

Localising Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Parliamentary Constituencies:

2021 Case Studies

March 2022



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List of abbreviations

ADUN	Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri (State Assembly Woman / Man)
APPGM-SDG	All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia - Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
B40	Bottom 40% household income range
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DOSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
E-KASIH	National Poverty Data Bank
FCDO	UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLC	Government Linked Companies
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GRPB	Gender Responsive Participatory Budgeting
ICU	Implementation Coordination Unit
JKKK	Jawatan Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (Village Development and Security Committee)
JKM	Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (Welfare Department)
KMKK	Ketua Masyarakat Ketua Kaum (Community and Ethnic Leader)
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
MP	Member of Parliament
MPC	Malaysia Productivity Corporation
MUIP	Majlis Ugama Islam Pahang (Pahang Islamic Council)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEKA	Peduli Kesihatan B40 (B40 Healthcare Benefits)
PEMULIH	National People's Well-Being and Economic Recovery Package
PPR	Program Perumahan Rakyat (Public Housing Programme)
PPRS	Program Perumahan Rakyat DiSewa (Public Housing Programme – Rental)
PRIHATIN	COVID AID Stimulus Package
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RELA	Malaysia Volunteer Corps Department
SADIA	Sarawak Dayak Iban Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TEKUN	Entrepreneur development agency (Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Cooperatives Development)
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAO	Women's Aid Organisation
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
YB	Yang Berhormat (Honorable)

Acknowledgements

This inaugural project on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in parliamentary constituencies has been the dedicated work of a project team led by Usha Devi Sabanayagam, WFD Country Representative, Malaysia in collaboration with Omna Sreeni-Ong, Founder and Principal Consultant, ENGENDER Consultancy who, as local Gender Consultant for this initiative, curated and conducted the programme. She is also the author of this report.

The programme was made possible with the support of the British High Commission in Malaysia, whose funding is managed by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

We recognise the contribution of the Honourable Members of Parliament, Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, Dato' Sri Hajah Rohani Abdul Karim, Fuziah Salleh, Wong Chen and Dr Kelvin Yii for championing GRB and leading parliamentary legislators as the first cohort for this programme. We extend our appreciation to the constituency officers, Awang Safri, Sheila Zaidi, Fakhru Anuar Zuklawi, Ivan Wong and Julian Tan whose commitment and tireless efforts saw the project to fruition.

Janet Veitch who edited the report, and together with Ong Bee Leng provided their expert views on this first group of case studies, deserve special mention; as does the Gender Budget Group of civil society organisations (CSOs) and academics for the smart partnership on the Roundtables, National GRB Survey and policy input.

This collective initiative has brought together key stakeholders who have now put in motion a process to advance and accelerate the advocacy and adoption of gender-responsive budgeting through a whole-of-society bottom-up approach.

About Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) is the UK public body dedicated to strengthening democracy around the world. WFD works with parliaments, political parties, and civil society groups as well as on elections to help make countries' political systems fairer and more inclusive, accountable and transparent. WFD work in the Malaysian Parliament since 2018 has focused on improving the technical capacity of parliament and encourage MPs to engage effectively with the people they represent.

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Background

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 exacerbated and brought to the fore pre-existing inequalities disproportionately affecting women, girls and vulnerable groups in all socio-economic areas, reducing them to greater exclusion and poverty. How governments respond to the economic crisis will have far-reaching consequences for political participation and inclusion in the longer term. Mitigating short-term impacts and addressing long-term structural drivers of inequality requires countries to put in place gender-responsive policies and budgets, without which they risk harming long-term prospects for an inclusive and sustainable recovery. Recognising the important role legislators have in shaping national developmental policies and monitoring accountability, WFD's programming in Malaysia focused on building capacity for gender-responsive budgeting among parliamentarians.

Over the course of 2020-21, WFD supported the COVID-19 response programme in Malaysia, through funding from the British High Commission in Malaysia. This funding is managed by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and implemented by Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). The project aimed to promote more gender-sensitive policies and legislative responses in Malaysia to address the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

With the support of the COVID-19 response funding in 2021, WFD created a *Gender-Responsive Budgeting Toolkit* to help MPs begin to procure comprehensive sex-disaggregated data that could better inform the debate around budget allocations in parliament. However, more work was needed to fully operationalise all aspects of the toolkit. To achieve this purpose, the project sought to strengthen MPs' knowledge and use of the GRB toolkit by providing capacity building to enhance the understanding of GRB and technical support for its practical application. This led to the development of a further programme: *Localising Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Parliamentary Constituencies*, which was jointly curated and conducted with a local consultancy, ENGENDER. The objective of the programme was to allow the MPs to understand the reality of the constituency population through a gender lens and apply gender-responsive approaches in their projects and programmes.

Five members of parliament formed the first cohort of legislators to participate in this inaugural initiative in Malaysia.

The learning from the 2021 initiative will inform the same programme with a second cohort of MPs in 2022. The first group of participating MPs will be engaged to support the subsequent cohort while their application of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting in their constituencies will be monitored and supported further.

Programme overview

This inaugural initiative served to build capacity in legislators to develop a deeper understanding of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) through its application in a bottom-up approach within their constituency projects and programmes.

Participating legislators

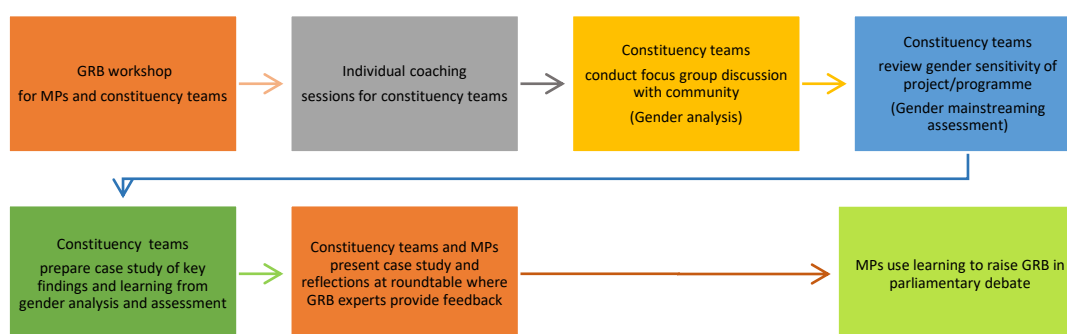
Five members of parliament (MPs) formed the first cohort of legislators to be a part of this programme. Each one of them is an active advocate of gender equality and inclusive development which they promote in their parliamentary roles.

- Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri - P200 Batang Sadong
- Dato' Sri Hajah Rohani Abdul Karim - P201 Batang Lupar
- Fuziah Salleh - P083 Kuantan
- Wong Chen - P104 Subang
- Dr Kelvin Yii - P195 Kuching

Methodology

The programme included workshops and coaching sessions for MPs and their constituency teams on the concept and application of gender-responsive budgeting using a gender analysis questionnaire and a gender mainstreaming checklist. The activities allowed the constituency teams to undertake a rapid gender analysis and gender-responsive review of a selected project or programme.

The findings and learning of these basic activities were developed by the constituency teams into initial case studies. The MPs and their constituency officers presented their case studies at a roundtable where international and local GRB experts provided feedback. It should be noted that this was not meant to be an academic exercise but a first level practical and participatory exercise to allow MPs and constituency teams to use gender analysis and assessment tools to better understand the lived realities of their constituency population, and to consider approaches to mainstream gender into their projects and programmes. The following process diagram charts the various activities the constituency teams undertook in this programme:



Localising GRB in parliamentary constituencies: programme flow

Gender analysis is an important part of constituency work for understanding the realities of the local population. It is premised on the fact that women and men experience life differently. It is a tool through which gender-sensitive questions explore existing gender roles and responsibilities within the community and identify, understand and explain gaps between men and women, and between boys and girls, that exist in households, community and in society. It can help identify gender norms and power relations and how these affect opportunities, participation and productivity.

A basic gender analysis should ideally be done during the project identification phase of a programme, to understand the gender dynamics within a community. The results of the gender analysis can inform the other components of the project cycle so that appropriate measures can be put in place to ensure the programme benefits men and women equally.

This activity was conducted as focus group discussions held separately for women and men in the constituency. The targeted questions in the focus group discussions unpacked gender dimensions of issues that would help to provide constituency teams with evidence on women’s and men’s specific priorities, needs and responsibilities, and would help to reduce the risk of designing a project or programme based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes. The insights can reveal how women and men are affected by a particular problem so that, informed by this knowledge, a gender-responsive intervention in the form of a project or programme can be designed and gender-responsive budgets can be allocated.

Due to the short duration of the project, the exercise was a rapid gender analysis which provided the constituency team with a glimpse into the practical use of a tool that can help them better understand their community through a gender lens. More comprehensive research would be required to provide a more conclusive analysis.

Demographics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe the population in your community? 2. Who is left behind? 3. What are some of the main issues of concern faced by these groups?
Work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of work do the women do (unpaid and paid work, work within the household, work for wages outside the household ie. formal and informal)? 2. How much time do women and men spend on these different tasks? How is it done and when? Why is it done? 3. Is there a community or home childcare centre? 4. What specific challenges do women and families face ?
Leadership and Decision Making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who makes what decisions at home? Why does the person make the decision? What decisions are made by the grandmother/grandfather, mother/father, elder aunty/elder uncle? 2. Do women participate in community level consultations or decision-making processes? If yes, how? If no, why?
Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How safe is your neighbourhood? 2. Have you witnessed or heard of domestic violence or sexual harassment in your neighbourhood? What type of violence have you heard about? 3. Do you know where to get help and what to do if violence or harassment occurs?
Access to Aid & Support Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the community generally know about government aid and services? 2. Have individuals (single mothers, persons with disabilities, elderly) and families been able to access government aid and services? If no, why?
Sexual & Reproductive Health	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the general health of the community? 2. What specific health issues do women and girls have? 3. Do they have access to government clinics?

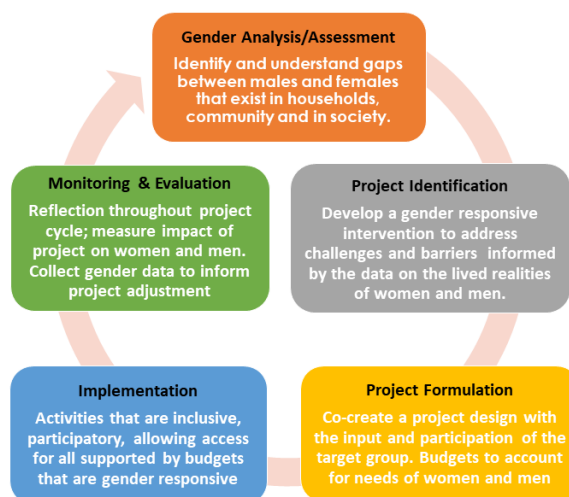
Gender analysis: topical questions

Gender mainstreaming in the project cycle

In this project, a checklist on gender mainstreaming within a project cycle was introduced to foster and monitor the application of a gender-responsive approach in local constituency programmes and projects.

It directly supports WFD's gender-responsive budgeting toolkit which provided further guidance on the steps of GRB.

MPs' officers were required to review a past or current project or programme using the checklist to identify and apply the learning to their current and planned projects which were developed as case studies and presented at a review roundtable on 14 October 2021.



