UN Volunteers, Kawtar Abendag (right) and Ariane Massy (left) serve with UN Women in Morocco and enhance Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting. © UN Women, 2023

Powering gender inclusive budgets in Morocco

Kawtar Abendag from Morocco and Ariane Massy from France are UN Volunteers with UN Women and help make public financial management gender inclusive. Both women support the Moroccan government in integrating gender into local budgets. Thus making sure public finances are used for women’s empowerment.

Kawtar Abendag is a UN Youth Volunteer serving with UN Women in Morocco. She is a Gender Responsive Budgeting Programme Assistant for Communications and Knowledge Management.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) ensures an equitable distribution of public resources for the benefit of all. It does not mean that there should be a separate budget for each gender rather it means that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the public budget cycle. From planning the budget, to spending the resources, and to the final audits.

Kawtar’s role is to collect knowledge in progress for gender-responsive budgeting. She obtains this through training, conferences, workshops, programmes, and project implementation.

The thorough statement of a government’s priority is expressed through its budget, which determines how funds are used and who benefits from them. Morocco’s implementation of gender responsive budgets is an important milestone in the government’s priority for gender equality. Now public spending decisions have more consideration for the needs of women and girls.
Gender equality is not a silo, it’s a cross-cutting issue!” -- