

## Panel 4: Panel 4 – Tools for enhancing gender mainstreaming – from political will to e-solutions

Unnur Ágústsdóttir

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to be here to talk about gender budgeting in Iceland. Are we there yet? The short answer is NO!

We are not there yet but we surely have been progressing.

Our guiding light during the implementation is that gender budgeting is where justice and fairness go hand in hand with economic wellbeing. Our goal is to emphasize that we do gender budgeting for two reasons; because it is the right thing to do and because our economic wellbeing depends on gender equality.

In Iceland our governmental agencies took the first steps toward gender budgeting in 2005 when the first pilot project was implemented. It was based on an initiative from the Nordic cooperation and was not continued.

The implementation of gender budgeting was started in 2009. To begin with the focus was on information gathering and planning. A steering Committee with participants from all ministries was appointed and a project manager was hired. In the years 2010 to 2011 all ministries worked on pilot projects. In total there were seventeen projects and the results were presented in the 2012 state budget proposal. The pilot projects led to increased knowledge in gender budgeting and some of them did result in changing work processes and decisions.

In April 2011 the Icelandic government approved a three year implementation plan for the years 2011 to 2014. Each ministry worked with a key policy during the three years period. The projects had to have importance according to key areas and cost. Nine projects out of ten revealed gender impact. The one remaining project was building of an analytics model for bill proposals. The outcome was presented in the budget proposal for 2015.

The current implementation plan is for the years 2015-2019 and was approved by the government on June 19th 2015 – the day of the 100 years anniversary of women's suffrage in Iceland. The focus is on integrating gender budgeting in the decision making process. By doing so, the steering committee aims to ensure that the gender perspective is taken into account before decisions are made, instead of doing the analysis afterwards. It includes analyzing the gender impact of budget proposals and doing a gender impact assessment of new law proposals. According to the plan the focus is on progressive implementation:

- In Budget Proposals the plan is to go from 0% in 2015 to 100% in 2020.
- In Proposed Bills the plan is to go from 0% in 2014 to 100% in 2019.

We believe the legal basis is very important and in Iceland it is based on two different legislations:

- Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men from 2008.
- New Budget Law which took effect Jan 1st 2016.

Important factors in the current implementation plan:

- Political support.
- Project management principles.
- Steering Committee.
- Steering Groups in all Ministries.

Obstacles and challenges:

- Direct connection to feminism still has a negative implications to some people.
- Opposition to change – and extra workload caused by this new project.
- Promotion and open discussion are important in gaining support. Since the project started there is increased positive attitude and understanding of the importance of gender budgeting.
- Economic collapse and the aftermath.
  - Threats; austerity measures within the administration and increased workload because of new projects and challenges.
  - Opportunities; Window of opportunity occurred when a government led by a feminist prime minister confirmed the project. The current government decided to continue the project and legalize it in the new budget law.

The ministries have started to work according to the new implementation plan. In The Ministry of Welfare the steering group is discussing the next steps. Those steps will include choosing budget and bill proposals for analyzing and discussing how we can improve gender disaggregated statistics.

Thank you.