



BRIEF ON GENDER BUDGETING

Budgetary processes and spend are far from 'neutral' – policies emanating from the Programme for Government and budgetary decisions have gendered consequences, whether they be intended or not. By taking a 'gender neutral' stance, decision-makers are oblivious to the complexities between the experiences of women and men and reinforce systemic disadvantages faced by women and other groups.

What is Gender Responsive Budgeting?

Gender budgeting is the tool that can help recognise systemic disadvantages and lead to budgets and policies that promote greater gender equality. If implemented, policy makers would have to consider the gendered impacts of spending and revenue raising decisions and how to use these mechanisms to bring about gender equality. Women's intersecting identities are also included in this analysis and policy makers are expected to promote these areas of equality as well.

In [Gender budgeting: Working paper 1](#), our partners Prof. Ann Marie Gray, Dr. Joan Ballantine, and Dr. Michelle Rouse highlight that, "*Northern Ireland lags significantly behind other devolved UK administrations and other OECD countries,*" where gender budgeting has "*made a significant contribution to addressing gender inequalities, the elimination of unequal outcomes and to increasing women's participation in civic and political life.*"¹

It is important to note that gender budgeting is not about allocating more funds but about making the available resources have the maximum impact. The [European Women's Lobby](#) breaks down the realities and misconceptions about gender budgeting²:

Gender budgeting is about:

- *Including a gender perspective into budget planning and analysing budgets taking into account their impact on women and men, girls and boys.*
- *Introducing a gender perspective into the entire budget, including seemingly "gender-neutral" budget lines.*
- *Reprioritising and refocusing of spending and restructuring of taxation with a view to promote equality.*

Gender budgeting is not about:

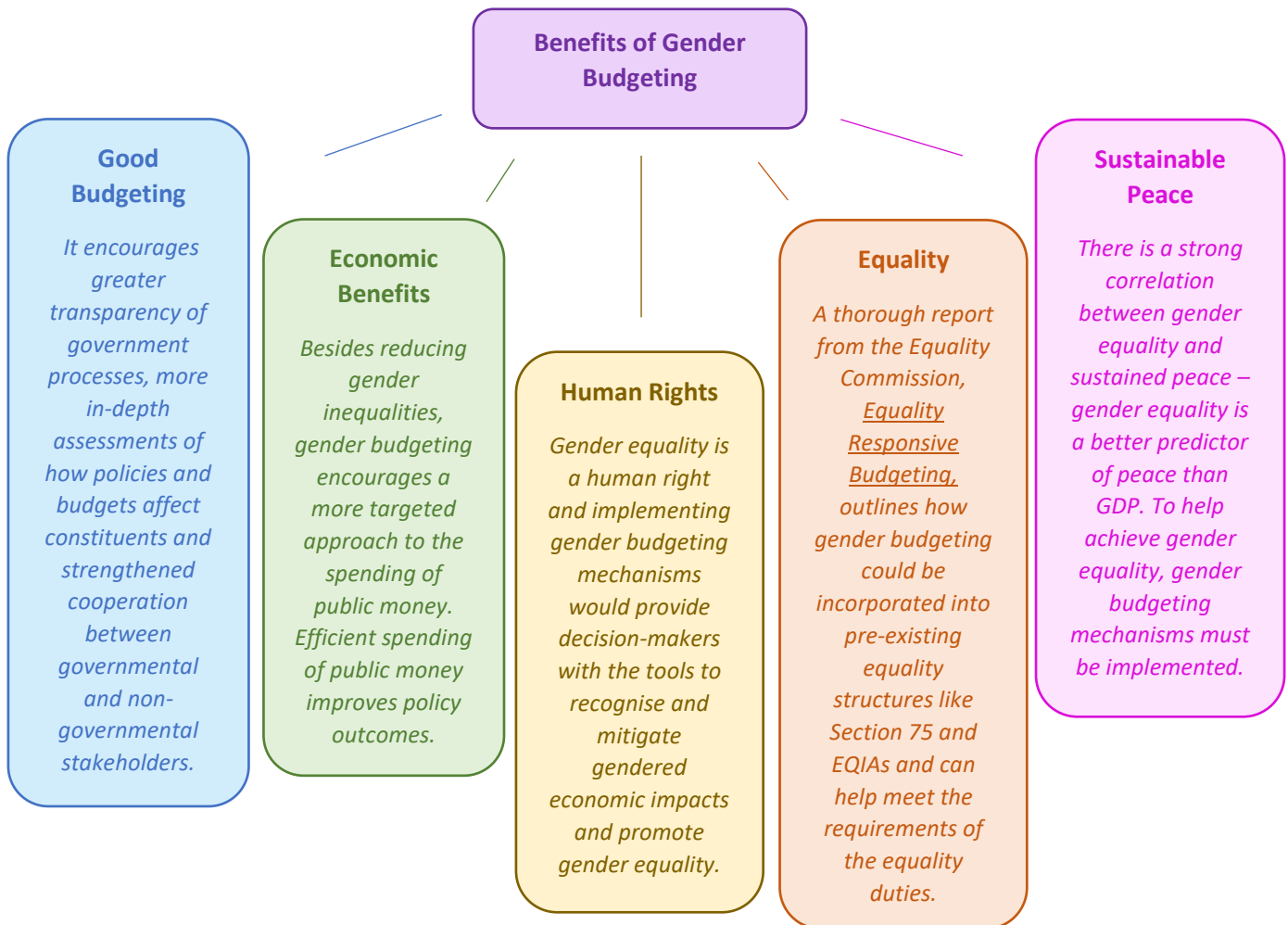
- *Creating separate budgets for women.*
- *Only looking at the parts of the budget which have a social content or that are explicitly gender-related.*
- *Demanding more spending.*

¹ Ballantine, J., Rouse, M. and Gray, A.M. (2021). *Gender Budgeting: Working Paper 1: What does the literature tell us? Lessons for Northern Ireland (NI)*. ([Gender Budgeting-1.pdf](#))

² European Women's Lobby. *What is Gender Budgeting?* ([What Is Gender Budgeting.pdf](#))

Why implement Gender Responsive Budgeting?

Gender budgeting is transformative, assists in transparency and accountability, and is of value in delivering economic benefits³, rights and equality⁴, and securing sustainable peace⁵.



The Northern Ireland Women’s Budget Group (NIWBG) is made up of organisations and individuals from the women’s sector, trade union movement, academia and wider civil society in Northern Ireland, with the aim of implementing a gender equal economy. The NIWBG works with a range of organisations in Northern Ireland on devolved issues and with sister organisations in Wales, Scotland, England and Ireland on East-West and North-South issues.

Please direct any questions to Alexandra Brennan, Coordinator of the NIWBG, at info@niwbg.org.

³ Himmelweit, S. (2002). ‘Making visible the hidden economy: the case for gender-impact analysis of economic policy,’ *Feminist Economics*. 8 (1), 49-70.

⁴ Quinn, S. (2013). *Equality responsive budgeting*. ([Equality Responsive Budgeting \(equalityyni.org\)](http://equalityyni.org))

⁵ Fernanda Espinosa, M. (2020). *Peace Is Synonymous With Women’s Rights*. (<https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/peace-synonymous-women%E2%80%99s-rights>)