

EXAMPLES FROM LOCAL LEVEL GRB WORK IN LATIN AMERICA

One of the ways in which Latin America's GRB initiatives are different from those in other regions and countries is that most of the GRB work has happened at local level. Further, the Latin American initiatives have often emphasized participation of women in decision-making, building upon the 'mainstream' participatory budget initiatives which already exist in the region.

UNIFEM has taken a regional approach in Latin America, in the hope that different countries can learn from each other. At the local level it has supported work in five countries. Its partners have included local governments (both officials and elected representatives), NGOs and women's organizations, and national and international organizations such as United Nations Fund Population, United Nations Development Program and United Nations Volunteer.

In Cuenca (Ecuador) the municipality worked with women's organizations to draw up an Equal Opportunities Plan which is now been implemented by the Department of Social and Gender Equity. In parallel, the municipality introduced a participatory budget process in rural areas which provided opportunities for women to get organized and participate.

In Bolivia, the Law of Popular Participation of 1994 established participatory development of local development plans and vigilance committees as two of the main citizenship participation mechanisms at local level. The Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral (IFFI) of Cochabamba has mobilized and trained members of local women's organizations to use these opportunities to bring a gender perspective into local public policies. As a result of the advocacy campaign organized by the IFFI, an article was introduced in the municipal budgetary guidelines which obliges municipalities to allocate budgetary resources to programs to promote gender equality and to provide services for women's victims of violence.

In 2001, Recife (Brazil) created the post of women's coordinator to assist with addressing women's demand for gender mainstreaming in the municipality and to promote the participation of women in public politics. Women who attend the public assemblies have called for budgets to address issues of violence against women, women's poverty, participation, racial inequality, and safe abortion care.

In Rosario (Argentina), the municipality's women's coordinator has worked to create mechanisms that promote women's participation in the participatory budget process.

In Villa El-Salvador (Peru) a federation of grassroots women's organizations provides volunteer services to the community through programmes such as "Glass of Milk" and "Popular Dinning-Rooms". The participatory budget process, launched in 2000, has provided opportunities for women to demand equal access to public services and better conditions in which to carry out their volunteer work.

Compiled by Debbie Budlender based on presentations by Raquel Coello, Programme Coordinator UNIFEM Ecuador and Leire Lopez, UNIFEM Brazil, during UNIFEM/UNFPA GRB Workshops in Cape Town and Bangkok, April and June 2006

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