

Gender-responsive budgeting

Gender-responsive budgeting is a holistic approach that looks at all the domestic violence services being provided (by government, civil society, NGOs and INGOs), as well as the budgets for each. At the outset, it is vital to know what you are seeking to cost and where you will obtain the data. A gender-responsive budgeting approach can be undertaken wherever public budget and resources are being dedicated to domestic violence prevention and/or response. It involves “following the money” allocated and then spent (or not). Gender-responsive budgeting should be conducted hand-in-hand with household surveys, with no time gap, by a national institution and international consultant together. This combination will allow building government capacity and institutionalizing the practice, as well as ensuring ownership of the costing study findings.

This approach has been proven effective and has many elements of an in-depth evaluation of existing domestic violence policies and services. Gender-responsive budgeting identifies budgetary efforts (by government and other actors) to implement services to victims and survivors; gaps in resources to properly implement services; weaknesses or absence of referral systems and/or protocols needed for better management of specialized and general public and private services that survivors might access. It also informs future rounds of consultation for national plans and/or strategies (mainly through an approximation of the time used by public employees on domestic violence related cases).

This methodology does not aim to arrive at total monetary costs, but rather offers a clearer picture and analysis of the current budgetary situation with regards to domestic violence services. It provides valuable information to improve effectiveness and efficiency of policy implementation. In sum, it requires knowledge at different levels of intervention, from the legislative and police to budgeting and services.¹ It is useful to delimit the scope of the analysis, as it can only be carried out by examining governmental efforts to prevent and address domestic violence (that means the financial efforts of NGOs must be excluded).²

¹ UN Women, *Manual for Costing a Multidisciplinary Package of Response Services*.

² In most countries NGOs delivering services to victims ranging from legal to medical and psychological support and employment are financed either through private contributions or contributions by national government or foreign governments through their development cooperation efforts.