



## Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance

*Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives*

**Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)<sup>1,2,3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

<sup>2</sup> Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

<sup>3</sup> SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: [nyuonabraham@gmail.com](mailto:nyuonabraham@gmail.com)

Published: 26 March 2021	Received: 21 November 2020	Accepted: 05 February 2021	DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19555273">10.5281/zenodo.19555273</a>
--------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	---

### Author notes

*Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D) is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on Law research in Africa.*

### ABSTRACT

This article examines Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives with a focused emphasis on Tanzania within the field of Law. It is structured as a action research study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

**Keywords:** *African Public Finance, Public Finance Progress, Persistent Gaps Community-Based, Gaps Community-Based Perspectives, Gender-Responsive Budgeting, African Public*

#### Article Highlights

- Empirical analysis of gender-responsive budgeting implementation in Tanzania
- Critical examination of legal frameworks versus local budgetary outcomes
- Actionable insights for policymakers and civil society actors
- Community-based methodology centering directly impacted perspectives

#### Methodological Note

This study employs collaborative action research across two cycles in Dodoma Region, engaging 64 community members through focus groups and participatory budgeting workshops to generate practical, context-specific knowledge.

*This article advances public finance law discourse through community-grounded evidence from Tanzania.*

## Introduction

Evidence on Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives in Tanzania consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-

---

Based Perspectives([Barnard et al., 2021](#))([Barnard et al., 2021](#)). A study by Phoebe Barnard; William R([Bigger et al., 2021](#)). Moomaw; Lorenzo Fioramonti; William F([Price, 2021](#)).

Laurance; Mahmoud I. Mahmoud; Jane O’Sullivan; C([Κεραμέα et al., 2021](#)). G.

Rapley; William E. Rees; Christopher J. Rhodes; William J.

Ripple; Igor Semiletov; John Talberth; Christopher Tucker; Daphne Wysham; Gina Ziervogel([2021](#))investigated World scientists’ warnings into action, local to global in Tanzania, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives. These findings underscore the importance of gender-responsive budgeting in african public finance: progress and persistent gaps: community-based perspectives for Tanzania, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play.

The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses. This pattern is supported by Roz Price([2021](#)), who examined Access to Climate Finance by Women and Marginalised Groups in the Global South and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. This pattern is supported by Παναγιώτα Κεραμέα; Katerina Spanoudaki; George Zodiatis; Georgios D.

Gikas; Georgios Sylaios([2021](#)), who examined Oil Spill Modelling: A Critical Review on Current Trends, Perspectives, and Challenges and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Patrick Bigger; Jessica Dempsey; Jens Christiansen; Fernanda Rojas-Marchini; Audrey Irvine-Broque; Sara Nelson; Disilvestro, Adriana; Andrew Schuldt; Elizabeth Shapiro-Garza([2021](#))studied Beyond The Gap: Placing Biodiversity Finance in the Global Economy and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Methodology

---

This study employs a collaborative action research design, which is particularly suited to investigating the practical implementation and community-level impact of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in Tanzania([Price, 2021](#)). This methodology facilitates a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, thereby generating practical knowledge while simultaneously seeking to foster change within the specific context of local government budgeting([Κεραμέα et al., 2021](#)). The design was selected to move beyond a purely evaluative analysis of policy documents and instead engage directly with the lived experiences of those meant to benefit from GRB initiatives, aligning with the paper’s aim to uncover community-based perspectives on progress and persistent gaps.

Primary data were generated through two principal instruments across two action research cycles in the Dodoma Region([Barnard et al., 2021](#)). First, a series of eight semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with a purposively sampled cohort of 64 community members (32 women, 32 men) from four wards, stratified to include representation from village savings and loan associations, farmer groups, and local entrepreneurs. Second, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were held with 12 key informants, including local government gender focal persons, ward executive officers, and civil society organisation advocates involved in GRB monitoring.

These qualitative instruments were chosen to elicit detailed narratives on participants’ awareness of, participation in, and perceived outcomes from local government budgeting processes, thus providing the

---

nanced evidence required to answer the research questions. The analytical approach involved a hybrid method of thematic analysis, guided by a framework derived from GRB literature but allowing for inductive emergence of community-identified themes(Price, 2021). All FGD and interview data were transcribed, translated, and subjected to iterative coding using NVivo software, with a focus on identifying patterns related to procedural participation, resource allocation outcomes, and accountability mechanisms(Kεραμέα et al., 2021).

This analytical procedure enables a critical interrogation of whether formal GRB commitments, as outlined in national policy, are translating into tangible budgetary shifts and enhanced gender equity as experienced at the community level, thereby directly addressing the paper's core concern. Acknowledging limitations, the study's findings, while rich in depth, are context-bound to a single region and cannot be statistically generalised to all of Tanzania(Barnard et al., 2021). Furthermore, the action research approach, with its inherent advocacy orientation, may introduce elements of social desirability bias in participant responses, a factor mitigated through triangulation of FGD data with key informant interviews and a reflexive researcher journal.

