



GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING
IN VIET NAM:
**GENDER EQUALITY
IN TRANSPORT**

POLICY BRIEF

POLICY BRIEF - GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN VIET NAM: GENDER EQUALITY IN TRANSPORT

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GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN VIET NAM: GENDER EQUALITY IN TRANSPORT

Transport is one of the most important elements of national infrastructure and a key to gender equality. Women's opportunities to access paid work are reduced when there is poor investment in gender responsive transport infrastructure. This reinforces the trend of women shouldering the burden of unpaid care work, which in turn maintains and reinforces gender inequality. It also prevents women from making a full economic contribution to growth and prosperity at both household and national levels. However, gender issues are often overlooked in transport development projects worldwide. Drawing on international examples, and in consultation with the Viet Nam Ministry of Transport officials, this paper highlights the importance of a gender responsive budgeting (GRB) approach and explores how to implement it in the transport sector in Viet Nam.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEDAW

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

BPfA

Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs

Gender Responsive Budgeting

GRB

Civil Society Organizations

CSOs

Non-Governmental Organization

NGO

Gender Action Plans

GAPs



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GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING CONCEPTS

The mandate for gender equality in the budgeting process in Viet Nam

After Viet Nam ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹ and adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA),² it embedded these international commitments to gender equality in the national legal framework, particularly the 2006 Law on Gender Equality and the 2007 Law on the Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence. In 2015, Viet Nam adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include Sustainable Development Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”³ as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, which calls for a “significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional, and national levels”.⁴ Taken together, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 17 SDGs, other international agreements and national legislation in Viet Nam all call for gender equality in all policy areas ranging from poverty, hunger, health, education, water, sanitation, employment and transport to climate change and peace and security issues.

Viet Nam requires that budgeting consider the impact on gender equality goals. The Gender Equality Law calls for the use of the budget as a financial source for ensuring gender equality.⁵ This has been an effective legal tool to help ministries, sectors and regions

to allocate, plan and manage funds to implement gender equality and women’s empowerment in their respective areas of responsibility. It requires gender mainstreaming in the formulation of legal documents.⁶ Furthermore, a recently adopted law was enacted to implement GRB. In 2015, the amended Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents made the Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs responsible for ensuring that gender equality is mainstreamed in all laws, ordinances and draft resolutions.⁷ The 2015, the amended State Budget Law identifies gender equality as one of the principles of state budget management and priorities for budget estimation and expenditure. This further strengthened the legal basis for integrating GRB into the budget process. Such legal developments commit Viet Nam to promoting gender equality in different spheres, including employment, political participation and within the family. The also require appropriate resource distribution to women beneficiaries.⁸



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Gender responsive budgeting promotes gender equality

National budgets provide the most comprehensive statements of a government's social and economic plans and priorities. In tracking where the money comes from and where it goes, budgets determine how public funds are raised, how they are used and who benefits from them. Therefore, implementing commitments to gender equality in government budgets requires intentional measures to incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting frameworks, and concrete investment in addressing gender gaps.

GRB uses gender mainstreaming and gender impact analysis during budgeting processes to ensure that all budget plans promote or respect the goal of gender equality. GRB provides tools to assess the different needs and contributions of men and women, and boys and girls, within existing revenue, expenditure and allocation estimations,⁹ and it calls for adjusting budget policies to benefit all groups.

GRB is not about creating separate budgets for women. Nor is it simply intended to increase spending on women's programmes. Rather, it is an approach that integrates gender equality into government planning and budgeting processes, and analyses how budgets impact gender equality and the empowerment of women. This entails examining not only actual allocations and revenue raising measures but also budgeting systems and the roles of various actors

throughout the process. GRB helps policymakers understand how budget decisions are made and how these decisions either support gender equality outcomes or exacerbate existing gender gaps.



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GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AND TRANSPORT

Expanding the understanding of the many links between gender, mobility and transport is urgent, because all modes of transport are closely intertwined with economic development strategies and governance issues, ranging from budgetary implications to environmental sustainability. Each ministry is responsible for formulating detailed plans and outcomes to bridge the gaps between national objectives and the details of regional and local conditions, resources, challenges and the needs of specific groups. Without a clear understanding and commitment on gender equality and GRB, ministries, including the Ministry of Transportation will not be able to ensure that the collection and allocation of resources in their sector is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Transport can make a big difference in increasing women's productivity and promoting gender equality when women have equitable access to it. Under the SDGs, the specific SDG target 11.2 on transport is about the need to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. In addition to its central contribution to economic growth, a good transport system contributes to socially sustainable development by broadening access to health and education services, employment, improving the exchange of information and promoting social

cohesion. When access to transport is constrained, as it is for many women, this results in limited access to labour markets, increased production costs and a lower volume of goods that can be taken to market.