Mainstreaming Gender in a Project Cycle

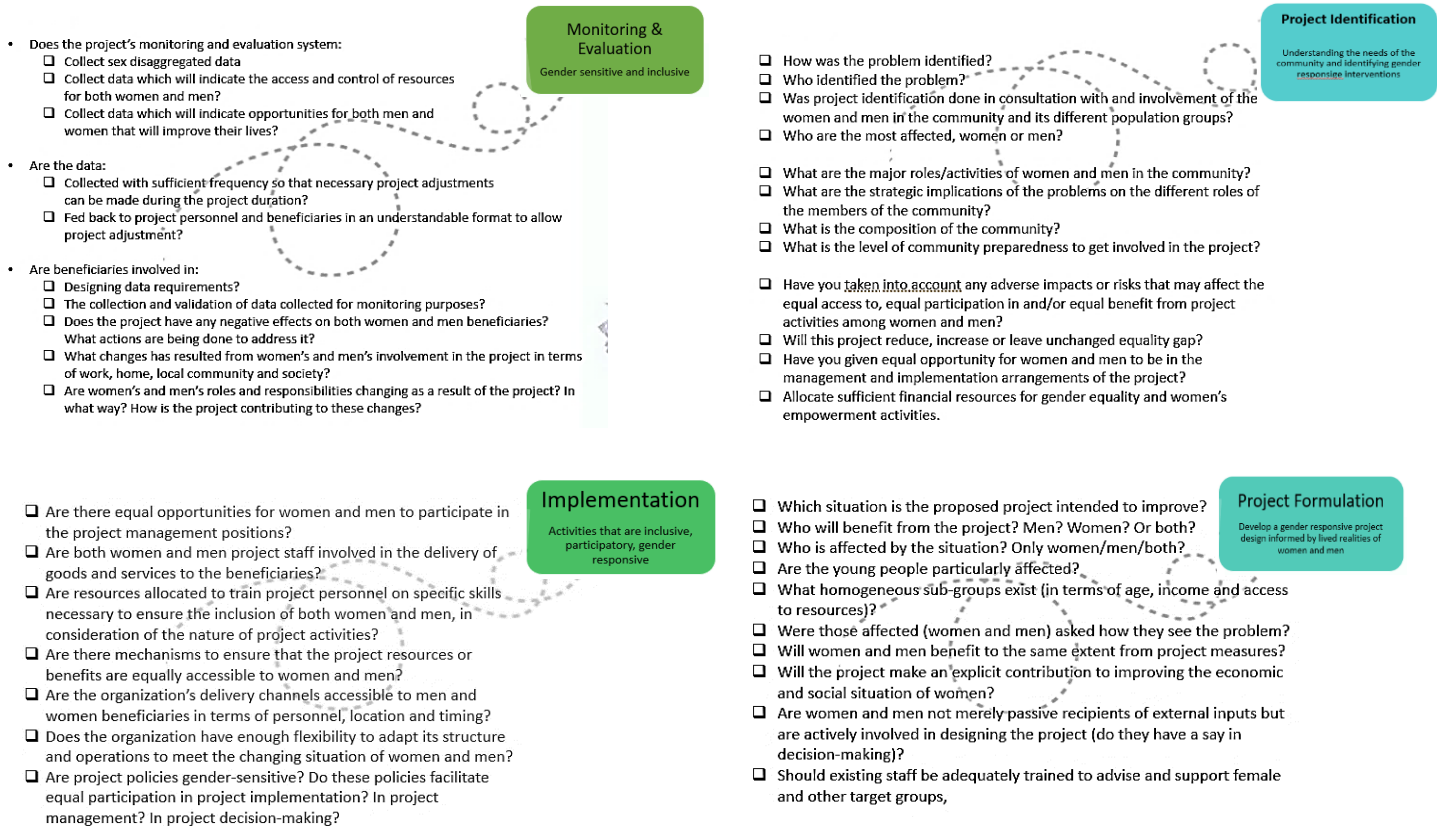
Understanding and applying concepts

The workshop and individual coaching sessions sought to provide a deeper understanding of fundamental gender concepts, which were applied in a practical exercise using the gender mainstreaming checklist (below) as a guide to review the gender responsiveness of the constituency's project work cycle.

- **Gender mainstreaming** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.¹

- **Gender-responsive budgeting** is a tool that supports gender mainstreaming efforts. It seeks to assess the impact of government revenue and expenditure on women and men, girls and boys. It helps to improve economic governance and financial management, for example, relating to whether the government is meeting the needs of different groups of people, by providing information that allows for better decision making on how policies and priorities should be revised – and the accompanying resources needed – to achieve the goal of gender equality. Gender-responsive budget analysis, along with legislation and other practical policy measures, can address gender bias and discrimination. It is a step not only towards accountability to women's rights, but also towards greater public transparency and can shift economic policies leading to gains across societies.²

Gender mainstreaming in a project cycle checklist



Limitations

This programme was designed as a pilot initiative to familiarise MPs and their constituency teams with gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting through a preliminary rapid understanding and review of their constituency and programmes through a gender lens.

There were several limitations which should be noted as these case studies are reviewed.

- The short duration of the programme (27 Aug – 10 October 2021) was intensive, providing the constituency teams with two weeks to attend the workshop and coaching sessions, undertake the focus group discussions (FGD) separately for women and men as well as conduct a gender-sensitive review of a selected project or programme.
- The restrictions of the pandemic, including lockdowns during the period of the programme, posed numerous challenges for the constituency teams in accessing their target groups.
- Not all teams were able to conduct FGDs or have separate discussions with women and men. The ones who could not had key informant interviews with local leaders, while others provided their responses based on their knowledge of the local community.

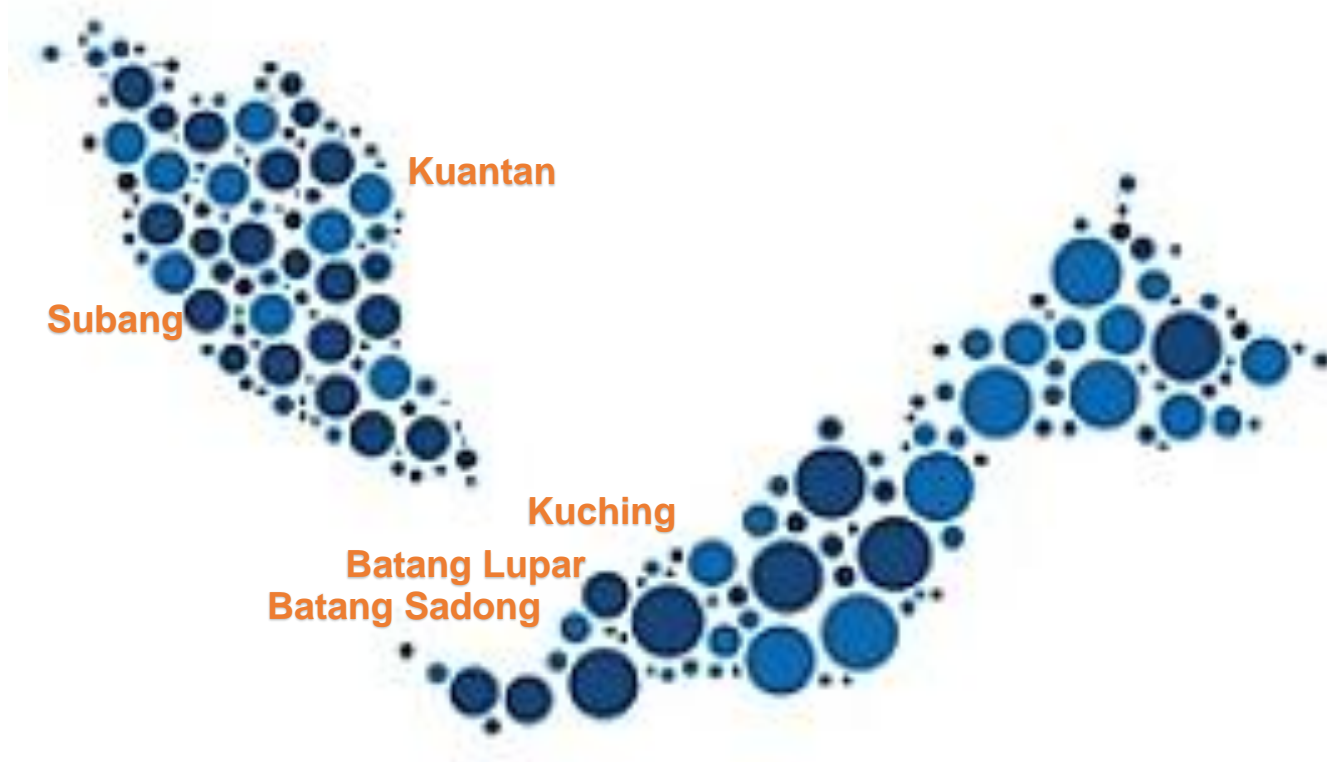
Notwithstanding, the five teams were committed and did their best given the time, resources and capacity, to carry out the activities and prepare their respective reports.

Case studies

This section presents the case studies of the five participating parliamentary constituencies. For the most part, the case studies are reflected as they were presented by the constituency teams, to maintain their context and to serve as a documentation of their learning through gender-responsive projects and programmes in their respective constituencies.

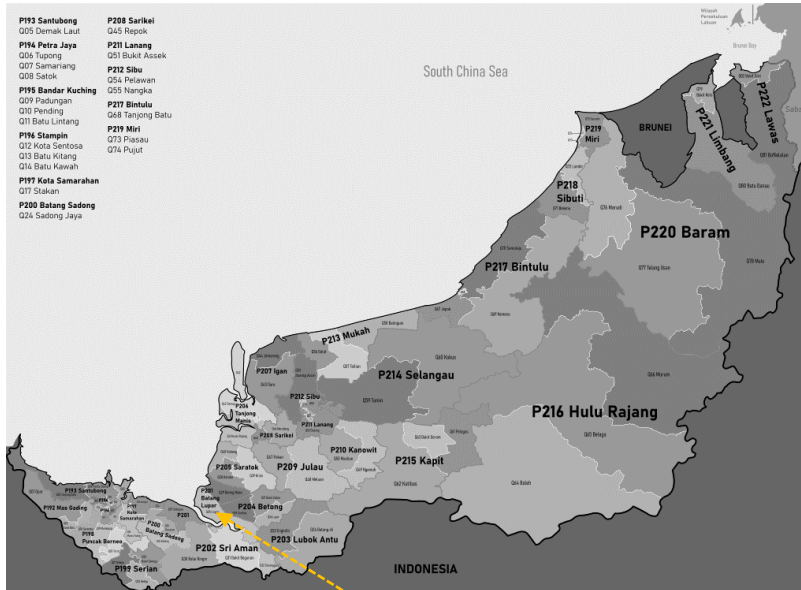
Each case study is organised as follows:

-
- Rapid gender analysis – focus group discussions
 - Key findings and analysis
 - Focus group discussion – constituency team notes
 - Mainstreaming gender in a project cycle
 - Key learning
 - Review notes by constituency team
 - MP reflections
 - Analysis and reflection of the case studies
-



P201 Batang Lupar

Member of Parliament: Dato' Sri Hajah Rohani Abdul Karim



Batang Lupar is a rural area covering 2,024 sq km in Sarawak which comprises fishing villages and long houses located across Sebuyau, Lingga and Beting Maro. It has a population of about 38,000 who are mostly farmers and fishermen.

Batang Lupar

Gender analysis

A rapid gender analysis was conducted through two focus group discussions with a small group of women and men community leaders from the Sebuyau district.



Focus group discussions with women and men community representatives

Key findings

Domestic violence | Substance abuse | Unemployment | Specialist healthcare access

were highlighted by the community leaders as main issues of concern which are interlinked with a propensity to compound and impact the other. In the case of Batang Lupar, the community attributed heightened substance abuse and long periods of unemployment, particularly during the monsoon season, as major factors that contribute to domestic violence among young families. The issues are further compounded when government support structures such as enforcement, rehabilitation and helplines lack effective response.

Substance abuse is a state concern predominantly affecting the younger population.³ Sarawak has seen a 88% spike in domestic violence⁴ where substance abuse has been attributed as one of the major factors.