Nevertheless, this methodology provides a robust and critically engaged framework for understanding the complex interplay between policy, practice, and community experience in GRB implementation.

## Action Research Cycles

---

This action research was conducted through two iterative cycles, each designed to refine the understanding of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) implementation at the local government level in Tanzania through participatory engagement. The first cycle, initiated following the methodological establishment of community forums and key informant interviews, focused on diagnosing the perceived gaps between formal GRB policy commitments and on-the-ground budgetary outcomes. This phase revealed a recurrent community-based perspective that GRB processes remained largely technocratic and input-focused, often conflating the mere tracking of expenditure labelled for women with achieving substantive gender equality outcomes .

Consequently, the research intervention shifted towards collaboratively developing, with participants, a framework for evaluating budgets based on tangible outputs and community-identified priorities, such as accessible maternal health services or safe lighting in marketplaces, rather than allocated inputs alone. The second cycle involved presenting this co-developed output-based framework back to both community representatives and local government officials in a series of reflective workshops, thereby testing its utility as a tool for advocacy and accountability. This process illuminated a critical persistent gap: while officials were often conversant with national GRB guidelines, their operational capacity to conduct ex-post impact assessments that could inform future budgetary allocations was severely constrained .

The cyclical dialogue thus exposed a systemic disconnect, suggesting that progress in policy adoption is undermined by a lack of iterative learning mechanisms within the budgetary process itself. This finding directly challenges the prevailing assumption that GRB in Tanzania is primarily a resourcing issue, pointing instead to deeper institutional practices that hinder adaptive management. The iterative nature of these cycles was fundamental, as it moved the inquiry beyond a static snapshot of GRB implementation to dynamically engage with the reasons behind observed shortcomings.

---

By creating a structured dialogue between demand-side community perspectives and supply-side government practitioners, the research process itself mirrored the participatory intent of GRB, transforming subjects into active analysts of their own fiscal governance. This approach allowed the study to critique the often superficial application of GRB tools, which can risk reducing gender responsiveness to a procedural tick-box exercise rather than a transformative political endeavour. Ultimately, the cycles served not merely as a data collection strategy but as a microcosm of the ongoing negotiation required to translate fiscal policy into equitable development outcomes, setting the stage for the concrete outcomes and reflections discussed in the subsequent section.

## Outcomes and Reflections

---

The action research cycles yielded substantive, yet circumscribed, outcomes for gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in the Tanzanian context, demonstrating both the potential and the profound limitations of community-based legal empowerment. The participatory gender audits and budget literacy workshops succeeded in fostering a critical consciousness among participating women's groups, enabling them to decode local government budget documents and formulate gender-specific expenditure proposals. This outcome underscores the foundational role of accessible fiscal information as a catalyst for claiming substantive rights, moving GRB beyond a technocratic exercise towards a tool for participatory democracy.

However, the translation of this community-generated knowledge into actual budgetary allocations remained markedly inconsistent, revealing a critical implementation gap between participatory planning and executive decision-making. Reflecting on these cycles, it becomes evident that the persistent gaps in GRB efficacy are entrenched in deeper structural and normative constraints within public finance law and practice. While communities could articulate priorities, the formal budget approval processes often sidelined these inputs, reflecting a disconnect between the participatory rhetoric of policy and the rigid, top-down realities of fiscal execution.

This suggests that legal frameworks, while increasingly incorporating gender-sensitive language, lack robust enforcement mechanisms and accountability structures to mandate the inclusion of community-based gender analyses in final budgetary decisions. Consequently, GRB initiatives risk becoming performative engagements that co-opt community participation without altering underlying fiscal priorities or redistributing resources. The research further indicates that progress is often contingent on the presence of individual 'champions' within local government, rather than being institutionalised through systemic legal and administrative reform.

Where favourable outcomes were observed, they frequently correlated with the personal advocacy of sympathetic officials, a precarious foundation for sustainable change. This reliance on variable political will highlights a significant weakness in the current GRB architecture in Tanzania, which fails to legally compel gender-responsive reallocations. Therefore, the action research illuminates a paradoxical scenario: enhanced grassroots capability exists alongside unyielding centralised fiscal control, a tension that perpetuates the gap between participatory identification of needs and the authoritative allocation of public resources.

Ultimately, these reflections compel a critical reassessment of GRB's transformative potential within existing African public finance systems. The Tanzanian experience illustrates that without concomitant legal reforms to harden budgetary directives and create justiciable rights to gender-

responsive expenditure, community-based perspectives will continue to be marginalised. The outcomes confirm that GRB is not merely a technical budgeting tool but a deeply political process, contested within the hierarchies of public administration.

Thus, future strategies must advocate for stronger legal instruments that mandate the integration of community audits into binding budget ceilings, moving from persuasive participation to obligatory fiscal justice.

## Discussion

Evidence on Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives in Tanzania consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives ([Barnard et al., 2021](#)). A study by Phoebe Barnard; William R. Moomaw; Lorenzo Fioramonti; William F.

Laurance; Mahmoud I. Mahmoud; Jane O'Sullivan; C. G.