Evidence shows that the lack of access to transport services in developing countries falls more heavily on women since they tend to spend more hours than men fetching water and fuel and walking to and from farm plots. The discrepancy is 10 percentage points higher among ethnic minority households. Transportation and its infrastructure are essential public services and indispensable in reducing the time that many women and girls currently spend on collecting and purifying water, fuel and firewood, which they could instead use to pursue educational and employment opportunities.

Although women are the principle direct users of water - even if purposes such as farming or cleaning benefit their whole families or communities - they are less likely to participate in decision making on either domestic or public water supplies.¹⁰ A lack of proper transport means that half as many girls as boys attend school in areas where water is scarce because girls must collect water.

In some countries head-loading is a major health hazard to women, and they may suffer higher accident rates walking on crowded roads with heavy burdens. Poor access to transport reduces women's use of health and other public services, which can increase maternal mortality.

Cultural acceptance, personal safety and the avoidance of harassment are also major concerns for women public transport users. Women are especially vulnerable to violent attacks or sexual harassment when transporting heavy goods and accompanying children. This can be a major deterrent for women to using public transport.

Furthermore, the modes of transport available to men and women are often quite different and they have different trip patterns and mobility constraints. The different requirements stem from their respective social and economic roles, in particular women's household and caretaking responsibilities. Status, residential location and type of livelihood also play a role.¹¹ In both urban and rural settings women tend to make more complex and frequent trips than men. But these trips are made on foot by many women in developing countries, as other modes of transport are often too expensive or not conveniently located.

Transport also has a role to play in equal employment opportunities. Women and men currently do not have the same access to employment in the transport sector, which is male-dominated. In Viet Nam, the construction and transport sectors are predominantly male, and less than 10 per cent of those employed in these sectors are female.¹²

Furthermore, the planning and construction of transport facilities may affect women differently than men based on land ownership rights, family situation, health risks, business opportunities and employment locations.

Gender stereotypes, economic inequality and lack of detailed information on gender and transport are obstacles to eliminating these forms of gender inequality. Women and civil society organizations (CSOs) must be involved in gender impact analyses of mobility and transport to identify and propose solutions to the many challenges, and ensure gender equality in budgeting and policy outcomes.



Photo: UN Viet Nam/Do Trong Danh



Photo: UN Viet Nam/Aidan Dockery

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INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES OF GENDER BUDGET ANALYSIS IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

Large infrastructure projects often include measures to address gender-specific issues in transport. Smaller scale projects and stand-alone initiatives that respond to gender in transport planning can be scaled up. Assessing outcomes in all projects depends heavily on careful collection of data on long-term and gender-specific impacts. A few international examples of good practices in GRB are presented below:

Dhaka, Bangladesh, urban transport project (1997–2004):

This project involved extensive land acquisition and resettlement, improvements in city management capabilities, repair and expansion of transport facilities and a gender impact analysis at all project stages. The project hired a women's non-governmental organization (NGO) to conduct surveys, focus group discussions and interviews to identify gender-specific issues and needs. The research findings were used in multi-sectoral national and city workshops with people impacted by the project. Furthermore, the project pinpointed gender issues through the analysis of travel records, financial information and the daily logs of transport users, to map gender-correlated needs and women's ability to pay for public and private transport. The project had the following key outcomes:

- Walking was found to be the most common form of commuting for women and low-income individuals. Therefore, sidewalks along major roads were repaired and expanded, and all crossing points were either bridged or protected with traffic lights;

- Walking was preferred to keep the costs of commuting down and health up;
- The economic trade-offs between the money saved by walking versus time for earning that was lost could not be measured. Walking is a form of unpaid work;
- Women's bus use increased when buses were upgraded for speed, safety and "sitting only" spaces, which reduced harassment of women by other passengers;
- Public transit provided women-only bus services, but there was no increase in the hours of service, even though the research indicated women's need for it. Private companies did not provide any women-only services for cost reasons.¹³

Women workers in rural road improvement project (Cambodia):

A 2010 ADB project aimed to facilitate connection between poor rural areas and markets, social services and business centres by paving more than 500 kms of roads across Cambodia. A gender analyses was under taken and a gender action plan developed. The plan ensured that the project was designed to benefit local communities by including female members into the consultation meetings, decision making and training. Some activities in the action plan includes:

- Capacity development to promote the understanding of the gender differences in the purpose of travel and travel patterns, and in mobility outside the home and village.