Unemployment in the state is high at 12.3 per cent⁵ with youth being most affected. The status of households can be vulnerable where there is a high dependence on a single breadwinner with unstable work, where the burden of household tasks and care fall on women, combined with a lack of social support services particularly childcare. This interlinked situation is rooted both in cultural social norms relating to gender roles and responsibilities and systemic structural barriers. It is hoped that the state's 2022 budget will address some of these areas including childcare.⁶

Specialist healthcare access is another persistent issue that was raised, given the nearest specialist clinic is three hours away. This prevents many requisite medical tests and treatments for life-threatening illnesses to be neglected for those who don't have mobility, for example some persons with disabilities (PwD) or some elderly people. This also affects those without access to transportation, childcare or money for transport or to stay over; or to even take time off from work to make the six-hour journey in addition to the hospital treatment time.⁷ There is a need for federal and state level gender-responsive interventions to close this "healthcare gap".

Focus group discussion - constituency team notes

by Sheila Zaidi, Private Secretary to MP Batang Lupar

DOMAIN	FGD findings
Work	Most of the women are homemakers and primary caregivers for their children. Among them, some are involved in various economic activities such as farming or online business. Younger women are seen to work in private and public sectors.
Leadership and decision making	<p>Cultural and traditional norms dictate the role of men as head of household. According to the women, men (husbands) make the decisions at home. While the women say they receive equal treatment at home and in the community, they believe that allowing men to lead the household is a form of respect. The men reaffirm their role as head and decision maker of the family; but also acknowledge that women's views are important and should be considered at both the family and community levels, as they are more comprehensive in their consideration of issues.</p> <p>It was found that women's involvement is much needed in community activities as they have the skillsets and efficiency in getting the job done, which was reflected in their packing of the food baskets in the PEMULIH programme. Women are also active in community consultations and activities such as PTA meetings where they are said to represent their husbands who are busy with their work.</p>
Safety	<p>Both women and men expressed that Sebuyau is generally a safe area with a low crime rate. Women however expressed that there are cases of domestic violence, while the men raised substance abuse activities among young men. According to the women, domestic violence occurs in young families where couples get married at an early age. Arguments arise when jobless husbands refuse to work. Both men and women claim that the arguments involve physical contact but are not severe.</p> <p>While both women and men are aware of government helplines, they prefer to reach out to people they know. As such, the women usually seek help from family members and community leaders. One woman said that the victims should not be silent and should speak up to report and get assistance. According to the men, community leaders received such complaints and have advised these couples. While a few filed for divorce, most women stay in the marriage for the sake of the children.</p>
Access to aid and support	The people (both men and women) in the constituency are well aware of government aid and services which is promptly disseminated on social media and community networks. Vulnerable groups receive information about aid and services from community leaders including the MP and State Assembly legislators who also provide support in applying for the aid and services.
Health	Overall, the general health of the community in Sebuyau is good. The illnesses found in this constituency are mainly high blood pressure and diabetes, which affect both men and women. Other illnesses such as cancer

DOMAIN	FGD findings
	<p>also exist but in very low numbers. Those with illnesses seek treatment from government clinics located here in Sebuyau. The clinics provide them with treatment and medication. The clinics are easily accessible, and most of the community go to these clinics using motorcycles. The community are well aware of their illnesses.</p> <p>What is needed is specialist care at the clinics so that those who need special treatments do not need to travel to Kuching, which is three hours away by car. Apart from specialists, therapists are also needed for PwD.</p>

Mainstreaming gender in the project cycle

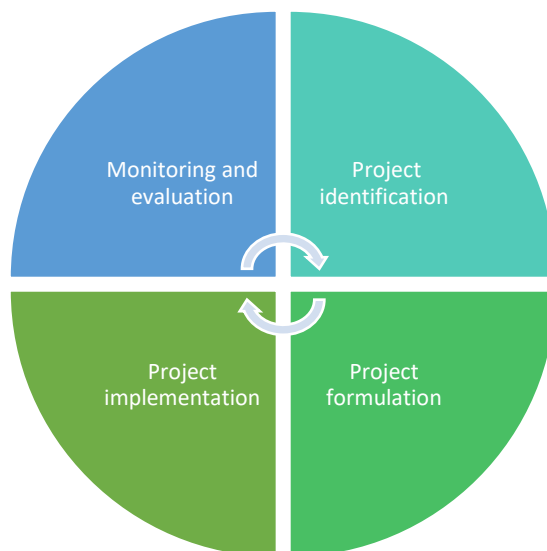
In describing the application of a gender-responsive approach in the project cycle of their programmes and activities, Batang Lupar’s case study focused on the Subayau Development Hall, a recent project, which was originally an open plan hall whose design evolved when informed by the community’s needs and recommendations.

Key learning

Data is collected on the various groups including the elderly, PwD and so on. This data should be gender-disaggregated and include further information about gender-specific realities such as access, decision making, resources and so on.

Further feedback has informed plans to build toilets for PwD as well as ramps for wheelchairs to enable access.

Male and female officers overseeing the project will benefit from a training on mainstreaming gender in the project cycle, just as much as the constituency project team. A budget could be allocated for such a training.



Post-construction, the views of the community women, men and elderly for infrastructural changes to the building to suit their varied needs were further considered.

The community leaders agree that community needs have to be fulfilled for both men and women in the community to benefit equally from the use of the hall.

Women and men participated in discussions on the desired changes; for example, men asked for a sports set up with more lighting in the hall while women wanted a room for their activities.

Separate male and female toilets were also requested. Male and female officers from the district office were identified to oversee the project.

Budget allocations were made for the extension for women’s activities and a smaller room to accommodate childcare and other activities, as well as a toilet for women.

⇒ Project identification

“Community needs have to be fulfilled and at the same time enable both men and women in the community to benefit from the utilisation of the community hall.”

- The open-air concept hall was built at the centre of Sebuyau District for the community gatherings.
- The community requested a closed building and added facilities. These suggestions were raised by both men and women of all ages in the community to the people's representatives (State Legislative Assembly Member and Member of Parliament) and supported by the head of the community.
- These suggestions and requests were then taken into consideration by the people's representative. It was agreed that fulfilling this community's needs would enable both men and women in the community to benefit from the renovation of the hall.

⇒ Project formulation

“With the participation of both men and women in this project, the needs of both genders may be fulfilled.”

- In conceptualising the design, views from both men and women were taken into account. The men requested that the main hall be adapted to include a sports facility with proper lighting to allow recreational activities at night. The women requested private spaces which will allow them to conduct their activities and discussions. The other inclusions in the design were separate male and female toilets. These are among the basic amenities that need to be provided to accommodate the needs and provide a conducive facility for both women and men in the Sebuyau constituency.
- This project management was under the supervision of the Sarawak Labour Department who assigned male and female officers to coordinate the design of the new hall. With the participation of both men and women in this project, the needs of both genders may be fulfilled.

⇒ Project implementation

“The adaptation of the building to include a woman and child-friendly space required a special budgetary allocation to build an extension to the main building.”

- The project implementation process involved both male and female staff of the department. They provided further recommendations for the renovation. It is the

practice of the department that staff are trained before they are allowed to begin their work.

- The adaptation of the building to include a women- and child-friendly space required a special budgetary allocation to build an extended area at the back of the main hall. This area consists of a main room and a small room that is equipped with a toilet. The area is a female-friendly zone for conducting programmes for women. While they have meetings or activities in the main room, their children will have a play area in the small room which will also serve as breastfeeding room.
- Following the renovation, the management of the hall was taken over by the Sebuyau District Office. Both male and female staff of the office were given respective tasks in managing the hall, monitoring the activities at the hall and reporting any damages or problems that occur.



⇒ **Monitoring and evaluation**

“With a better understanding of gender-responsive budgeting, we are now aware that there is also a need to consider every aspect of men, women, the elderly, and PwDs when developing a project.”

- The constituency team collects data on the older person , PwDs, single mothers, and incapacitated patients in all constituencies in Batang Lupar parliamentary area. This data is necessary to deliver aid to these disadvantaged groups. With a better understanding of gender-responsive budgeting, we are now aware that there is also a need to consider the interests of men, women, the elderly, and PwDs when developing a project.
- With the presence of this new extension, women in the constituency would now be able to attend any programme with their children.
- Currently there is no specific mechanism in place to ensure that this project will be equally beneficial to men and women but the new facilities provided in the hall may enable both men and women in the constituency to have equal rights to use the hall and hold their activities smoothly.
- However, some improvements still need to be made for the project – for example, building ramps and stairs with railings to enable PwDs to be on the stage during an event. Toilets adapted for PwDs also need to be considered. A suggestion has also been made to provide wheelchairs at the hall to accommodate PwDs and the elderly.

MP Reflections : YB Dato'Sri Hajah Rohani Abdul Karim



"Every Member of Parliament must apply and integrate gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting to all constituency projects. This is to make sure that every woman, man, boy, girl, the elderly and people with disabilities' needs are met in accordance with the principle of 'leave no one behind'."

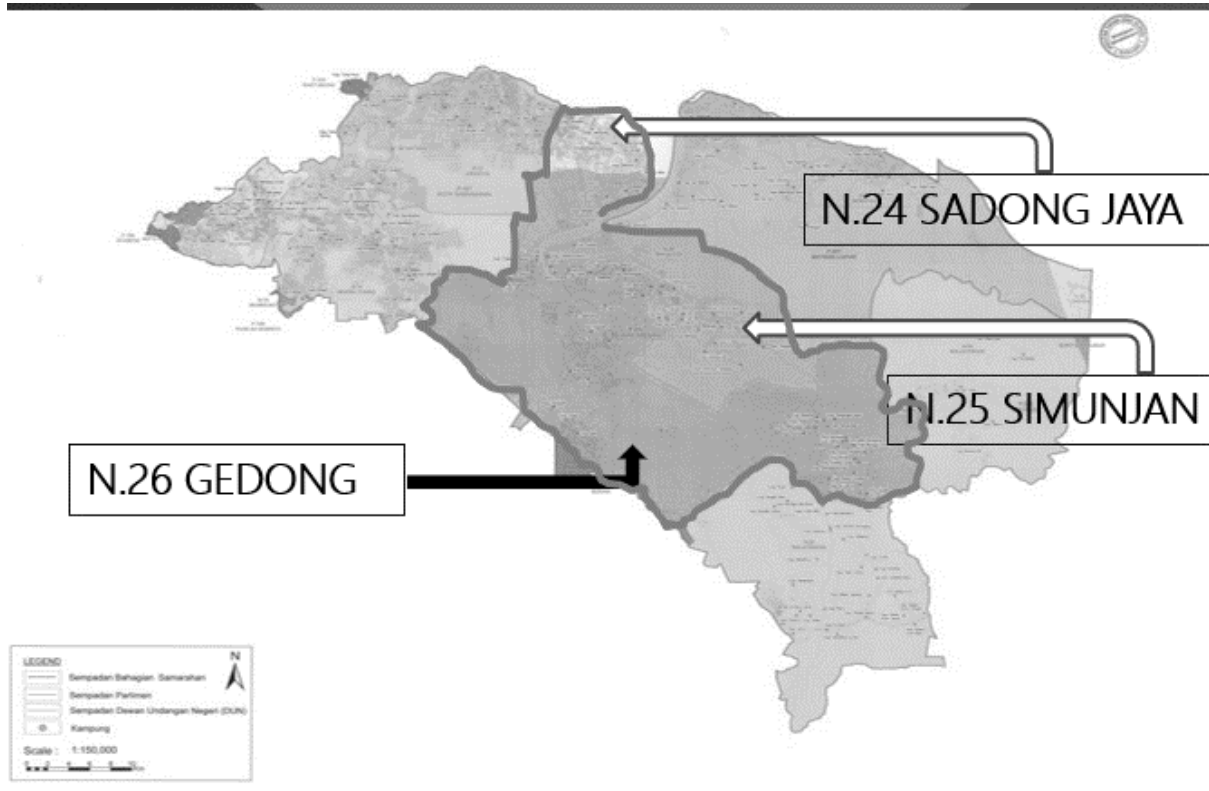
The constituency project of building a community hall for the people of Sebuyau might appear simple and basic; but it was a participatory project that was people centred. During the process of its development, the constituency team realised that many important aspects needed attention, particularly the ones that involved persons with disabilities (PwDs), the elderly and women. For example, the team observed that persons with disabilities and the elderly would not be able to access the stage area in the hall because there were no proper facilities like ramps and stairs with railings.

