Gender-responsive budgeting and breastfeeding

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Budgets matter for breastfeeding policy and programs

• Through the budget, commitments, plans and policies to protect, promote, support and monitoring breastfeeding are resourced and made real.
• The budget reflects, in financial terms, what is valued (and what is not).
• Assumptions about what are economic or productive activities, paid and unpaid work, that underpin economic policy influences how breastfeeding is talked about in policy debates.
• Governments can be made responsive and accountable for their commitments and plans through their budgets. Women’s groups and groups committed to breastfeeding can play an important role in keeping attention on the issue and pressing for changes.

*Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) has the fundamental goal of promoting gender equality.*
What approach to gender equality?

• Substantive equality: UN Women (2015, 35)
  “the concept of substantive equality has been advanced in key human rights treaties to capture this broader understanding: that inequality can be structural and discrimination indirect; that equality has to be understood in relation to outcomes as well as opportunities; and that ‘different treatment’ might be required to achieve equality in practice”
  “The specific policy package to achieve substantive equality will differ from context to context. Ultimately, the aim is to create a virtuous cycle through the generation of decent work, gender-responsive social protection and social services, alongside enabling macroeconomic policies that prioritize investment in human beings and the fulfilment of social objectives.”

• Women should be like men? Women and men are equal but different?
  • We need to avoid old debates about “difference” - risk of essentialising
    - “Separate spheres”: Home and Work?
    - Biological or genetic differences?
    - Breastfeeding as work that can only be done by women?
    - Infant care as work that women choose more than men do?
  • Instead: transform work, care for women and men: “the transformation of the institutions and structures…”
Capabilities approach

- ‘the true measure of human development is that a person has the “capabilities” necessary to leading the kind of life they value and have reason to value’; thus, ‘capabilities allow an individual to fully function in society; they are ‘substantive freedoms’ (Sen 1999: 17).

- ‘a good society must arrange to provide care for those in a condition of extreme dependency, without exploiting women as they have traditionally been exploited, and thus depriving them of other important capabilities. This huge problem will rightly shape the way states think about all the other capabilities.’ Martha Nussbaum (2009)

- A “capabilities” approach enables us to think about capability of both mother and child in the breastfeeding relationship
  - Focus on the individual (who is a mother): It is her individual capabilities that, equally with those of others in society, including the infant, should be developed and respected
  - Examine the individual lifecycle: lifecourse (dynamic) wellbeing for each individual over their life
  - Equal distribution of the cost and burden of care
  - Specific capabilities for material wellbeing of women: time, income, work, health on an equal basis

- What are the most important capabilities to emphasise in gender responsive budgeting for breastfeeding and infant nutrition?
Getting Started

Gender responsive budgeting is a tool to analyse the potential gender impact of economic policies in order to develop policies that will promote equality between women and men.

Women throughout the world still experience structural inequality

Policies impact differently on women & men

Women are more likely than men to have responsibility for unpaid work which reduces their time available for paid work and other things.

Women on average are more likely to be living in poverty

Women earn less than men so don’t benefit from cuts to income tax

Women have lower incomes over a lifetime therefore can’t afford private provisions when public services are cut

Women accumulate lower levels of wealth so don’t benefit from business tax cuts

Household income rises

Income may not be shared equally within households

Women & girls may not benefit as much as men

Women continue to be under-represented in public life

Government policies don’t take women’s needs and priorities into account

This leads to policies that fail to meet the needs of women or have unintended consequences

Budgets usually fail to consider unpaid economy

• Unpaid work makes up a large proportion of the total economy. ABS 2014: value of household production was $416 billion to $586 billion or between 41.6% to 58.7% of GDP

• Unpaid work supports the paid economy as well as families.

• Unpaid work responds to budget decisions (eg. paid parental leave can affect breastfeeding).

Julie Smith (and an anonymous letter write) recently said: “women are not babysitters for the economy” (http://www.broadagenda.com.au/home/women-are-not-babysitters-for-the-economy/)

• Both men and women work in the unpaid economy, but tend to do different tasks, and women typically do more (Covid 19 is shining some light).
Total Productive System of an Industrial Society (Three-Layer Cake with Icing)

GNP-Monetized
1/2 of Cake
Top Two Layers
Monetized, Officially Measured
GNP Generates All Economic Statistics (15% "Underground" Illegal, Tax-Dodging)

Non-Monetized
Productive 1/2 of Cake
Lower Two Layers Non-Monetized Altruism, Sharing
"Counter-Economy" Subsidizes Top Two GNP Cash Sectors with Unpaid Labor
and Environmental Costs Absorbed or Unaccounted;
Risks Passed to Future Generations

Official Market Economy
All Cash Transactions

"Private" Sector Production, Employment
Consumption, Investment, Savings

Defense, State and Local Government, "Public" Sector Infrastructure (Roads,
Maintenance, Sewers, Bridges, Subways, Schools, Municipal Government)

Cash-Based "Underground Economy," Tax Dodges

"Sweat-Equity": Do-it-Yourself, Bartering Social, Familial, Community
Structures Unpaid Household & Parenting, Volunteering Sharing,
Mutual Aid, Caring for Old and Sick, Home-Based Production for Use
Subsistence Agriculture

MOTHER NATURE
Natural Resource Base—Absorbs Cost of Pollution, Recycles Wastes II
Tolerances Are Not Exceeded. GNP Sectors "External" Hidden Costs
(Toxic Dumps, etc.)