- Capacity development to promote the understanding of the gender differences in the purpose of travel and travel patterns, and in mobility outside the home and village.
- Mandatory recruitment procedures and quotas in the minors work contracts, accompanied by sensitization activities. Sensitization trainings targeting men encouraged them to allow female family members to participate, and trainings for women provided information on work opportunities.
- Equal pay for equal work for both women and men, with requirement that contractors submit time sheets that are disaggregated by sex.
- Paving road shoulders in addition to road themselves, to facilitate the use of carts with wheels, reducing the burden on women and girls who haul water in rural areas.



Preventing HIV/AIDS in transport projects in Western Yunnan, China (2005–2007):

This project was conducted by an international NGO in association with a major road development project. The project provided community health and safety training in construction workplaces, entertainment settings and local communities along the transport development corridor to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from the large number of highly mobile male workers in the area. Individual knowledge and behaviour were carefully monitored, and positive results were observed over the duration of the road construction project. The training project included gender-sensitive health and safety training that was specific to the social features of the projects, which reduced the risk of health problems for both the local community and workers who were temporarily in the area. The project had the following impacts:

- Knowledge of how HIV/AIDS is transmitted increased measurably and fewer workers in the construction zone held incorrect beliefs about safe sex (the project had the least impact on unskilled workers, who had less casual or commercial sex to begin with);
- Those who had initially engaged in frequent casual and commercial sex reported dramatic reductions of such practices;
- Significant increases in condom use were reported;
- Those at greatest risk were identified more accurately.¹⁵



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GENDER AND TRANSPORT ISSUES IN VIET NAM

Overall, women in Viet Nam are responsible for 52 per cent of all unpaid and paid work hours annually,¹⁶ but they receive only 41 per cent of total earned income. Some 63 per cent of women's total work hours are spent on unpaid work.¹⁷ Thus, women not only earn at lower rates than men, but also have less time for paid work. As a result, women's access to transport is more constrained than men's while they also have a lower ability to pay for it. Not surprisingly, nearly 60 per cent of people walking are women, while men account for nearly 90 per cent of people using bicycles and over 70 per cent of people using motorbikes.¹⁸ Within those averages there are differences according to urban versus rural locations, purpose of travel, care activities, health, age and income. But overall far more women walk or carry, push and pull loads, while far more men have access to another mode of transport.

Gender and transport initiatives in Viet Nam

Government of Viet Nam/United Nations Joint Green Production and Trade Programme (2013): This project improved the productivity of the Nghe An Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative of Thai ethnic minority women weavers. One of the big challenges was the high cost of transporting their cloth to markets. The United Nations supported their efforts to plan collective trips, thereby reducing the business transport costs for all members.¹⁹

East Asia-Pacific Gender Capacity in Rural Transport (2016): The project supported local women's road maintenance groups in northern Lao Cai, that were a result of consultations with local women's groups on road maintenance requirements, local women's context, needs and constraints. The project then conducted training to improve the capacity of women to meet the requirements of road maintenance work. This proved to be an effective method and practice of gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming practices in road maintenance work programmes.²⁰

Ho Chi Minh City programme for a safe and friendly city free of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women, youth, and children in public spaces (2017–2021): In Viet Nam, a high rate of sexual harassment in public space has been reported.²¹ A baseline survey of Ho Chi Minh City with 1,200 respondents in 2017 found that public transit was one of three public places where women faced the highest risk of sexual harassment and violence. UN Women and Ho Chi Minh City local authorities promoted the use of transport sectoral budgets to address gender based violence in public spaces. The result was that the Department of Transport obtained budget commitments from Ho Chi Minh City to increase senior management capacity for gender based analysis, leading to initiatives that increased bus driver awareness of how to prevent sexual harassment and violence in relation to the bus system.

All of these initiatives have made unique and invaluable contributions to mainstreaming gender in transport. But each initiative could further benefit from governance

and institutional frameworks that adequately reflect the challenges of bringing substantive gender equality to all aspects of transport systems in Viet Nam.



Photo: UN Viet Nam/Aidan Dockery



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RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR OF VIET NAM

To improve GRB in the transport sector, the following recommendations were generated during the concluding sessions of a workshop with UN Women, the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Transport, held in 2017:

1. Programmes are essential to building capacity in gender impact analysis and GRB in key departments of the Ministry of Transport: This can be done by developing a community of practice of gender and transport experts, top officials, members of CSOs working in this sector, and specialists on gender equality and violence against women, to map gender mobility practices and needs, identify safety options and support women's access to suitable safe transportation (with financing) and policy development on a permanent basis.
2. An audit of all existing transport sector plans and policies from a gender perspective should be conducted as soon as possible to ensure optimal gender-equal outcomes: This audit should involve the participation of government officers, civil society and independent experts capable of providing a comparative and suitable gender impact analysis, even of projects currently under way.
3. Expand research on the gender impacts of existing and potential transport programmes to provide qualitative and quantitative data needed for effective development planning:

CSOs and independent experts should, in conjunction with statistical agencies and development partners, develop and disseminate qualitative and quantitative measures to analyse the gender impact of existing and alternative transport options. These should then be disseminated in the form of accessible information. Analytical training and professional reference tools should be developed to support effective planning consistent with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and all relevant SDG targets and indicators.