After using the GRB Toolkit and Checklist, the constituency team found many possibilities and suggestions for improving the hall's condition so it can cater to the needs of every individual in the community. Some of the suggestions included installing ramps and stairs with railings for the elderly and persons with disabilities. A budget was also allocated for building an extension room or space for women and children's related activities. The team also realised the need to improve the toilet facilities to be more accessibly for the elderly.

It is critical that every member of parliament has an in-depth understanding of the fundamental values of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) before reaching out to the grassroots.

P200 Batang Sadong

Member of Parliament: Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri



Batang Sadong is located within the Samarahan division and is viewed as the jewel of Samarahan with an area of 103004 HA. It has a total population of 32,709 (male: 15,334; female: 14,995) and constitutes three state legislative assemblies: Sadong Jaya, Simunjan and Gedong.

Batang Sadong

Gender analysis

The constituency team conducted brief interviews with three members of the community, including male and female village chiefs, who explored the gender analysis questions. Further insights were provided by the constituency team's observations and learning from their work in the community.



*Ahmad Najib bin Arbi
Village Chief (Ketua Kampung)
Kampung Samalatong), Gedung*



*Jeslina Tan
Chinese Village Chief (Ketua Kpg
Terasi Cina), Sadong Jaya*



*Irene
Trader, Farmers' Market,
(Pengusaha Pasar Tani), Simunjan*

Key findings

Voice and agency | Livelihood | Support services | Specialist care access

Culturally, men assume the decision-making role in the family and community. The women are active in community-level consultations but are rarely seen in leadership roles. State level data reflect the same, with 16 persons or 3% of women appointed as community leaders, and only 513 or 9% of women appointed as community ethnic leaders as of March 2021.⁸ The statistics for women in state level civil service leadership are dismal with only 12 persons or 15% of women in top management level roles, with 47.19% or a total of 1,840 women in management and professional groups; and only one woman has been appointed to lead government linked companies (GLCs).

Financial instability plagues the low-income groups where their socio-economic situation requires dual incomes to sustain the household. However, structural barriers persist particularly for women, as raised by a local civil society organisation (CSO), who reported that poverty was more common among women due to challenges they face in entering the workforce, such as juggling care and household responsibilities.⁹ The community also noted the lack of affordable and accessible essential support services such as elder care and childcare, this lack being one of the main impediments to the economic participation of women. They disproportionately bear the double burden of childcare and work, limiting their work opportunities, forcing them into informal precarious employment, lowering productivity and often resulting in poor health outcomes for the whole family.

Focus group discussion: constituency team notes

by Awang Safri, Special Officer to Minister MOTAC and Officer of Parliamentary Constituency

DOMAIN	FGD FINDINGS
Work	<p>Women's income-generating activities constitute small retail businesses (handicraft, tailoring, traditional food), and crop farming including traditional, fertigation and hydroponics. Financial issues plague low-income groups, necessitating dual income households.</p> <p>Work-related challenges faced by men, women and families are mainly balancing work life balance, access to transport, network accessibility, work-home travel and the lack of childcare facilities. There are kindergarten and childcare centres, but most parents cannot afford to send their children to the available centres.</p>
Leadership and decision making	<p>Culturally, men are the primary decision makers; while other family members may participate in family discussions and voice their opinions. While women and men participate in community-level consultations and decision-making processes, it is also observed that generally women are reluctant to voice their views and opinions.</p>
Safety	<p>There is a general sense of safety, and it may be due to proximity of homes and the public services provided within the area, especially police and head of community as well as agencies like RELA (Malaysia Volunteer Corps Department), JKKK (Jawatan Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (Village Development and Security Committee)) and KMKK (Ketua Masyarakat Ketua Kaum (Community and Ethnic Leader)). However, they also pointed out that some of these agencies lack human resources.</p> <p>Domestic violence occurs in the community but in most cases, they are unreported or undisclosed. Victims do not seek help due to fear or shame, pressure, intimidation, or public criticism. It is not known if the community is aware of the state and national helplines or even NGO helplines.</p>
Access to Aid and Support	<p>The community receives information from the district offices and agencies. Most know about the E-Kasih, PEKA (Peduli Kesihatan B40 (B40 Healthcare Benefits)), Women's institutes Sarawak, Kenyalang Gold Card. However, most of the community are not aware of services provided by other agencies such as MARA (Majlis Amanah Rakyat), TEKUN (Entrepreneur development agency (Ministry of Entrepreneurial and Cooperatives Development)), Digital Academy and MPC (Malaysia Productivity Corporation).</p>
Health	<p>Diseases such as dengue, tuberculosis, rabies and oral health-related conditions are prevalent and attributed to unhygienic conditions within the community. Basic government medical facilities, such as health clinics, are available in the area. Patients have to travel a long distance to access specialist care.</p>

Mainstreaming gender in the project cycle



The constituency programmes been focused on women’s socio-economic empowerment for some time now. The MP’s office reviewed their past and existing entrepreneur programmes using the gender mainstreaming checklist.

Key learning

Collection of data involved the participation and validation of beneficiaries.

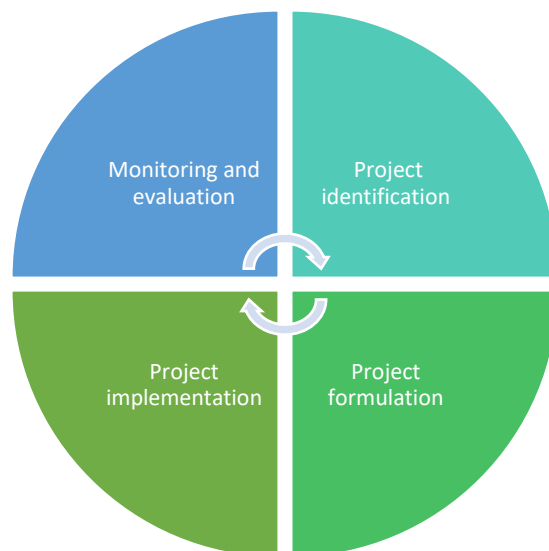
Regular team meetings were held to monitor the project. The data kept the project in focus and informed adjustments and improvements.

Involving beneficiaries as active protagonists in the monitoring and evaluation process will be key to ownership and sustainability.

Project team comprised male and female project members.

There was a realisation that a gender-responsive approach requires new management approaches.

All project team and delivery partners will benefit from a training on gender mainstreaming in the project cycle to best deliver on gender-responsive approaches.



Issues of concern raised by both women and men were heard and attended to by the team.

The receptivity to the project is an excellent entry point to engaging the community and participants to take an active role in the project. The project team was mindful of taking a gender-responsive approach. The steps and process would be useful to document for learning.

The entrepreneurial skills training programme was designed for both women and men.

Gender training of personnel was recognised as a need.

Budgetary allocations have been made based on project and target group. Gender-responsive budgetary considerations will factor in what needs to be in place to allow full participation; for example, childcare, transport, daily allowance payments (for loss of work/earnings during programme), team gender training and so on.

⇒ Project identification

“Efforts were made to not only reduce but understand the equality gap between men and women in the community.”

- Engagement with both women and men in the community identified the problems of low income or joblessness and the lack of skills. Their issues of concern helped develop the programme to suit their needs.
- The community's level of acceptance or preparedness for programmes was generally high, and they were willing to cooperate with the constituency team.
- Efforts were made to understand the equality gap between the women and men in the community.

⇒ Project formulation

“The budget allocation needs to align to project priorities and those of the target group.”

- The focus of the programme was to upgrade skills and build knowledge of entrepreneurship.
- Target groups for the programme were both women and men.
- Both women and men will benefit from the training in terms of improved social and economic wellbeing.
- It is important to ensure comprehensive (gender-sensitive) training for personnel.
- Each proposed budget allocation needs to align to project priorities and those of the target group.

⇒ Project implementation

“New management approaches may be required to strengthen gender-responsive approaches.”

- Key male and female personnel were identified based on their respective assignments.
- Basic resources are seldom sufficient due to lack of monetary support and a lack of relevant tools and equipment.
- The active interest and engagement of both women and men is required for successful implementation of the project.
- Implementing organisations (NGOs) may have challenges in delivery such as lack of budget allocation or insufficient human resources.
- New management approaches may be required and will require restructuring to strengthen gender-responsive approaches.

⇒ **Monitoring and evaluation**

“Allocations are based on tasks and functions in order to accommodate differential needs.”

- Data collected from respondents enabled better focus on activities and priorities.
- Project beneficiaries participated in the collection and validation of data.
- Allocations are based on tasks and functions to accommodate the differential needs of women and men.
- Dedicated attention is required to ensure the project's impact.
- Team discussions and consultations were held regularly to monitor the project and address issues which called for immediate attention.
- The outcome of the project reflected improved livelihoods and wellbeing for both women and men participants.

MP reflections: YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri



Policymakers must ensure that issues which are gender-sensitive are being addressed accordingly. Having that in mind, MPs should ensure government allocates resources in an equitable manner so that the most pressing needs of individuals in society are provided for. As Member of Parliament of P200 Batang Sadong in Sarawak since 2008, gender mainstreaming and GRB have always been a main priority to better people's lives, whether it relates to socio-economic concerns, education, health or infrastructure.

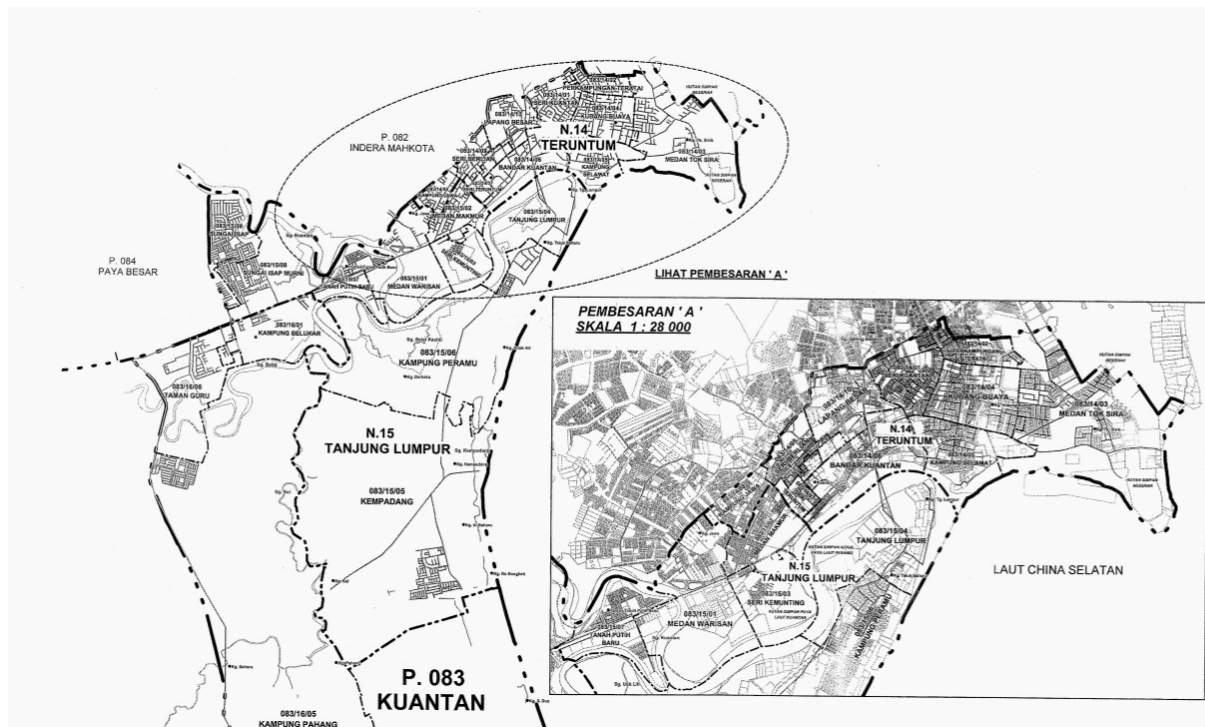
Batang Sadong is a large area with a population spread across many small villages. During my first term, I saw an urgent need to develop Batang Sadong, as there was much to improve. Infrastructure was lacking, and most of the residents were from the lower-income group. Together with my team, we immediately started drafting plans to improve the people's standard of living. One of the biggest outcomes was the Batang Sadong bridge. It is currently the longest river-crossing bridge in Malaysia. With greater access, the bridge has spurred economic growth benefiting more than 70,000 people across both sides of the river. Travel time from Kuching to Simunjan is now three hours compared with five hours before the bridge was built.

