



WOMEN CHAMPIONING ADVOCACY FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING.



The practice of mobilising women, strengthening their capacities to engage in the planning and budgeting processes at Local Government has enabled them to take up an active role in society to demand for quality service delivery and engage duty bearers for equitable resource allocation.

The goal of the practice is to have women play an active role in development processes, to ensure that their most pressing needs are prioritised by Local Government and that when funds are allocated to women specific needs, service are delivered in their right quantity and quality. They have become aware that public funds are theirs.

Knowing this, they go ahead to demand for transparent service delivery and budgetary

allocation at local government level to address the most pressing gender and equity service delivery needs.

In Tororo for example, the women under the Village Gender Responsive Budget Clubs initiated a process of establishing a child protection committee in Magola sub county, they are more vigilant in bringing out service delivery gaps for example, they reported to the duty bearers' cases of absenteeism of in charges of the Health Centers of Nyalakot health center II in Osukuru sub county and Gwaragwara Health center II in Kisoko Sub County. An issue that was ably handled with a stun warning to the concerned against such bad practices.

Another example is in Kasese District, where women under the Village Gender Responsive Budget Clubs in 2020 reported to Police 16 defilement cases for prosecution of culprits.

A case in point is where a child was defiled by a soldier and was reported to RSA Office to ensure the perpetrator is prosecuted, under file name SD REF 12/13/08/2020 victim of 14 years in Village 1. The case is being followed up on.

They also mobilise fellow citizens to participate in the Budget processes as part of ensuring that women’s voices are heard, and they inform decision making in recourse allocation.

On the rights holders’ side, the practice involves men and women selected and trusted by fellow community members, who can read and write and are in position to understand the budget processes to ensure that resources are allocated to address the unique Gender and Equity issues affecting them.

Gender budget issues incorporated in Kasese LG budget presented by women’s budget clubs

Identified priorities	Level of adoption
1. Construction of Maternity ward at Kirembe Health Centre II	Central Division Kasese Municipality
2. Construction of classrooms at Isule Primary	Kasese district Education sector departmental Priorities for F/Y 2021/2022
3. Construction of 10 girls’ washrooms	Kasese district Education sector departmental Priorities for F/Y 2021/2022
4. Promotion of menstrual Hygiene in schools	Kasese district Education sector departmental Priorities for F/Y 2021/2022

Secondly the practice also involves duty bearers at Local Government who have mandate to cause the desired change. For example, a

health centre in charge, a Subcounty leader, a district Health Officer, Local Councils leaders, among others. With the activism of the women to demand for Gender responsive service delivery, some Local governments have gone ahead to consider some of the service delivery issues presented to them by these groups in the district budget framework papers.

In Kasese for example, in Kitswamba Subcounty during the 2020 village interface meeting community members presented the issue of lack of safe and clean water, poor community access roads and pushed for its inclusion in the subcounty budgets and subsequently, the subcounty in November 2020, forwarded this matter to the district as indicated in the Subcounty letter to the district on (Item IV). See Figure image.

The women particularly influenced the integration of Gender response budget priorities into both lower and higher local government budget framework papers that eventually contribute to the formulation of the annual budgets.

A total of 12 Priorities were identified during the planning and budget meetings out of which 4 were adopted into the budget frame-work paper for F/Y 2021-2022 (33.3% adoption) The strength of this approach is two pronged- women generate evidence on state of service delivery from various service delivery centers within their communities e.g., health centers, which they use to advocate for improvement in budget allocations and service delivery,

secondly, women use dialogue. They use nonviolent tactics, to cause change in practice. With dialogue, they engage both technical and political leaders at higher and lower local governments to address service delivery leakages, financing gaps and sometimes misuse of public funds where it has been detected. This approach has proven that leaders listen if those most affected are at the forefront of challenging them to address service delivery leakages and addressing funding gaps than when CSOs or other stakeholders speak on their behalf. Women can best articulate their challenges, so they are not trivialized or referred to as those ‘women issues’.

Challenges

The women have challenges however, some leaders undermine their work or refuse to avail information like funds allocated, number of people benefiting from a service. To overcome this, they work as team as opposed to working as an individual, this way the leaders respect them and respond better than if a group member decides to do this work as an individual.

Often members have been challenged with limited knowledge on the budget cycle, how and when to engage leaders- Each Group is constantly supported by a field facilitator, who trains them on basic knowledge on budgeting, securing them platforms to engage with leaders,

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supporting them to define service delivery needs and some skills in communicating and confidence building.

Ultimately some gain confidence to better articulate these issues independently to their leaders. This approach enhances ownership and leadership amongst the group where they can independently monitor service delivery and demand for gender responsive accountability on their own. It is less cost intensive as members are not paid salaries, they are rather facilitated with fees like transport and airtime when they are engaged in community activities. It has also proven to strengthen linkages and collaboration with the leaders who continue to rely on them as community watchdogs, and informants on service delivery.