



Scottish Government Community Wealth Building Consultation

May 2023

Introduction

The Scottish Women's Budget Group believes an equal and more caring, green economy is possible. The Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG) is an independent analysis and campaign group that aims to promote gender analysis in public policy and public finance decisions through budgetary processes. SWBG brings together a wide range of women from across Scotland who have an interest in women's equality and want to achieve better gender equality in our society and has focused on encouraging active gender analysis in the Scottish Budget process since 2000.

The Community Wealth Building (CWB) consultation paper highlights CWB as central to rewiring the economy and to creating a wellbeing economy. CWB presents opportunities to tackle inequalities and to build thriving local economies. For CWB to meet its ambitions on tackling inequality, it needs to ensure equality analysis is built into its processes and SWBG would highlight the need for gender budget analysis to be undertaken by public bodies involved in CWB processes. In answering questions through this consultation, we will highlight why a gendered understanding of the economy is vital for the community wealth building approach to play its part in tackling structural inequalities.

Unfortunately, the National Strategy for Economic Transformation was a missed opportunity for building a gender equal economy. It failed to recognize the central role of care in the economy and of the different economic realities women and men experience. However, the CWB is an action from this strategy and offers an opportunity to demonstrate how and why gender analysis is critical within economic policy development.

Building gender justice into the goals of local CWB plans has the opportunity to act as a mechanism to demonstrate political leadership on equality and can lead to more specific recommendations within the different pillars of CWB. The Centre for Local Economic Strategies report on Community Wealth Building in Clackmannanshire offers an example of how a Council priority on women's equality can be built into CWB planning.¹

We are proposing a duty to advance Community Wealth Building, which form do you think this duty should take

SWBG does not take a strong position on the manner of a duty for Community Wealth Building, however, a combined option would appear to ensure responsibilities are spread across the levels of delivery. SWBG would recommend that inclusion of gender budget analysis within a duty to ensure equality is built into the heart of the system. In our answers below we further outline the benefits and purpose of building gender budget analysis into the Community Wealth Building responsibilities and alignment this would provide with other reviews currently underway including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

¹ CLES (2020) Community Wealth Building in Clackmannanshire

One way Scottish Government could support the implementation of the proposed Community Wealth Building duty is to provide statutory or non-statutory guidance. Would this be helpful to partners in meeting the proposed duty?

Whether the guidance is statutory or non-statutory it would be helpful for guidance to include advice, information and practical tools to support key organisations (both anchor organisations and other significant community organisations) to undertake equalities analysis alongside their CWB planning. SWBG would recommend guidance that highlights the use of intersectional gender budget analysis throughout this process.

The principle aim of gender budgeting is to integrate intersectional gender analysis into economic policy, through this process raising awareness of different impacts of women and men of publicly funded policies and programmes and challenging the assumption that budgets are 'gender blind'. Gender analysis of the policy and resource allocation process in local budgets/spending plans means examining how budgetary allocations affect the economic and social opportunities of women and men and restructuring revenue and spending decisions to eliminate unequal gendered outcomes.²

Women and men continue to experience inequalities in pay, in employment and promotion opportunities, and in the harassment and abuse they experience, with women being more likely to experience poverty at all points in their life. Women still have more responsibility for unpaid work including childcare, care for older or disabled people, and domestic work. For many women, this means a greater reliance on public services and can limit the time they have for paid work and other activities. Spending commitments on policy and programmes have to include an intersectional analysis based on the different lived experiences that come from the inequalities that women experience. Failure to incorporate a gendered perspective within pandemic recovery budget efforts will deepen existing gender inequalities and worsen outcomes for women.³

Decisions made within the CWB framework need to be cognisant of these gendered dynamics to take full advantage of the opportunity that community wealth building offers to tackle inequalities through local economic development.

Inclusion of an understanding of gender and wider equalities analysis would also be in line with other government processes underway, including the review of recommendations from the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls to put gender budgeting on a statutory footing for all public bodies. This recommendation is being considered as part of the wider Public Sector Equality Duty. It would also be in line with recommendations made by the Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group to improve analysis initially aimed at advice to Scottish Government but which would be transferrable to efforts of public bodies.

Are there other non-legislative measures that you believe are required to accelerate the implementation of the Community Wealth Building approach in Scotland?

In order to build an effective evidence base for CWB strong collation and use of data will be needed to demonstrate impact and how benefits are being spread across communities. Sex-disaggregated, intersectional, data needs to be incorporated into the policy making process and the ongoing review of impacts of decisions made. Working to include good use of data

² O'Hagan, A. (2018) [Gender Budgeting in Scotland – A work in progress](#)

³ Policy Scotland (2021) Consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic: exploring the unequal social and economic burden on women

from the outset will improve the chances of CWB approach building better equality measures from the start.

Are there specific actions required to advance delivery of the items contained within the Shared Policy Programme outlined on page 11?

The Shared Policy Programme highlights the inclusion of improved access to training and labour markets for disadvantaged communities and individuals. Taking a gendered approach in how to deliver this will be crucial for its success. For example, training or employability services need to build in an understanding of care responsibilities, the majority of which are undertaken by women. So, if a training or employability service is aiming to reach women provision for childcare support will need to be made or engagement with those caring for adults to understand how their needs can be met to ensure equal opportunity to access. Research conducted by Dundee University with women in Dundee found that provision of childcare is often an essential component for them to access the service. In some cases lack of childcare prevented women from accessing services entirely.⁴

Should CWB have intersectional gender analysis built into the process these type of programme developments should naturally be developed with equity in mind.

Are there ways in which the law could be changed to advance the spending pillar of Community Wealth Building?