With this new accessibility, infrastructure and facilities began to develop profusely, including the new coastal highway. All this physical development has become a catalyst for socio-economic activities, especially in agriculture and tourism. This has motivated the locals, particularly the women to become more entrepreneurial.

The constituency allocated a budget to improve women's skills through training. This also saw the setting up of a women's entrepreneurial centre in Sadong Jaya in June 2018. Over the years, almost RM200,000 has been provided to upgrade and improve the building. Another RM200,000, through a rural and transformation project from the Sarawak State Government, was allocated for Simunjan to build a similar infrastructure. Soon, Gedong will have its own centre for women entrepreneurs which will cost RM500,000. Through the training provided at these entrepreneurial centres, the women in the community will be more empowered, have jobs to support their families and increase their household income.

P083 Kuantan

Member of Parliament : Fuziah Salleh



The Kuantan parliamentary constituency is the state capital of Pahang, Malaysia. It is located near the mouth of the Kuantan River and is the largest city in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia with a population of 529,300. Fisheries, tourism, trade and commerce are its main economic activities.

Kuantan

Gender analysis

The rapid gender analysis findings below are based on focus group discussions conducted with both women and men members of the PPR Pak Mahat (Program Perumahan Rakyat (Public Housing Programme)), a government low-cost housing area which is the focus community selected for this case study. They include 700 families living in two apartment blocks. 60% of these families are female-headed households with an average of five members per household.



Focus group discussions with women and men in the community

Key findings

Decent livelihood | Housing hygiene | Government-community engagement | Safety are some issues of concern raised at the community focus groups. Both women and men are engaged in low-skilled jobs in the informal sector. The pandemic has hit this sector, where 70% are self-employed, especially hard. According to Department of Statistics Malaysia's (DOSM's) 2020 COVID survey, 50% of the self-employed lost their businesses due to the pandemic.¹⁰ The findings of the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) reflect that the Budget's COVID AID Stimulus Package (PRIHATIN) wage subsidy policy narrowly targets workers in formal employment, ignoring a substantial segment of individuals in vulnerable employment, including the self-employed, informal workers and unpaid family workers who are disproportionately women.¹¹

Public housing hygiene and sanitation are nagging issues in low-cost housing developments, and this also reflects poor government-community engagement and consultation. The Gender Responsive Participatory Project (GRPB) in Penang has addressed this issue through a process of community engagement and multi-stakeholder consultation which informs government budget allocation for the specific community along with community monitoring to manage public facilities in low-cost housing areas.¹²

Domestic violence and sexual harassment were issues raised by the women, but they believe that the victims choose not to report it even though they are aware of support helplines. A lack of women's voice and agency coupled with a culture of victim-blaming and a lack of trusted community and government support systems are some reasons why many such cases go unreported. The men on the other hand claimed that they were not aware of any form of gender-based violence or national helplines.

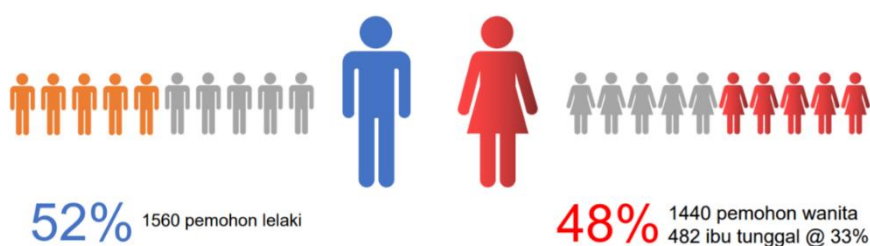
Focus group discussion: constituency team notes

by Fakhru Anuar Zuklawi, Special officer to MP Kuantan

DOMAIN	FGD FINDINGS
Work	Women work as cleaners, babysitters, small business entrepreneurs and homemakers. It is not uncommon to see women working for up to 14 hours a day. Men are mainly engaged in low-skilled jobs, for example as fishermen and in self-employed jobs, for instance in construction.
Decision making	As social norms would dictate, men assume the role of primary decision makers in the home, with women focusing on household care responsibilities. Men are perceived as income providers and are more active in religious activities while women are more involved in community-related work.
Safety	Both men and women expressed concern about drug-related crimes. The women reported that there were also cases of domestic violence and sexual harassment while the men claimed they weren't aware of such occurrences. The women felt that victims know where to get help, but normally domestic violence problems remain within the family. They added that women are generally aware of helplines but do not trust that they may receive the needed help. The men on the other hand claimed that they are not aware of helplines, such as Talian Kasih.
Access to aid and support	While women say they generally know about government aid and support, the men reported that the information is not well broadcast; although the Majlis Ugama Islam Pahang (MUIP) do visit the community and help the needy.
Health	Both women and men mentioned dengue is a major health concern and that it is directly related to the cleanliness of the housing area. Diabetes and hypertension are other common ailments there but due to unaffordable medical services and low health awareness, many end up going for treatment at a late stage of the disease. The nearest hospital is located with 5km of the neighbourhood. The women were also concerned about poor nutrition.

Mainstreaming gender in the project cycle

The constituency team selected an ongoing Food Basket Programme (PEMULIH) as the case study. It was conducted at the PPRS Housing Project (Projek Perumahan Rakyat DiSewa (PPRS) Pinggiran Putra). This was a federal government-funded programme to provide food baskets to 3000 B40 families affected by the pandemic. The duration of the project was from July 2021 to September 2021.



Food basket programme applicants

Key learning

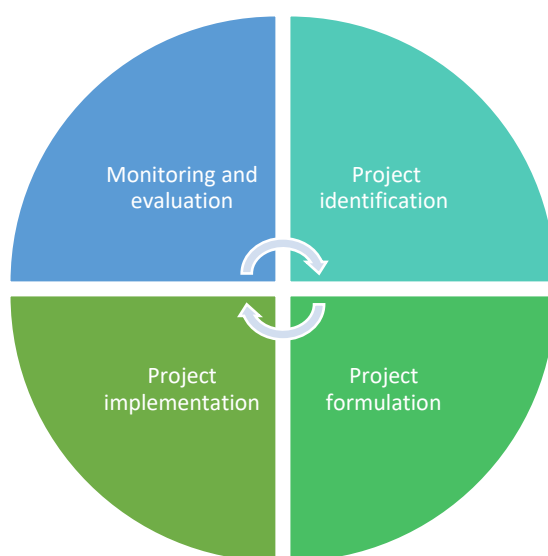
Project data collected was gender-disaggregated data.

Conversations with beneficiaries during the project were useful to measure impact. This also revealed cash vouchers would have addressed the priority needs of families.

Findings and data from the gender analysis FGD provided feedback on the project and gender insights that can inform further projects.

While both women and men were given equal opportunity to be in the management and project teams, it is important to be mindful and address structural barriers (cultural barriers, access, stereotyping, unconscious bias etc) which might restrict women, and team members' equal or full access and participation. Budgets will need to factor in these considerations.

The project team would benefit from further gender sensitive training to address the nuanced gender considerations.



A gender analysis at this stage of the project can clarify the problem; identify needs of the sub-groups of women, men, boys and girls; and enable targeted interventions to be designed.

Flexibility to adapt to local realities should be in place.

This is a consideration for the federal or state agencies who formulate the projects.

The project team deliberated on the modality based on prior knowledge and experience working with the community.

Future aid measures will need to be gender-responsive to consider the actual needs of the community during a crisis situation.

Constituency team review notes by by Fakhru Anuar Zuklawi,

⇒ Project identification

“Single mothers were found to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic.”

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused the loss of livelihoods, particularly affecting whole B40 families. The food aid programme was a national initiative carried out at parliamentary constituencies to provide temporary relief to these families.
- Single mothers (female-headed households) were disproportionately affected by the pandemic.
- Families applied for the food baskets through an online application form developed by the constituency team. Local community leaders were also engaged to identify families who may have been left out.
- The needs of the community were based on the online application and through information provided by the community leaders.
- From the information gathered, the priority of food aid would be distributed to the most affected families.

⇒ Project formulation

“The budget allocation provided by the Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) was restricted to food and not flexible enough to allow the inclusion of other essentials like sanitary napkins, baby and elder diapers, or medications.”

- The budget allocation provided by the Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) was limited to food and not flexible enough to allow the inclusion of other essentials like sanitary napkins, baby and elder diapers, or medications.
- Furthermore, the beneficiaries were restricted to Malaysian citizens only.
- Comprehensive gender-sensitive training is needed for the project team.

⇒ Implementation

“There were equal opportunities for both women and men in the project team to participate in the management and implementation arrangements and allocations were made accordingly.”

- The food baskets were delivered to the families identified.
- The beneficiaries did not generally give feedback, but some provided feedback on other priority essentials that were needed by women, children and the elderly.
- The project policies are not specifically gender-sensitive, in that they do not focus on gender needs and requirements.
- However, there is equal opportunity for both women and men in the management and implementation arrangements.
- Allocations were made for the women's team working on the project.



⇒ Monitoring and evaluation

“The gender analysis revealed gender perspectives, which better informed current and future programmes.”

- The data collected during the project was gender-disaggregated.
- The beneficiaries of the food basket project participated in the gender analysis FGD which revealed further gender perspectives about the realities of men and women in the community. This data provided greater insights to the project team to better inform current and future programmes.
- It is difficult to measure impact other than the result that the food provided temporary relief to families. A preferable aid would be financial assistance as the recipients could decide more effectively based on the families' needs.

MP Reflections: YB Fuziah Salleh



Women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and as MPs, there is a need to mainstream gender to ensure that gender equality is achieved by 2030. Malaysia is far behind, and the MPs are well aware of that. That is why Malaysia must do what is necessary to embark on this programme by having every MP across all political divides working together, particularly the women MPs in making it happen.

The best way to implement gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting would be to adopt a bottom-up approach. It starts with parliamentarians looking into constituencies, focusing on specific groups as a pilot project, and learning from there.

GRB was first introduced in Malaysia in 2004. In 2005, UNDP supported the government in undertaking a GRB initiative. However, Malaysia failed move beyond the early phase of the initiative.