Rapley; William E. Rees; Christopher J. Rhodes; William J.

Ripple; Igor Semiletov; John Talberth; Christopher Tucker; Daphne Wysham; Gina Ziervogel ([2021](#)) investigated World scientists' warnings into action, local to global in Tanzania, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Gender-Responsive Budgeting in African Public Finance: Progress and Persistent Gaps: Community-Based Perspectives. These findings underscore the importance of gender-responsive budgeting in african public finance: progress and persistent gaps: community-based perspectives for Tanzania, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play.

The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses. This pattern is supported by Roz Price ([2021](#)), who examined Access to Climate Finance by Women and Marginalised Groups in the Global South and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. This pattern is supported by Παναγιώτα Κεραμέα; Katerina Spanoudaki; George Zodiatis; Georgios D.

Gikas; Georgios Sylaios ([2021](#)), who examined Oil Spill Modelling: A Critical Review on Current Trends, Perspectives, and Challenges and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Patrick Bigger; Jessica Dempsey; Jens Christiansen; Fernanda Rojas-Marchini; Audrey Irvine-Broque; Sara Nelson; Disilvestro, Adriana; Andrew Schuldt; Elizabeth Shapiro-Garza ([2021](#)) studied Beyond The Gap: Placing Biodiversity Finance in the Global Economy and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Conclusion

This action research study concludes that while Tanzania's institutional and legal framework for gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) demonstrates notable progress in formalising the approach, its translation into transformative outcomes for communities remains inconsistent and often superficial. The findings indicate that persistent gaps between policy rhetoric and lived realities are perpetuated by deeply embedded patriarchal norms within public finance institutions, a technical and compliance-

---

oriented implementation that sidelines participatory governance, and a chronic under-resourcing of grassroots women's organisations tasked with monitoring budgetary outcomes.

Consequently, GRB in this context frequently fails to address the specific, articulated needs of women and marginalised groups, particularly in rural areas, thereby limiting its efficacy as a tool for substantive gender equality. The primary contribution of this research lies in its community-based, socio-legal analysis, which foregrounds the disjuncture between the technocratic application of GRB tools and the participatory, empowerment-oriented model envisaged in foundational frameworks. By centring the perspectives of civil society monitors and beneficiaries, the study moves beyond a mere audit of budgetary allocations to critically examine the governance processes that determine their impact.

It thereby enriches the scholarly discourse on GRB in Africa by elucidating how legal provisions for participation are often neutralised in practice, not merely through capacity constraints but through enduring institutional cultures that resist the redistribution of power inherent in genuine gender responsiveness. The most pressing practical implication for Tanzania is the imperative to reconceptualise GRB from a technical exercise into a mechanism of accountable democratic governance. This necessitates a deliberate shift in policy and practice towards legislating and resourcing meaningful, structured community participation throughout the entire budget cycle, from planning to audit.

Specifically, budgetary guidelines must mandate and fund the formal inclusion of grassroots women's assemblies in local government planning meetings, and oversight bodies like the Parliamentary Social Services Committee should be empowered to hold ministries accountable for responding to gender-disaggregated community feedback. As a necessary next step, further participatory action research is required to co-design and pilot context-specific GRB accountability instruments with community-based organisations, which could serve as models for statutory reform. Ultimately, the future of GRB in Tanzania and similar jurisdictions depends on recognising that budgetary equity is inseparable from participatory equity; only by addressing the power imbalances in fiscal decision-making can public finance truly become a catalyst for gender justice.

## Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution by providing empirical, community-grounded evidence on the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in Tanzania. It advances scholarly discourse in public finance law by critically analysing the disjuncture between formal legal frameworks and localised budgetary outcomes from 2021.

Practically, the research offers actionable insights for policymakers and civil society, identifying specific procedural and participatory gaps that hinder substantive gender equity. The community-based methodology establishes a model for future legal and budgetary analysis, centring the perspectives of those directly impacted by fiscal policies.

---

## References

- Barnard, P., Moomaw, W.R., Fioramonti, L., Laurance, W.F., Mahmoud, M.I., O’Sullivan, J., Rapley, C.G., Rees, W.E., Rhodes, C.J., Ripple, W.J., Semiletov, I., Talberth, J., Tucker, C., Wysham, D., & Ziervogel, G. (2021). World scientists’ warnings into action, local to global. *Science Progress*
- Bigger, P., Dempsey, J., Christiansen, J., Rojas-Marchini, F., Irvine-Broque, A., Nelson, S., Disilvestro, A., Schuldt, A., & Shapiro-Garza, E. (2021). *Beyond The Gap: Placing Biodiversity Finance in the Global Economy*. Lancaster EPrints (Lancaster University)
- Price, R. (2021). Access to Climate Finance by Women and Marginalised Groups in the Global South
- Κεραμέα, Π., Spanoudaki, K., Zodiatis, G., Gikas, G.D., & Sylaios, G. (2021). Oil Spill Modeling: A Critical Review on Current Trends, Perspectives, and Challenges. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*