The spending pillar offers a strong opportunity to advance gender equality through the CWB process. Ensuring gender analysis is part of the process of developing new systems or guidance will ensure this opportunity is taken advantage of.

Procurement

Procurement processes have a critical role in helping to reduce inequalities and this should be considered during procurement processes. Consideration should be given to the inequalities that exist, how have they come about, and how the services/products being purchased with public money will be used and directed to alleviate and eliminate those inequalities, and proactively advance equality and the realisation of rights.

When considering the role of procurement making this more accessible to both small and micro businesses. The Cross-party group on Women in Enterprise report highlighted that despite making up 93% of the entire business community, micro businesses only get less than 5% of procurement spend. CWB in Scotland offers an opportunity to change the current dynamics and specifically support smaller enterprises that are more likely to be women run than larger enterprises. Specific guidance to support understanding of gender analysis within procurement

In a paper for the Women's Budget Group Dr Katharina Sarter found that to promote 'gender equality through public procurement there is a need for a continuous integration and acknowledgement of differentiated needs and impacts, from the design of a service and contract to the final evaluation.'⁵

⁴ Dundee University (2019) Gendered Approaches to Service Provision

⁵ <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Public-Procurement-and-Gender-Equality.pdf>

Dr Sarter states that for procurement to be used to address inequalities that it is essential that 'If public procurement professionals do not have the necessary knowledge to take account of existing inequalities and foresee potential and/ or likely impacts on equality, and if they do not have access to support in integrating equality considerations, it is highly likely that public procurement's potential to foster gender equality cannot be fully exploited. Therefore, any approach to promote gender equality aware public procurement needs to focus on education, training and the availability of easily accessible help, support and knowledge for public procurement officials.'

Guidance should be provided to anchor institutions and other public bodies on how public procurement can include obligations, which can promote measures to foster equality *within the workforce executing the contract* and as a lever to promote equality beyond the workforce.

In a report on developing Community Wealth Building in Clackmannanshire the Centre for Local Economic Strategies make a clear recommendation around use of CWB in developing gender justice, in line with the Council's local outcomes improvement plan. The recommendation specifically references how procurement and commissioning can be used to support this goal by measuring gender pay gap, care leave policies and other equality measure policies of companies engaged in procurement processes or commissioning of services. Ensuring that these procurement processes are clear about gender equality aims and wanting to work with businesses that support these aims.

Support to local businesses

As highlighted above the opportunity for CWB to build greater equality requires embedded gender analysis within the processes as well as outcome goals. This is necessary within support to business as evidence shows that women-owned businesses are just 20% of the business base in Scotland.

The good news for CWB processes is that alternative business models, such as social enterprises, that are promoted through CWB are already having more positive outcomes. 71% of social enterprises in Scotland are women-led.⁶ However, strategic roles within the sector may not reflect the same demographic so this does not present job done for gender equality.

Support to business provided through CWB processes needs to understand the differing needs women and men experience when setting up a business and sustaining it. Through recognition of these differing needs processes that work to challenge structural inequalities in business can be built into CWB systems. Greater detail on gender specific business support and what research demonstrate is needed to support women owned enterprises - <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/>

Employment law is reserved to the UK Parliament. Are there other devolved areas where the law could be changed to advance the workforce pillar of Community Wealth Building?

⁶ Social Enterprise Scotland (2021) Social Enterprise Census

As highlighted earlier in the consultation response, equal access to employment is dependent on factors outside workforce legislation. Improving employability support through CWB requires to understand the different needs of women and men, and different groups of women. In particular, understanding the impact of care roles in accessing work. Whether this means ensuring flexible job opportunities to meet different needs or recognising that employment programmes should be designed with childcare support available. This requires funding support to be directed beyond just the employability elements and highlights why gender budget analysis as part of the process can work to build better equality into the process.

Delivering fairwork is an important component to tackling gender inequality as women are more likely to be in low-paid, part-time or precarious employment. Certain female-dominated sectors have been highlighted as poor or not delivering on fairwork – in particular the care sector. The Fairwork convention report highlights several elements related to this failure in the sector. Commissioning of services was highlighted as a key area of concern leading to the failure in delivery of fairwork. Where anchor organisations with responsibility for social care are part of the CWB process the importance of building fairwork into commissioning grows further. The Fairwork Convention have an ongoing working group on adult social care and anchor organisations should seek to implement recommendations from the initial report and ongoing work of the convention to take a significant step in creating better jobs for women locally.

Further promotion of schemes such as the Carer Positive Employer in Scotland award and accreditation to the Real Living Wage are other mechanisms to support improving work practices outside formal legislation.

Are there ways in which the law could be changed to advance the finance pillar of Community Wealth Building?

SWBG recommend the inclusion of mainstreaming an intersectional gender analysis to the finance pillar of the CWB Bill. As highlighted in previous responses this would be in line with work underway by the NACWG and linking to work underway in the updating of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The possible inclusion of gender budgeting as a statutory duty will have implications for anchor institutions within CWB. This offers the opportunity to more deeply embed measures to build equality. Reflecting this within the law on CWB will offer a strong leadership signal on the importance of gender analysis within finance, investment and public spending decisions across CWB.

When considering investment streams some principles to support gender competent investment include:

- Recognising the role of care as a central component to local economies and a key sector for investment;
- Investing in infrastructure should not only mean physical infrastructure such as buildings or roads but also investment in social infrastructure which is crucial to the running of our economy such as childcare and social care support;
- Aiming for gender balance amongst decision-makers on CWB investment in local communities;
- Collection of intersectional sex-disaggregated data on the access and use of community facilities to understand how they work for different groups of women and men;
- Ensuring necessary capacity and leadership support to conduct intersectional gender analysis within the finance and budgeting processes.