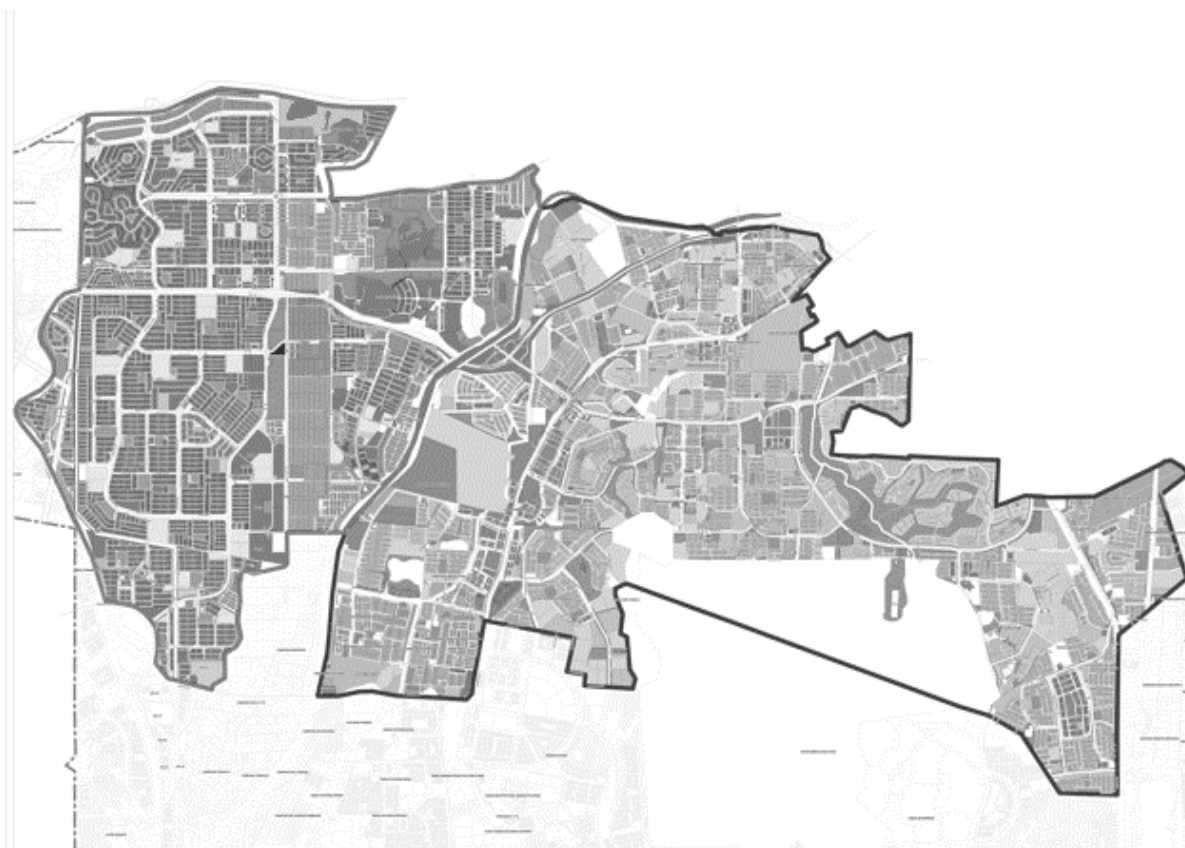
Recently, at a meeting with the Ministry of Finance (MOF), I revisited the issue of GRB where I shared my experience in using GRB in one of our early projects. I informed the MOF that in my constituency, the residents of the Program Perumahan Rakyat DiSewa (PPRS – Public Rental Housing Program) used to live in settlements by the riverside, where they didn't have proper facilities and sanitation. We wanted to move this community to a more suitable low-cost housing area. However, there were no low-cost flats or houses at that time except a state government low-cost housing project that had been abandoned for eight years. Despite being an opposition MP, I managed to get funding from the state government to renovate the abandoned state housing project. Soon after, we successfully moved the whole community from the settlement by the river into the government low-cost housing flats which we renovated. It is evident from our constituency data that the community is very patriarchal. Interestingly, the head of the community is a woman, who takes care of the needs of the community.

At the macro level, the constituency has a myriad of issues from health, social, substance abuse, safety and job security which are typical of B40 communities. The constituency conducts upskilling and reskilling programmes for single mothers and women from the B40 community. However, there is always a question concerning equitable access to resources. We have found that women lack awareness of the programmes, but it has also been a challenge for the constituency to disseminate the information regarding the resources that are available and accessible to the public.

Through some of these efforts, the constituency team is doing what it can on gender mainstreaming and GRB. I am also pushing the Malaysian government to start embarking on the GRB journey next year to work towards achieving the goals of the 12th Malaysia Plan.

P104 Subang

Member of Parliament: Wong Chen



The Subang constituency consists of two state legislative assemblies; Kinrara and Subang Jaya. Subang Jaya has a large population of middle-income families while Kinrara has more families in the lower-income bracket.

Individuals that fall within the lower-income brackets tend to have more financial and social problems. Different income groups have different challenges.

Subang

Gender analysis

The gender analysis was based on focus group discussions with the constituency's local councillors who are familiar with men and women in the community.

Key findings

Job security and livelihoods | Voice and agency | Domestic violence support were some specific issues of concern highlighted by the local councillors in this urban constituency. The community highlighted that female-headed households disproportionately face multiple barriers that limit their access to job opportunities and social protection. The same is reflected in the UNICEF/UNFPA report on families living in urban low-cost apartments which show that female-headed households are especially vulnerable and 57% have no access to social protection and have a 32% higher rate of unemployment compared to total heads of households.¹³ This exclusion inevitably has a negative trickle-down effect on children and elderly in the household particularly in terms of health and wellbeing.¹⁴ While Budget 2022 has specific measures for both female-headed households and children, it will require a more granular outreach to ensure segments of this population do not continue to fall through the cracks.

The disproportionate distribution of household responsibilities is reflective of a patriarchal mindset, but it is noteworthy that the constituency team observed women's voice and agency pronounced with greater financial independence and where their presence is visible at the community level consultations and leadership. However, the entrenched mindset continues to see men in senior community and government decision-making spaces. Women's ability, resilience and leadership is not in question but what is relevant is making their contribution visible through the creation of an enabling environment. Entry points to explore may be affordable and community-based childcare, mentoring, and appointments to leadership positions.

Undocumented migrant families were also spotlighted; due to the nature of their legal status and right to work, they face a host of socio-economic challenges. In these circumstances, women migrants and refugees become dependent on their partners, increasing their vulnerability to domestic violence with insufficient support systems due of their status.¹⁵ This is reiterated by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee's concluding observations to Malaysia which included a call to identify and address obstacles faced by undocumented women migrants in accessing justice and recourse to remedies. This is especially concerning when the scale of the situation is considered – Malaysia has a population of 2 to 4 million undocumented migrants.¹⁶

Focus group discussion: constituency team notes

by Ivan Wong, Officer MP Subang

DOMAIN	FGD FINDINGS
Work	<p>Women in the middle-income group tend to be in the formal sector. In contrast, those in the lower-income group are more involved in the informal sector, such as opening stalls selling food at the roadside. Many single mothers in the lower-income group usually work as cleaners as it gives them the flexibility to take care of their children.</p> <p>Household work is mainly undertaken by women; however, the amount of time spent on it and the level of contribution differs significantly between the income groups and between ethnic groups.</p> <p>It is much more difficult for single mothers in the lower-income group to find a job as they have no-one to help look after their children.</p> <p>There are a lot of childcare centres within the Subang constituency. However, most of them are privatised, and so are not an option for many of those in the lower-income group as they cannot afford it. (There are no government childcare centres.)</p>
Decision making	<p>The head of the household (husband) usually makes the final decision. However, as we move to higher-income groups, women tend to make more decisions because they are not financially reliant on their husbands.</p> <p>At the community level, men take up more positions within the informal community groups. Still, more women can be seen participating at the grassroots levels. There are more women community representatives in the low-cost areas. At the grassroots level (community level) leaders are primarily women. Most of them are homemakers, and they have time to be involved in the activity with the community leaders; while men mostly lead top local level committees like Majlis Perbandaran (local municipality council).</p>
Safety	<p>It is relatively safe but there are incidents of sexual harassment like catcalling and whistling which are lower in middle-income areas but higher in low-income neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Most of those affected by domestic abuse in the area are foreign women married to local men. Although the women are aware that they need help as a victim of abuse, they are afraid to seek help because their husbands might revoke their working visa and they are quite reliant on their husbands.</p> <p>Many of them are aware of the hotlines and the constituency's services, but they don't come forward due to their status.</p>

DOMAIN	FGD FINDINGS
<p>Access to aid and Support</p>	<p>The community is generally aware of government aid and services. Only a handful of people slipped through the cracks due to lack of knowledge and no access to the internet.</p> <p>Most individuals can access aid and services provided by the federal government, state government and local councils. No extra help is needed to spread the information on assistance and services because the community is located in an urban area.</p> <p>YB Michelle Ng, a Member of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly and Y.B. Tuan Ng Sze Han, ADUN Kinrara, are a great team. They will physically go to the area and communicate with the community while spreading awareness about specific programmes and services.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Other than the pandemic, the general health of the community seems to be relatively good. We see more elderly people in Subang Jaya while in Kinrara there are more middle-aged people.</p> <p>Everybody has equal access to government clinics. Within our constituency, there is a 1Malaysia clinic. There are other government clinics at the constituency border, like Puchong Batu 14 and Petaling Jaya. For government hospitals, the community have to travel to Serdang or Klang.</p>

Mainstreaming gender in the project cycle

The selected case study was the National People’s Well-Being and Economic Recovery Package (PEMULIH) Food Basket Programme where each constituency was given RM300,000 to distribute food baskets to B40 families.



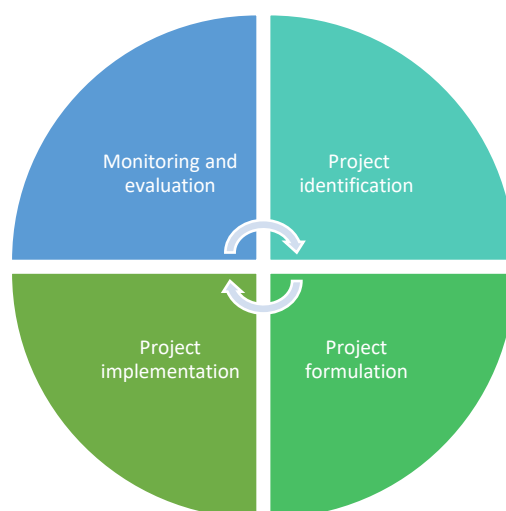
Key learning

Gender-sensitive data was collected which involved the participation of the beneficiaries.

Surveys measure the impact of the programme on both women and men. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews of different sub-groups: women, men, children, youth, adults, PwDs, the elderly and migrants will provide valuable insights on the differential realities and needs.

Ensuring project budget to be gender-responsive by identifying issues such as access (transport, finance), literacy, childcare, and so on) can facilitate an inclusive and participatory project.

A gender training will hone the skills of the project team to be perceptive to the gendered lives and realities of the population and to adapt targeted interventions.



Feedback was sought on previous food basket programmes which clarified the realities and needs of the community. Although a gender analysis was not conducted, the project team had adopted a gender-sensitive lens in identifying vulnerable families, which included single mothers/female headed households. There was also a greater appreciation of specific needs of the community.

Understanding the needs informed the necessary restructuring of the initial food basket programme. This was adapted to providing food vouchers which allowed families to meet their priority needs. Forming a project team of women and men, and involving the community members as protagonists and having them undergo a training on understanding and mainstreaming gender in a project cycle is key to an inclusive and people-responsive project.

Constituency team review notes by Ivan Wong

⇒ Project identification

“Single mothers were mainly affected during the pandemic and that essential food assistance was insufficient. This information resulted in a greater focus on single mothers.”

- During the pandemic, many of constituents were unemployed, causing them to lose their only source of income, and the food baskets was to provide temporary relief.
- From the feedback received from the various communities, the recipients were grateful for the food baskets. However, they were not truly satisfied because the food basket could not fulfil their current needs. Hence, rather than giving food assistance, shopping vouchers were provided to allow the recipients to purchase things to satisfy their immediate needs.
- The vouchers were also convenient as it was difficult for the elderly and single mothers with young children to carry food baskets. Giving them shopping vouchers with smaller denominations allowed them to spread out their purchases.
- At that point of time, a gender analysis was not conducted as the primary purpose was to help everyone affected by the pandemic.
- Jabatan Kebajikan Malaysia (Welfare Department) pointed out that single mothers were more affected than other groups during the pandemic and that essential food

assistance was insufficient. This information resulted in a greater focus on single mothers, following which the MP's team included single fathers to make it more inclusive.

- The community leaders also provided assistance by drawing up a list of recipients who required immediate food assistance and identifying recipients who needed more than food assistance.



