Gender Webinar: Using Data to Advance Gender Equality

On the 4th of November the second 2020 CIB Webinar on gender in international programming was held. This edition was geared towards the exploration of the use of data to advance gender equality in international projects and programmes. Together with a large and active group of participants, three knowledgeable experts and a great moderator, the webinar kicked off with the introduction of the Gender Publication 2019 - 2020, that includes 10 case studies and is now ready for validation and dissemination. The publication focuses on the topic of advancing gender equality, specifically relevant for CIB members that are working on gender-related activities in their capacity building programmes. For CIB, the topic of gender has been one the thematic pillars of our Work plans over many years, and we are looking forward to contribute to a change for the better the coming years.

Gendered impacts of COVID-19
Sarah Vieux, communication director for the committee on culture of UCLG, kicked off the webinar with an insightful and informative overview of some of the gendered impacts that follow from the COVID-19 crisis. A key initiative that was launched by UCLG, Metropolis, and UN-Habitat at the start of the pandemic is the #BeyondtheOutbreak initiative, focused on live learning experiences on the impacts of COVID-19. With special attention for Asia and Africa, Sarah's presentation focused on statistics of women in leadership positions, based on official statistical resources and globally comparable data – a key necessity to be able to work on gender equality around the world. Alongside this, emphasis was put on the issue of violence against women and girls.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increasingly unveiled gender-based inequalities concerning discrimination and an increase in gender-based violence towards women in all spheres of society around the world: this includes violence in institutional setting. Touching upon women in the sphere of economic development, poverty and care and health, Sarah finalised her presentation with key insights on how women are at the centre of the recovery of the pandemic. Data has shown how the stakes are higher for women during this pandemic, and therefore increased the need for women to be placed in positions where they can have influence on mid and long-term recovery strategies, especially in the context of the UN Decade of Action towards the effective realisation of the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Therefore, in regard to the theme of the webinar, monitoring of women's representation and participation at decision making levels has direct consequences on the efforts to improve gender equality regarding the COVID-19 crisis and its impacts.

Working on data that include challenges in reaching positions of decision-making, discrimination and violence against women candidates and in local office, and access and participation in decision-making processes are critical in this regard. Sarah could have shared a lot more information on regional effects but unfortunately time was limited. We would invite everyone to explore the #BeyondTheOutbreak platform and to check the dedicated webpage on the LLE on Women's Leadership. See also the Youtube channel with key speakers of the LLE session.

Interpreting Gender Data
Building on the opening contributions, Marija Risteska, an expert in the field of (disaggregated) data collection and gender, highlights the difficulties of putting gender on the agenda of local government, further reinforcing the necessity of webinars as such, to shed more light on this topic. As we know, there are large disparities when it comes to the role men and women play in society, whether it be

education, career opportunities, economic resources etc. With that said, the lack of adequate data makes it difficult to identify not only how large these disparities are, but also to what extend this differs between regions and municipalities.

> *"We protect them from becoming infected with the virus, since they are seen as the pillar of society and the family"* – interview with Hekuran Dukar, Mayor of the Municipality of Debar, June 2020

Some of the key insights Marija took us through is for example how the identification of gender issues and implications for social improvement are not exposed when simply examining data on women's participation. Therefore, there is a need to identify gender relevant data, specifically what is needed for policy formulation and monitoring and evaluation in this area. With the example of the city of Skopje, Marija outlined the gender responsive programme provisioning public transport for the disabled, in which the data was monitored, and illustrated that women make disproportionally less use of it than men. This shows the necessity of reviewing existing data sources and developing new data collection programs.

Lastly, asking the right types of questions about our quantitative data, guides to the areas in which we need to extract qualitative data to provide us with the insights we need for a deeper interpretation of what sometimes seems like just numbers.

Impact and outcome measurement
Tom Aston, an independent consultant specialised in participatory methods for monitoring and evaluation, guides us through the process of disaggregation to decision-making, thereby focusing on meaningful participation and leadership. As well as this, the concept of representativeness comes to play. When examining data on the different types of participants, primarily women, but at different levels i.e. poor and marginalised households, local committees that include women. In this sense we can show how project actions contribute to greater representatives of formal spaces, as well as how this has improved year-on-year.

When figuring out how to measure impact, we start with outputs leading to outcomes (changes in behaviour), and finally impact i.e. changes in systems and societies. One key element is having separate progress markers for men and women, which helped to capture nuances otherwise lost. More information on these methods and techniques, including combining Log Frames and Outcome Mapping can be found here. Lastly, Tom goes through the process of Most Significant Change, a form of participatory evaluation. This involves deciding which types of stories should be collected, determining which of these are the most significant and sharing the stories and discussion of values with stakeholders and contributors. With that said, it is all about discovering what different types of people value through a structured and transparent dialogue process.

Moderator Pascal Lavoie wrapped up the session with a very relevant, as well as salient, question: how can we make sure we reach the right data? The speakers engaged in a fruitful manner each building upon one another's presentations and points. Some of the points brought up were: multi-level systems from the international to the local level, calling on expertise of local groups, and civil society. Another

point made, was that it is not about simply reaching out to women, but also placing the focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, to increase their representation.

The session ended on the topic of the reoccurring issue: lack of budget within programs for M&E and data collection. The main takeaways mentioned by the speakers were: the mutualisation of resources but also the work as well as building capacity for specifically gender analysis. A lot of work is done on M&E and policy development, however the skills for gender analysis are often lacking. Furthermore, sharing best practices, case studies and examples in the sphere of knowledge management also plays a big part.

During the Webinar several interesting document and links were shared, please find an overview below:
- CEMR: Women in Politics: Local and European Trends (EN): bit.ly/2JJmi6X
- CEMR: Les femmes en politique : Tendances locales et européennes (FR): http://bit.ly/36AbSA8
- CoE: Draft resolution from the Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe on fighting sexism in politics at local/regional level: https://rm.coe.int/fighting-sexism-against-women-in-politics-at-local-and-regional-level-/16809c8b7b
- CoE: Guide preventing and combatting sexism at local level https://rm.coe.int/preventing-and-combatting-sexism-at-the-local-level-in-ukraine-eng-web/16809ee57f
- Metropolis: The metropolitan indicators available at indicators.metropolis.org also have data on women's political representation worldwide
- Metropolis: "Safety and Public Space: Mapping metropolitan gender policies" about metropolitan best experiences and gender indicators to combat sexual violence against women and girls in public space: https://www.metropolis.org/sites/default/files/resources/Mapping_metropolitan_gender_policies_0.pdf