficiently integrate and allocate resources for gender activities"

- **HOLVOET + INSBERG (2014)** / MOZAMBIQUE / - EFFECTS (BAD FUNDING)
    - Context: mainly qualitative analysis of past field research
    - Ministry of Women and Social Action receives less than 1 percent of government budget each year - 0.4 percent in 2008
    - However, the analysis applauds the national government's inclusion of representatives from the Ministry of Women and Social Action in budgetary discussions on issues surrounding gender
    - Gender framing has been found to be useful, echoing Burn (2017) - presenting gender within the context of economic success to budget and economic officials elicits more responsiveness and willingness to incorporate gender into policies

- **KUSAMBIZA (2013)** / UGANDA / + EFFECTS
    - Majority qualitative study conducted via interviews and policy surveying
    - In Uganda, women own just 16 percent of registered land

  - Uganda's successes with GRB demonstrate the power of partnerships between civil society and governments
  - GRB must be packaged alongside other, larger reforms/development issues and must include a variety of different demographics

- **KODA + MTASINGWA (2021)** / TANZANIA / + EFFECTS
  - Women account for 90 percent of agricultural labor force in Tanzania and produce 70 percent of the country's food supply
  - 10 percent of government agricultural budget is allocated towards women, youths, and people with disabilities (marginalized groups)
  - In village councils, women represent 30 percent of seats - however, given the patriarchal system in place, women's voices are not heard and they are not taken seriously, as one female respondent interviewed by the researchers stated
  - Lack of resources and time to implement projects have presented issues before
  - "...and not all people need loans in cash. Some might need equipment, agricultural inputs, or skills. Indeed, the poorest groups need grants rather than loans since they farm for subsistence and household food security and not the market" - important to recognize nuances in effective handling of GRB initiatives
  - A participatory planning and budgetary process in which women are able to voice their concerns and have them addressed is essential - must have strong communication and transparency at all levels of government
  - Small-scale farming is the most common form of agriculture for women
  - Female farmers have specifically expressed concerns surrounding:
    - Lack of ownership + control over agricultural land and security of ownership
    - High cost of improved seed and other technologies
    - Low extension service delivery to women compared to men
    - Excessive sale of food crops by male heads of household
    - Low exposure to agricultural and market information
    - Lack of business/entrepreneurship skills
  - Successful mainstreaming of gender in Tanzania has led to increased gender sensitivity in budgeting; however, some challenges of institutionalizing gender budgeting still remain

- **AKALBILA ET AL. (2021)** / GHANA / + EFFECTS BUT HAMPERED BY LACK OF ACCESS
  - Study that interviewed:
    - 44 farmers (86 percent women)
    - 9 community leaders (78 percent women)
    - 3 assembly members (0 percent women)
    - 13 district government officials (38 percent women)
    - 2 regional government officials (50 percent women)
    - 5 ministry officials (60 percent women)
    - 8 NGO staff (57 percent women)
  - Among all participants interviewed in the study, the most frequently mentioned challenge was lack of access to agricultural inputs and productive assets; women also specified that infrastructure issues made it difficult for them to obtain these assets, such as having to travel long distances to obtain them
  - In addition, female farmers specified non-farming challenges - especially a lack of health facilities and a lack of childcare facilities in their areas, revealing that gender issues in

agriculture are also linked to structural issues with healthcare, childcare, and transportation

- Poverty, lack of access to financial services, and high costs of resources also create issues for women and were mentioned by all interviewees in the study
- "The support provided may not be tailored to the needs of women farmers or address the barriers to their access— including high costs, distance, and cultural norms—meaning that women farmers do not fully benefit from the actions the government is taking to support them. Thus the mere existence of support for farmers is not sufficient. Rather, targeted support for women farmers, tailored to their exact needs, is critical. This has significant budget implications"
- "When women farmers mentioned tractors as a need or a challenge, many of them also said there was a tractor in their community but that the men often got access to it first, so by the time it was the women farmers' turn to use the tractor, it was too late in the harvest season"
- Overall, Ghana has made some small strides but there remains much to be desired in the realm of access to resources and understanding other obstacles that limit women's ability to partake in the agricultural industry

- **TAYE, HUSSEN, + MENGISTU (2021)** / ETHIOPIA / **COUNTRY OF INTEREST**
  - Difference in productivity/output production per hectare reflects a 24 percentage point difference between male and female farmers (when adjusted for systematic differences) - reflects male-dominated and male-biased agricultural policy/industry
  - 83 percent of the population relies on agriculture for livelihood, and over 10 percent of the national budget is allocated to agriculture
  - More than 60 percent of the overall budget in Ethiopia is devoted to pro-poor sectors, such as education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture and rural development, and road infrastructure - but despite this progressive budgeting, it often fails to take into account specific gendered disparities - the study argues that GRB and pro-poor budgeting must be used to complement each other rather than treated as separate entities
  - "Nevertheless, according to two globally accepted indices, the budget allocated to the agricultural sector in Ethiopia is significantly lower than the average in peer countries. Based on a budget of US$630 million allocated to the agriculture sector in Ethiopian fiscal year (EFY) 2010, investment needs to grow drastically. Considering Ethiopia's 2.3 percent intensity of spending in agriculture and its agricultural per capita expenditure of US$14, its budget allocation needs to grow by US$2.14–2.42 billion just to reach its peer countries' average"
  - Discrepancies in money being allocated and money being utilized - only 2.87 percent of that budget was used for agricultural administrative programming
  - The PNSP program (Productive Safety Net Program) is a strong start for Ethiopia because it seeks to address structural issues - more programs like this must be developed and funding channeled towards them

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