Food voucher beneficiaries

⇒ Project formulation

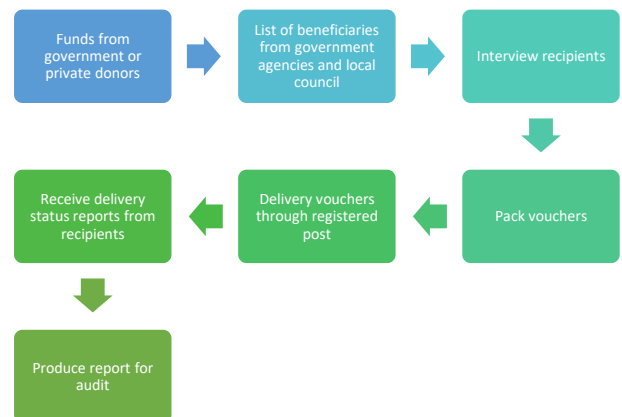
“Women significantly benefited from the vouchers as they were able to buy sanitary products or milk formula for their children.”

- Both women and men were involved in the design of the project.
- The contactless shopping vouchers project was intended to allow recipients to choose the items they needed.
- The beneficiaries were both men and women who were affected by the situation. However, women will significantly benefit from this as they can buy sanitary products or milk formulas for their children.

⇒ Project implementation

“Both genders were equally involved in the decision-making process.”

- For our project, both genders were equally involved in the decision-making process.
- There is no specific allocation to train staff for this project as the learning curve is not steep. No particular skills are needed. Our office is quite flexible in adapting to changing situations.



Workflow of the contactless shopping voucher project

⇒ Monitoring and evaluation

“Simple surveys may be conducted to determine the impact of our programme on men and women.”

- Project reports will reflect the learning from the data analysis to see how much this project has affected women and men.
- Data collected was based on race, gender, employment status and family size.
- Beneficiaries were involved in the data collection.
- The project team will be analysing the data and simple surveys may be conducted to determine the impact of our programme on men and women.

MP Reflections: YB Wong Chen



The Subang constituency has been gender-responsive for quite some time now. The constituency's officers are mainly women and it has a history of hiring more women than men in the office. At any one time, approximately 62% of office staff are women. We apply the same principle to the interns we take on, where in 2020, 70 of the 106 interns at the constituency office were women.

The Subang constituency has been undertaking projects like this for a long time but without a specific GRB framework. The focus and main priority of the constituency has always been single mothers. In terms of welfare, we have also provided development funding for schools, where 60% of the constituency budget was spent on schools and building kindergartens.

At the macro level, I am collaborating with YB Fuziah on GRB, where we have been persistently working on getting the government on board on matters related to gender mainstreaming and GRB. As legislators, we understand that the government's limitation is the lack of disaggregated data. In this regard, we hope that the government will expand its collection of disaggregated data next year. This will hopefully see a more gender responsive budget in 2024. budget.

P195 Bandar Kuching

Member of Parliament: Dr Kelvin Yii



The Bandar Kuching constituency is part of the larger city of Kuching. This urban constituency has a population of between 170,000 to 200,000. Its jurisdiction covers the state assembly areas of Padungan, Pending and Batu Lintang. Rural urban migration has brought jobseekers to the city which has several slum colonies.

Kuching

Gender analysis

A rapid gender analysis was conducted through focus group discussions with men and women of Kg Chawan.



Focus group discussions with men and women in Chawan

Key Findings

Housing and sanitation | Job security | Education were the three key issues of concern raised by the community. The multi-generational slum dwellers of Chawan are indigenous rural migrants from the interior who moved to the city for better job prospects. Their makeshift homes, poor drainage, lack of water or electricity supply and sanitation makes for concerning standards of living. With no relocation to better housing in sight, the community through their own resilient efforts, creativity and cooperative community action have sustained their living conditions, albeit below wellbeing standards, for the past 40 years. This, as mentioned by the World Bank in its report, makes slum communities worthy of special policy attention.¹⁷

The pandemic has also gravely affected this slum community's loss of income from their already precarious jobs, now hard hit by the movement restrictions over the two years. The lack of affordable and accessible childcare also prevents the women from participating in income generation activities. The closure of schools during the pandemic has resulted in the Chawan children missing out on most of the two years of schooling. Online schooling was not feasible for these families who lack adequate devices, particularly for households who have more than one school-going child. Poor connectivity compounds the problem resulting in a lack of interest among the children in attending school.

The community's participation in the APPGM-SDG, Malaysia (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia – SDG) project led by the Member of Parliament in collaboration with a local indigenous NGO SADIA, to enhance community building and empowerment among the Chawan leaders, has seen the rise of Chawan women. They now lead several initiatives in education of children, income generation for women, health and wellness programmes, infrastructure repairs and community clean-up – all through an all-of-community participatory approach.^{18,19}

Focus group discussion: constituency team notes

by Julian Tan, Assistant to MP Kuching

DOMAIN	FGD FINDINGS
Work	The women and men are mainly factory workers, cleaners, waiters and homemakers. Men are largely engaged in hard labour jobs. Women reported working nine-to-five jobs while men worked between four and eight hours per day. Both expressed concerns about low income and job insecurity. They said there was no personal or family time. The lack of childcare centres presented a problem for these families who require dual incomes to make ends meet.
Decision Making	Both men and women reported that all participate in community decision making. Women take an active role in the community work.
Safety	<p>The women reported that the neighbourhood was generally safe. They were mostly concerned about floods and the occasional crocodile. They said there were no reports of harassment to date. The men reported petty thefts which occurred about three years ago.</p> <p>The women are aware of the national hotlines (Talian Kasih) while the men claimed they were not aware. Both the women and men said that any crime including domestic violence would be reported to the police.</p>
Access to Aid and Support	Both men and women are aware of government aid and services, and reported to have received cash aid from government, JKM (Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (Welfare Department)).
Health	Both women and men claimed that the overall health is good with the exception of high cholesterol, hypertension, obesity and asthma among some members of the community. They reported that there is access to government clinics.

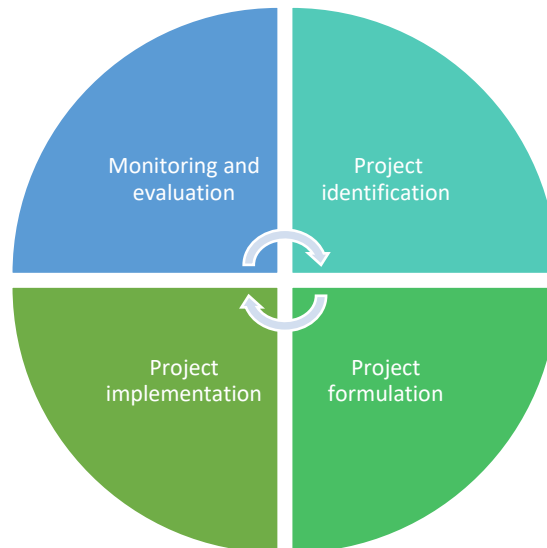
Gender mainstreaming in the project cycle

The case study was the CHAWAN 13 project which was undertaken with the MP as part of the APPGM-SDG, Malaysia's localisation of SDGs in parliamentary constituencies in 2020-22.

Key learning

Regular project team reflection sessions are helpful for monitoring, and adjusting in order to deliver on outcomes. Observations of family and community dynamics including persons left behind during project work can be raised for specific and targeted interventions. The data collected would be useful in better understanding community realities and needs. The potential and capacity of women's leadership was seen in this project.

Women from the community and men from the NGO on the project team were the main community coordinators for this project, which had several activities for the community. It would be useful to document the gender-responsive approaches undertaken as learning on engagement of the 60 families, what challenges and barriers were found; which were addressed and which persist; and how budgets were gender-responsive.



The needs assessment survey conducted through home visits may allow views from more than one family member to be recorded. It would be useful to also have male and female enumerators to get more honest replies, as respondents may respond differently to a man than a woman (and vice versa). Validating the issues based on the findings of the survey through town hall sessions can build ownership and consensus. It would be important to ensure all voices are heard.

Having women on the enumerator team and as facilitators of the town hall discussions is useful to highlight the gender dimension of issues, including for PwDs and the elderly. Gender-sensitive training for the project team would be important at this stage in ensuring issues identification and solutions formulation, implementation and for ensuring that budgets are gender responsive.

Constituency team review notes by Julian Tan

⇒ Project identification

“A pre-project needs assessment led by the community women was conducted to identify issues.”

- The projects were undertaken by NGOs in close collaboration with the MP's office and APPGM-SDG, Malaysia, a local NGO SADIA and the community of Chawan.
- The projects were identified involving and in consultation with women and men in the community.
- A pre-project needs assessment led by the women was conducted to identify issues of concern in the village of Chawan's 60 families.
- No specific gender analysis was undertaken but issues were identified through a dialogue with stakeholders through a needs assessment and community town hall sessions.
- Both women and men were asked how they see the problem.

- Town hall sessions were held to consult on the findings of the needs assessment and to prioritise the issues as well as develop the solutions. The women enumerators and male members of the project team led the consultation. The level of community participation and engagement during the town hall sessions was very positive and encouraging.
- The project identification did take into account any possible adverse impacts or risks that may affect equal access to, equal participation in, or equal benefit from, project activities for women and men.

⇒ Project formulation

“Consideration of gender will certainly advise project budget allocations.”

- The prioritisation of issues and solutions at the community town hall event was taken again to the community through home visits to gain their buy-in and build ownership.
- The project intends to improve the economic situation, health, education as well as at the level of government policy.
- Both women and men will benefit from the project measures.
- This project will make explicit contribution to improving the economic and social situation of women and families.
- Both women and men are actively involved in designing the project and have some say in the decision making.
- More training should be provided for staff to advise and support female target groups.
- Considerations of gender will certainly advise project budget allocations – resulting in a focus on health, children (education) and the empowerment of men and women.

⇒ Project implementation

“Both women and men had opportunities both in the management and implementation of the projects.”

- The joint team of Chawan women coordinators and one male coordinator, and the indigenous NGO SADIA together with the APPGM-SDG project, formed the project team to implement several projects for the community.
- The projects were primarily run by women who engaged the other members of the community. There is equal participation and decision making.
- Both women and men have opportunities in the management and implementation arrangements of the project – on the committee and as local community coordinators.
- Women and men project team committee members, volunteers and staff work closely together.
- The allocation of resources was deliberated over to ensure that the project resources or benefits are accessible to women and men.
- Gender considerations are in place to ensure women and men have access to delivery of services in terms of location, timing and personnel.

- There are continual project team reflections to assess the needs of the community and to evolve accordingly based on available resources (human or budget resources) for both women and men.

⇒ **Monitoring and evaluation**

“There is greater awareness within the community of the potential of both women and men’s capacities and involvement in projects.”

- Progress of the projects was measured through periodic meetings and information fed back to project personnel and beneficiaries in an understandable format to allow project adjustment.
- The beneficiaries were involved in the collection and validation of data collected for monitoring purposes.
- The project budget did somewhat provide allocations based on the women’s and men’s differential needs, for instance to participate, contribute and benefit from the project.
- The project evaluation did not explicitly measure the project’s impact on women and men. Sometimes the project’s impact can be gender-specific, such as in providing medical assistance for health issues and soft skill training for a specific gender. Sometimes the impact can be general or similar for both genders.
- There is greater awareness within the community of the potential of both women and men’s capacities and involvement in projects. Women are seen to take an active role in the community. There is greater awareness among the men of this role of the women. Both are seen to share the load where necessary.

MP Reflections: YB Dr Kelvin Yii



Being gender-aware and gender-sensitive is vital to ensure no one is left behind. Gender analysis is the way to go. Collecting data from the ground up enriches the discussion on gender mainstreaming.

The constituency team has been working on the CHAWAN 13 project for almost three years, and the difference is very significant between the first day the team met the community and where they are today. They are an empowered community where most of the time it just takes a phone call to mobilise the families to be part of any project conducted by the constituency. In this regard, they are not just passive recipients of welfare from the constituency but are actively engaged.