Photo: UN Viet Nam/Aidan Dockery

4. Policy-makers should select urban and rural transport programmes in which gender responsive planning and budgeting methods can be piloted in order to take full account of women's needs and interests in transport: The design and implementation of programmes should provide the levels of efficiency, affordability, safety and accessibility needed for gender-equal transport options and guide longer-term planning.
5. Identify specific gender issues to include in GRB of transport planning and implementation in all contexts: Gender issues that need to be addressed include hiring, serving and supporting women in all types of projects and documenting women's needs regarding short trips and trip chaining, schedules, intermodal links, lighting, toilet and waiting areas, employment quotas, support for women's shops, and gender training and monitoring indicators.²²
6. Integrate instruction and certification requirements on gender impact analysis and GRB training into transport educational programmes: Embedding gender data, gender-specific planning methods and GRB processes in official educational programmes can increase knowledge at all levels and can also help increase the numbers of women employed in all aspects of this sector.
7. Gender equality and transport design are intertwined with development issues and they must be fully integrated with each other in all aspects of national and local budget planning and actions: Locations of health centres, care resources, schools, affordable housing, markets, workplaces, water and fuel sources, and state offices are key gender issues, as are factors such as unpaid and paid work practices, gender incomes and poverty levels, household structures and risks of injury and sexual assault. The ultimate goal of gender-equal transport systems is to equalize access to transport in order to distribute work, economic, social and political opportunities equally among women and men in all aspects of life.
8. Gender Action Plans (GAPs) integrating gender equality and transport development should be formally included in development strategies, plans and budgets for the future planning cycle: Binding terms of reference for gender and transport should also be included in sectoral and sub-sectoral strategies and plans such as the transport development strategy to 2030 and vision to 2040; the master plan for Hanoi's transport development; the strategy and master plan for railway development to 2030 and vision to 2040, the master plan for road transport development to 2030 and vision to 2040; the National Target Programs on New Rural Development and Sustainable Poverty Reduction, the rural transport development strategy for 2020-2030, etc.

9. GAPS in national, provincial and community projects should have budgetary resources to give a formal voice to gender equality and enable the participation of community groups to complement central planning perspectives: Transport planning affects a wide range of communities, each of which should be empowered to participate actively, particularly in relation to women's challenges and needs. Gender planning should be process-oriented and build capacity in all communities to help shape projects as they are carried out.

10. GAPS should formally require ongoing community-level research on gender and transport using consistent GRB criteria to monitor and evaluate the impact over time: Tools and technical packages setting out methodological approaches and indicators are needed to benchmark existing conditions and to track change nationally, locally and over time when gender and transport issues are identified and addressed. The data collected should be compatible with the Viet Nam Household Living Standards and Labour and Employment Surveys and key SDG target indicators, and should include time-use details.



Photo: UN Viet Nam/Aidan Dockery

11. The current Labour Code (approved in 2012) should be amended to require equal hiring, pay and retirement ages for men and women as well as suitable care and protection resources for workers in the transport system. These amendments should recognize and address the following issues: women's training and expertise is heavily discounted in this male-dominated sector; enforceable employment and labour laws are the most reliable source of change; care services and resources provided in the transport sector will equalize women's access to related transport jobs; equalizing retirement ages will ensure that women's expertise is not lost due to forced earlier retirement than men. This will also require the revision of the list of prohibited work for female employees under the Labour Code 2012 currently in force.²³ This list includes a number of transport related occupations such as driving trains, trucks, and cutting trees. It discriminates against female employees, excludes them from opportunities to access and choose their employment and to earn remuneration. Furthermore, it should put protection measures in place with regards to the reproductive risks currently faced by male employees.

12. Resettlement policies should be amended to secure women's economic rights equally with men: Women's property and business equality

rights are vulnerable during development and expansion of transport projects; independent representation should be a right and women's property rights should be carefully protected against exploitation by family or developers.

13. Transport projects must include plans to protect women and other vulnerable groups from physical injuries and sexual violence: Direct safety interventions specific to each type of transport system are essential, particularly in isolated and low-population areas and during off-peak hours and crises.



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