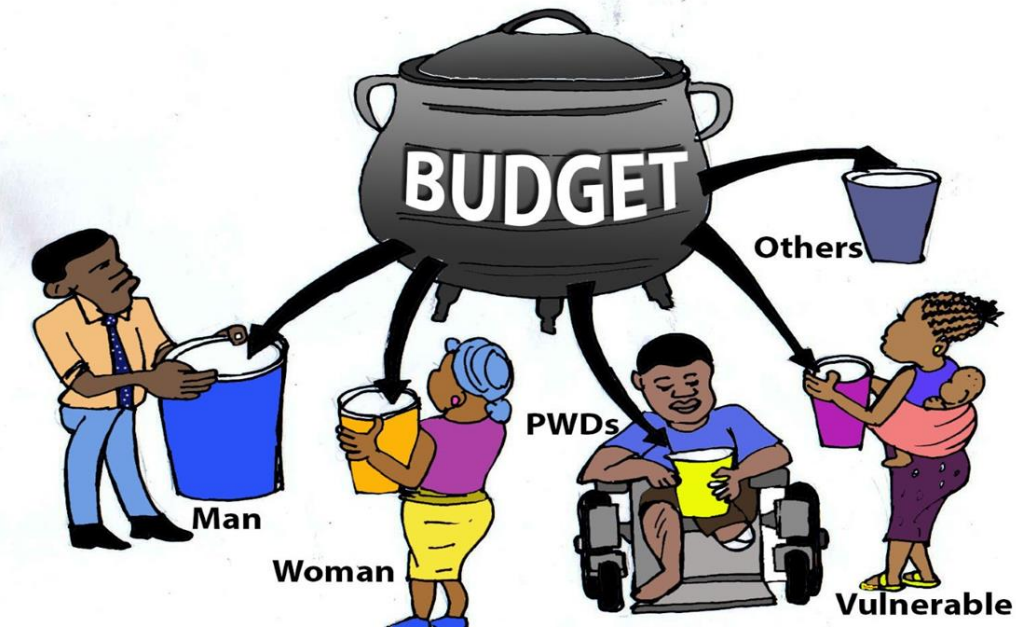




STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN FOR INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE 2023 KAMBIA DISTRICT COUNCIL AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE



This gender budget analysis was done through a collaboration between three Sierra Leonean organisations, led by Talking Drum Studio Sierra Leone (TDS-SL), including the Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) and the 50/50 Group, and funded by Irish Aid. It was done as part of the project's intervention to assist local governments in developing spending plans that account for gender gaps in service provision.

Gender budgeting refers to the design and implementation of budgets that consider the unique needs, preferences, and contributions of individuals of distinct genders. The objective is to ensure that fiscal policies and resource allocations benefit everyone equally, regardless of gender, and help reduce gender disparities.

As part of an effort to assess the state of gender mainstreaming in Sierra Leone's local governments, this Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) analysis was conducted. The goal of the gender budget analysis was to determine if and to what extent women and men in the local councils benefited equitably from all areas of the budget.

The analysis focused on the Kambia District Council and targeted the health, education, social welfare, and agriculture sectors for the 2023 fiscal year. Four approaches were used for this analysis, namely:

1. Overview of the budget process and gender
2. Gender-specific allocations
3. Equal employment opportunity/facilities allocation
4. General Allocation

An understanding of the various needs of users informed the budget process. This is because the Local Government Act (2022) makes it mandatory for every council to do a needs assessment that forms the basis of the development of the development plan and subsequently the budget. There was no evidence of the existence of regularly updated planning data. The councils regularly make an effort to invite stakeholders into the budget process, and gender disaggregation of participants is normally done.

Gender mainstreaming in budgeting is mentioned in the revised Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)¹. Furthermore, the Budget Call Circular² for local councils also provides concrete guidelines including gender budgeting. However, the gender component of these guidelines is not normally followed in detail. In addition, specific gender targets are not reflected in the MTEF.

The table below summarizes the gender allocation for four sectors at the Kambia District Council for 2023 fiscal year.

Table 1: Gender Allocation per Sector for 2023

Name of Council	Sector	Gender-Specific Allocations	Allocations if disaggregated by sex will have become gender specific allocation	Equal employment allocations	Allocations if disaggregated by sex will have become equal employment allocations	General allocations
Kambia District Council	Agriculture	46.07%	10.79%	0%	0%	44.28%
	Health	0.00%	10.50%	0%	0%	78.49%
	Education	47.5%	8.38%	0%	0%	44.14%
	Social Welfare	55.91%	6.56%	0%	0%	38%
	Total	149.5%	36.09%	0%	0%	201.44%
	Average	37.37%	9.05%	0%	0%	50.36%

Source: Local Council detail budget allocations

¹ Ministry of Finance Revised Medium Term Expenditure Framework 2017

² [The Budget Call Circular gives the official guidelines on budget preparation for a particular period.](#)

According to Table 1, on average, 37.37% of the four sectors for the Kambia District Council developed gender-specific budgets, and 9.05% of the activities would have become gender-specific if disaggregated by gender. There was no budget allocation that gave equal employment opportunities, nor was there one that, if disaggregated by gender, would have resulted in gender allocation in regard to job opportunities. General allocations account for 50.36% of the total budgets for all four sectors.