Men's concerns are general but the women in the community are concerned about issues related to their children, safety, and in particular, education. They can specifically pinpoint their needs and concerns and those of their families.

One of the greatest challenges of this community is that Chawan is an illegal settlement and therefore there is no proper infrastructure built for them. To date, it has been challenging negotiating a resettlement that works for all parties.

A predominantly Iban community, it can be said that Chawan is a patriarchal community, where men are regarded as the head of household. In light of that, numerous programmes have been organised to empower the women in the community to voice their opinions and work together for the betterment of their personal development and that of their community. Now, the women in the community are actively involved in projects conducted by the constituency. The constituency team will continue to provide the space and resources for women in Chawan.

Reflections on case studies

“Implementing commitments towards gender equality requires intentional measures to incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting frameworks and concrete investment in addressing gender gaps.”

UN Women

This programme provided MPs and their constituency teams with an opportunity to immerse themselves in understanding the reality of their population through a gender lens. The programme framework consisted of two practical and participatory activities involved in undertaking a rapid gender analysis through focus group discussions, with both women and men, and thereafter to conduct a review of the gender-responsiveness of a project or programme in their constituency with the guidance of a checklist. Although it was a brief but intensive initiative, the five constituencies were able to at some level uncover the gendered lives of women and men through the gender analysis thematic questions. Several cross-cutting issues were revealed:

From exclusion to inclusion

Cultural and social norms moderate and shape the gender roles and behaviour of men and women within the family and society, and these in most cases result in a situation of dominance of one and the subordination of the other. This belief over time perpetuates power relations which inhibit and exclude a whole segment of the population, robbing society of their vital contribution towards the development and prosperity of a nation. It is well-evidenced that women who form half of most nations, are by far the most underutilised and marginalised population. Nowhere has the business case of women’s empowerment and inclusion been more evident than it is now as the world lifts itself from the scourge of the pandemic.

The constituency case studies echoed each other on the dire situation of households where a dual income is an absolute necessity. This means that burdens need to be lifted; that is, the burden of one person shouldering the responsibilities of decisions, livelihood, and fate of the family while the other bears the burden of childcare and elder care, health, household operations and livelihood. The balance is shifting to shared responsibilities, where both women and men can equally access and benefit from opportunities and resources to fully develop their potential and become equal protagonists in the progress and development of their families, communities, and society. This will reduce poverty in families and support growth in the economy as more women enter the formal, paid workforce.

Gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting are prescribed methods which allow us to facilitate this process by responding to the lived realities of individuals and formulating targeted interventions to ensure that individuals are included, and their potential is harnessed to ensure no-one is left behind.

Reflection:

- How can the practice of gender-responsive approaches in constituency programming meet the needs of women and men?
- What were the learning outcomes of the gender analysis and gender mainstreaming exercises for the community project team and beneficiaries?
- How did it affect the perception of the roles of women and men?
- What capacities need to be developed in men and women to contribute towards the betterment of the families and community?

Gender-based violence

Domestic violence was raised as prevalent in all the constituencies. One in three women experience some form of gender-based violence (GBV) in Malaysia. During the pandemic, CSOs reported a spike in calls received on domestic violence. The government reported 9,015 cases of domestic violence from March 2020 to September 2021.²⁰ This we know is the tip of the iceberg and a vast number of cases go unreported. Constituencies' case studies revealed the normalisation of GBV where domestic violence is said to be physically inflicted but not severe, or where it is deemed non-existent by community leaders. This non-recognition or shrugging off GBV risks perpetuating the crime in its many forms. It also influences women to normalise and self-blame rather than report or seek help, thus perpetuating the cycle of abuse.

Reflection

- How can data be collected by the constituency to understand the challenges and support required?
- What community-level prevention and response mechanisms are in place? Which CSOs, community leaders and agencies in the locality can be engaged to consult on solutions?
- What capacity building programmes can be conducted for JKKK (Jawatan Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (Village Development and Security Committee)) and KMKK (Ketua Masyarakat Ketua Kaum (Community and Ethnic Leader)) to whom victims reach out for support?
- What government budget measures are in place to address the gender-based violence in your state or district?

Voice and agency

The imbalance in leadership is apparent, where senior leadership positions in the community-government spaces are occupied by men while at the grassroots levels women are active protagonists in community spaces and programmes undertaking much of the work over and above their household and caring responsibilities. However, when women are given specific leadership positions, they bring on board a wider and more granular perspective of the community.

Reflection

- How can women's active participation in grassroots activities be harnessed to foster their leadership role in their community, including networks, mentorship and capacity building?
- What environment needs to be created for the voices of persons with disabilities, children, the elderly, Indigenous people, migrants, refugees and undocumented persons to be heard?
- How can constituency projects and programmes provide leadership roles for women and the other groups?
- What federal and sub-national policies need to be in place for the appointment and progression of women in leadership positions?
- How can federal or state budget measures for women's leadership be allocated or made available for your constituency?

The double burden

All constituencies reported that women, more so than men, had to take on care and household work. The disproportionate responsibilities of household and care shouldered by women (75% globally)²¹ have dire repercussions for their personal development and present a direct economic cost as a result of their absence in the labour market. The communities also reported the lack of access to affordable and quality childcare, particularly for the women and families in the B40 community. In all constituencies this issue took centre stage as a barrier to women's economic participation. At the level of the family there is a need for dual incomes to sustain households, particularly in the B40 community. In most cases, women take on the double burden of paid work and unpaid domestic work but that limits their choices, often leading them to informal work which could mean job insecurity, risk of discrimination, abuse and no social protection – all at the risk of the woman and family's health and wellbeing.

The situation presents an all-round impact on the community as a whole, not to mention the loss of tax revenue from a growing informal economy. The government's national budget measures for childcare to date provide relief for childcare centres, tax paying parents, and government offices. More needs to be done for B40 families who are in predominantly informal employment or are unregistered self-employed workers, in the way of public funded or adequately subsidised childcare centres to allow more women to return to work and to create jobs and income in the childcare industry.^{22,23}

Reflection

- What data can be collected to measure time-use, childcare needs and a potential increase in female labour force participation in the constituency?
- How can constituency programmes and projects be adapted in consideration of the childcare and domestic responsibilities of women?
- What awareness programmes can be developed to foster shared responsibility in the home to facilitate women's economic participation?
- How can the federal and state budget measures for childcare be responsive to address the needs of B40 families?
- What enabling steps can be taken to formalise informal sector businesses?

Precarious work

Insecure jobs and livelihoods compounded by an inadequate social protection system sets back vulnerable communities further without a clear recovery in sight. Women, youth, female-headed households, PwDs, undocumented migrants and refugees are among those who are in such work situations.

Reflection

- What interventions and projects would you undertake based on the gender analysis conducted in your constituency?
- What other data would you require?
- How would you monitor and evaluate the impact of your programme on the lived realities of the beneficiaries?
- How will the constituency facilitate the awareness and support in application of federal and state budget measures for social protection, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities, so people don't fall through the cracks?
- How will the grassroots realities inform the parliamentary and state level advocacy on employment and livelihoods?

The constituencies also benefited from the learning of the local and international experience of gender-responsive budgeting experience of Ong Bee Leng, CEO of the Penang Women's Development Corporation who have been leading gender-responsive participatory budgeting (GRPB) with grassroots communities in Penang and of Janet Veitch OBE, Chair of the UK Women's Budget Group. The following is their feedback and reflections to the MPs and the constituency teams at the roundtable on 14 October after the case studies were presented:

ONG BEE LENG

Ong Bee Leng commented that it was amazing to see all the MPs and their teams develop a thorough and detailed analysis of their projects. It was good that the MPs approached communities that they are familiar with and that will contribute to a successful project and growth. The entry points that the MPs have selected were very powerful, impactful, and it is possible to see the success story of these pilot projects.

Data

Data, especially gender-disaggregated data, is very important when conducting any project so that it can be more focused and meet the needs of all beneficiaries. She encouraged the MPs to look into not just the poor and the rich; but to also look into whether it is more difficult for women of lower socio-economic status to reach out when compared with men.

Inclusive approach

MPs should also be mindful when speaking about GRB. GRB not only focuses on women; men also have a role to play, and MPs need to look into men's needs. She encouraged the MPs to focus on young women and girls in the community, and other

good empowerment programmes MPs should consider for girls, because they are the future generation that could bring change to the community.

Sustainability of projects and programmes

There is no “one size fits all” when speaking about GRB. Everyone has a different approach to accommodate the needs of all people in the constituency. MPs should also consider the sustainability of the projects undertaken in the community to ensure there is a positive and impactful change in the community for the future.

JANET VEITCH, OBE

Janet highlighted the importance of this ground-breaking initiative by MPs who were investing in economic growth in their constituencies through a transformative approach. It was interesting to see the outcomes from each constituency that have had gender focus group discussions separately with both women and men.

GRB and economic efficiency

She pointed out that women from the lower-income group work as cleaners because they could not pay for childcare. That is a classic point about GRB. One of the efficiency arguments of GRB is that it creates a more efficient economy. Removing barriers for women’s entry to the labour market will enable the economy to grow. When there is a population or a group of healthy and well-educated women, they can be encouraged to contribute to the economy and growth. It is a very quick route to growth if these women move into the labour market and start their own businesses.

Economic autonomy and violence prevention

Janet commented on the link that was being made between women's economic independence and their voice in the household; how far they could influence and participate in decision making. This also connects to their vulnerability to violence. One of the things found in many countries, including the UK, is that women in lower-income groups are three times more likely to suffer from domestic violence and rape. She further added that violence has an enormous cost. *"We did a lot of work in the UK costing violence. We know that it costs around 2%-3% of our entire GDP. After calculating the health costs and costs of the whole family, we know it is worth investing in violence prevention. These things are all connected. Women's economic autonomy is connected to their vulnerability to violence. So, if we could invest in both things, we will reduce the state's costs in domestic family violence."*

Training for social mobility

Janet was impressed with the women's entrepreneurial centre that was described by YB Nancy Shukri's constituency team. Janet stressed that it would be useful for the constituency to compare entrepreneurial training which was given generally with the training that focused on women, to see what the difference in expected income levels might be for each kind of training. She suggested different levels of training to take women from lower to higher levels of income.

Costing public services

Janet added a point about costing public services like elder care and childcare when government allocates the state budget. She shared the example of the UK where the MPs would use local evidence from their constituencies and inform the government about a particular service needed by the people. This local costing is then scaled up across the country to see how much should be invested by the government. This sort of raw community-level data is required to supplement gaps in the data that the government may lack.

Reflection

- What have you learned from this exercise? What challenges do you foresee?
- As MPs, what would you do differently next time?
- What additional resources are required to provide for greater maternal health?
- What elements are in the training programmes that are designed for women to become entrepreneurs?
- How much was being invested as a percentage of the money that is invested in general training on entrepreneurial skills?
- Where do we get the data on the allocation of budgets; how much is given by the government for these programmes and what is the data on the impact of women and men separately?
- How do we measure the impact on growth and wellbeing of these initiatives, as men and women are able to increase their income through greater skills and access to better training and services like childcare?

MP GRB advocacy

The MPs who participated in this initiative have been strongly advocating for gender-responsive budgeting in Parliament. This underscores the value of this programme in that it was able to facilitate a deeper understanding of gender-responsive budgeting which can in turn support the oversight mandate of our parliamentarians.

The MPs also participated and presented at two GRB roundtables which were a collaboration with ENGENDER Consultancy and the Gender Budget Group. The roundtables explored Entry Points for GRB Advocacy and Scrutiny of Budget 2022 on 15 October and Budget 2022: A Gender Lens Review on 3 December.

Next Steps

2022 will see the programme progress with a new cohort of MPs and the continued support of the first batch of constituencies in institutionalising gender mainstreaming and responsive budgeting in their constituency.

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