GNP "Private" Sector Rests on

GNP "Public Sector Rests on

Social Cooperative
Counter-Economy
Rests on

Nature's Layer

PLATE 1-5

Source: Henderson (1982) in Sharp (2017) GRB with special reference to the unpaid economy, University of South Australia
Gender responsive budgeting is a tool that involves:

Gender Analysis to unpack gender differentiated direct and indirect impacts of budget and policies on the paid and unpaid spheres of the economy.

Actions to change budgetary decision-making processes and priorities that bring about spending and taxation changes that promote gender equality.

Source: Sharp (2017) GRB with special reference to the unpaid economy, University of South Australia
Example: Linking GRB analysis and politics for change

- **South Lombok, Indonesia**: Poverty, limited services and cultural beliefs contributed to maternal mortality rates. Expenditure was at the time focused on salaries, buildings and ambulances. Analysis suggested that resources would be better placed for salaries for midwives, the purchase and maintenance of motorbikes and mobile sterilization materials. Advocacy resulted in an increase in the budget allocation to maternal services, from 2% in to 4.7%, over a period of three to four years.
Expenditure Categories

Category 1
Specifically targeted expenditures by government agencies to women or men, boys or girls
  e.g. women’s ministries, women’s employment programs, domestic violence counseling for men (typically less than 1 percent of total expenditure)

Category 2
Equal employment opportunity expenditure by government agencies on their employees
  e.g. child care for public sector, training for senior women

Category 3
General or mainstream expenditures by government agencies that are not gender targeted but often have significant gender impacts
  e.g. water infrastructure, hospitals, public transport, social protection and income transfers

Combined 100 percent of total Expenditure

Level of Government

In a federal system, revenues, expenditures and authority across different levels of government, hence:
  • COAG National Breastfeeding Strategy
  • But this makes budget analysis more complex...

Federal/national (Commonwealth)
“Mass” population levers; most tax and transfers; standardised health and education policies; family law; child support; some labour regulation

State or Territory
Direct health, education, safety, household, service delivery; maternal-child; hospitals; midwives; home care; work leave; labour conditions;

Council/local
Local services; family day care; maternal-child visits; babycare groups; street scape; public facilities eg playgrounds, toilets, breastfeeding rooms

Budgets have different impacts on men and women

direct impacts:
• Income transfers
• Baby-friendly hospitals
• Maternity leave
• Breastfeeding childcare

indirect effects:
• Impact on the private sector through contracts to supply the public sector
• Workplace policy regulation
• Expenditure on public space
• Macroeconomic impacts of the budget on aggregate demand in the economy and ... thus on job creation and economic growth.
What Australian government policies intersect to affect breastfeeding, at what level?

• Direct/targeted policies that affect breastfeeding
  - Identify level of government, and goal /metrics of policy, time period, etc
  - Identify budget allocation (and revenues needed)
  - Ensure budget execution is done properly, tracked, monitored
  - Evaluation and renewal/retargeting

• Indirect/general policies that affect breastfeeding
  - Require mass/systemic change
  - Engaging both market/care economy
  - Engaging federal/mass policy, tax, transfer, work systems
Link components of enabling environment for breastfeeding, to revenue/expenditure/policy levels of Government?
GRB in times of crisis: Opportunity for change

• Can you identify gendered dimensions of the COVID19 crisis (economic, social)?
  - Covid 19 is highlighting issues re vulnerability of women working in care industry, added unpaid care work for women, loss of jobs, isolation of the elderly, violence?

• What is the impact of ‘emergency’ measures on:
  - gender equality, unpaid and care work
  - supporting/undermine breastfeeding?

• How to make resources available to protect and promote breastfeeding (targeting expenditure):
  - Protect obstetric and reproductive health services?
  - Protect breastfeeding among those sick?
  - Ensure that communications and data collection include breastfeeding?
  - Essential workers have breastfeeding protected?
• Thanks!

• Questions?
• EXTRA SLIDES
Some examples of “mainstream” government policies that indirectly affect breastfeeding

- Income (social security) support, tax
  - Paid parental leave
  - Family and child payments (cash benefits)
  - Childcare policy and flexibility incl. infant care
  - Retirement savings policy/age pensions
- Family law
  - Divorce and child custody; parental location laws
  - Shared parenting laws
- Workplace policies
  - Leave and flexible work
  - Facilities, infrastructure, time at work
  - Leave, rights to return to work, anti-discrimination
- Health and nutrition policies
  - Basic medical care
  - Hygiene
- Commercial, advertising, pricing, consumer protection
  - Infant formula and advertising about what “good” mothers do
- Supermarket and trade policies
- “Sharing economy”; milk bank regulation
Brief history of more than 3 decades of GRB

Australia:

• 1984/85 women budget pilot and publication of the Women’s Budget Program (Australia, Federal level)
• 2013 Australian federal government ceases publishing a Women’s Budget Statement
• 2014 National Foundation of Australian Women begins analysis of the budget
• Victoria and the ACT governments have initiated GRB initiatives.

Globally:

• 1987 Women’s Budget Group (UK, civil society)
• 1995 Beijing Platform of Action calls for GRB and 2000 UN General Assembly called upon government to undertake GRB
• 17 OECD governments undertook GRB and 2 are on the way (2019 OECD).