One of the contributing factors to the council's gender-specific budget allocation was the capacity building and technical support in terms of budget preparation and how to disaggregate budget information that BAN provided to both council core staff and sector heads over the years. However, the absence of gender policies, which would have served as a foundation for the creation of gender budgeting, is a challenge at the council level.

Table 2: Trend in gender-specific budget allocation 2018 – 2023

Sector	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Education	0.00%	0.00%	4.48%	12.08%	65.85%	47.52%
Health	0.00%	0.00%	2.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Social welfare	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	57.60%	75.16%	55.91%
Agriculture	2.60%	0.00%	0.61%	16.92%	56.83%	46.07%
Average for gender-specific allocations	0.65%	0.00%	1.8%	21.65%	49.46%	37.37%

Source: Local Council detail budget allocations

Table 2 shows that on average, the Kambia District Council's gender-specific budget allocations **dropped from 49.46% in 2022 to 37.37% in 2023**. At the sector level, the social welfare-specific gender budget also **decreased from 75.17% in 2022 to 46.07% in 2023**, and education **decreased from 65.85% in 2022 to 47.53% in 2023**. The results show that the health sector has remained gender-blind since 2021. This decrease is mainly associated with the weak systems for replicating training given to council and sector staff by the project and the inadequate follow-up mechanisms by supervisors and council leadership. The weak role and poor collaboration of the M&E officer during budget preparation are also factors responsible for sectors not disaggregating target beneficiary information.

Table 3: Trend in gender budget allocation by gender type for Kambia District Council, 2018 - 2023

Gender type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Gender-specific allocations	0.65%	0.00%	1.35%	21.68%	49.46%	37.37%
Allocations if disaggregated by sex would have become gender-specific allocations	16.58%	28.50%	4.71%	44.74%	15.24%	9.05%
Gender employment allocations	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.05%	0.00%	0.00%
Allocation if disaggregated by sex would have become equal employment allocation	0.93%	0.37%	1.02%	23.99%	0.06%	0.00%
General allocations	81.85%	77.75%	92.69%	34.98%	15.74%	50.36%

Source: Local Council detail budget allocations

Table 3 shows that general allocations increased from **15.74%** in 2022 to **50.36%** in 2023. This means that the majority of the allocation was gender-blind. However, compared to 2018 and 2019, it was a great improvement. Also, allocations, if disaggregated by sex, would have become gender-specific allocations, which have reduced significantly from **44.74%** in 2021 to **9.05%** in 2023, which implies that the council has great potential to increase its gender-specific budget allocation.

If the Kambia District Council is to move towards a gender-mainstreaming approach and institutionalize Gender Responsive Budget (GRB), the following are key areas of intervention:

- **Awareness & Training:** Organize workshops and training sessions for council members and financial officers on the importance of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and its benefits. This should enhance their capacity to integrate gender into budget processes.
- **Data Collection & Analysis:** Council should collect disaggregated data by sex for all local council activities. Analyze spending and revenues to understand the different impacts on men and women, boys, and girls. Regularly conduct gender-based needs assessments to inform budget decisions.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Include gender experts in the budgeting process. Engage with local women's groups, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders to get insights into the specific needs and priorities of different genders.
- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Integrate gender considerations across all areas of the council's work, not just in traditionally "gendered" sectors like health, agriculture, social welfare and education.
- **Gender Budget Statements:** Require departments or units to produce a Gender Budget Statement as part of their annual budget submissions. This statement would outline how their proposed budget addresses gender inequalities.
- **Transparency & Accountability:** Ensure that the budgeting process is transparent and that documents are available to the public. Implement mechanisms for citizens, especially women and marginalized groups, to provide feedback on budget allocations and outcomes.
- **Performance Measurement:** Develop gender-specific indicators and metrics to evaluate the success of various initiatives. This can provide data-driven insights for further refining the approach.
- **Integrate Gender in Audits** Ensure that internal and external audits review the gender responsiveness of budgets and expenditures, recommending corrective measures as necessary.
- **Communication:** Raise awareness among the local population about gender-responsive budgeting efforts and successes. Engaging the community can build support and provide valuable feedback

Evidence of gender inequality is a successful method for generating gender sensitivity and is fundamental for improving efficient gender approaches. The equal participation of women and men in local government decision-making is critical to ensuring that: any decisions made and budgets allocated are relevant to the living conditions and needs of local women and men; there is no equity in the provision of services and planning, and municipal funds are not being spent effectively and efficiently from the gender perspective.

If gender budgeting is done properly at the local level, it will be one of the motivations for women's involvement with local government, hence it is obvious that gender-responsive budgeting is a perfect tool for enhancing women's power in local governments.