

## TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPACTS OF PROVINCIAL BUDGETS ON THE POPULATION –

### WHY USE GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS IN THE BUDGET PROCESS

*For New Brunswick's political decision makers*

*Because women's lives impact and are impacted by all aspects of society and the economy, work towards real equality for women must be carried out holistically and globally in order to address the status of women as a whole. Work on traditional women's issues, such as pay equity, childcare, and violence prevention, must continue. But we know that it is on a macroeconomic level, involving all government policies and investments – which includes traditional women's issues - that the action with the greatest impact on the socioeconomic status of women is taken. We must address the global problem of the status of women globally. Gender-Based Analysis is a management tool that enables governments to achieve this goal.*

#### What is Gender-Based Analysis (GBA)?

Gender-Based Analysis is a tool that can be incorporated into the budget and policy development process to ensure that these measures have an equitable impact on women and men, as well as on other sectors of the population.

#### Why should this matter to you?

**1 – It is a current priority for New Brunswick women** that emerged every time major women's consultations and dialogue were held in the province over the past years:

- It is a priority identified by the 300 women who participated in New Brunswick's 2010 World March of Women.
- It is a priority identified by women in ALL regions consulted in 2010 by the New Brunswick Women's Issues Branch as part of its strategic planning.
- It is the current No. 1 priority of the members of the Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick, which represents the rights and interests of the province's Francophone women.

**2 – It is an essential component of effective management.** Because the people of New Brunswick are the government's priority, the government has a duty to adequately measure how its policies and budgets affect them. Without measuring the impacts of the provincial budget on the various sectors of the population, including men and women, the impacts of the budget are unknown.

**3 – The need exists.** There are still large gaps between the situations of male and female New Brunswickers. For example, the average annual income for New Brunswick women is \$22,875, while that of New Brunswick men is \$34,321. Women in New Brunswick therefore have an income equivalent to only 67% of that of men, and this does not include the other areas where much progress still remains to be made for women, such as combating violence or the lack of adequate female representation in politics.



Austria, Morocco, and Australia are among the over 60 jurisdictions to have used Gender-Based Analysis in their budget processes. In each case, the use of this analysis has led to sound investments. For example, in Australia, where a Gender-Based Analysis initiative was used in the budget process from 1984 to 1996, the number of daycare spaces increased fivefold (UNPAC). This is a very wise investment, as we are well aware of the return on investment in childcare services. In fact, here in Canada, every dollar invested in childcare services yields a return of \$2.30 in short-term GDP (Robert Fairholm, Centre for Spatial Economics).

### **What does this mean, in concrete terms?**

Using Gender-Based Analysis in the budget process means systematically factoring men's and women's socio-economic realities and their needs into the budget process. Consequently:

- Research carried out and recommendations made with the aim of guiding budget decisions must address the specific situations and needs of men and women (by using population data broken down by gender and by analyzing this data when there is a discrepancy between the figures for women and men);
- We must give women and women's groups fair weight in the pre-budget consultations;
- And, when the Cabinet makes its final budget decisions, the most important considerations must be an analysis of New Brunswickers' situations and needs (including distinctions between men and women) and public consultations.

### **Where to start in New Brunswick – some options:**

- ✓ Issue a guideline to all departments to collect data about the users of their programs and services, broken down by gender, and make this data available to the public.
- ✓ Form a working committee composed of decision makers, public servants, members of civil society, and researchers to study and propose a strategy to implement Gender-Based Analysis within government.
- ✓ Conduct a pilot project to implement Gender-Based Analysis in one department.

### **To find out more:**

- Council of Europe, *Gender budgeting: practical implementation: Handbook* (2009): [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/gender-mainstreaming/CDEG\(2008\)15\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/gender-mainstreaming/CDEG(2008)15_en.pdf)
- Isabella Bakker, *Gender Budget Initiatives: Why They Matter in Canada*: [http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National\\_Office\\_Pubs/2005/afb2006\\_techpaper1\\_gender\\_budget\\_initiatives.pdf](http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National_Office_Pubs/2005/afb2006_techpaper1_gender_budget_initiatives.pdf)
- Women's Issues Branch, Executive Council Office. Guide: <http://www.gnb.ca/0012/Womens-Issues/Genderanalysis2003.pdf>

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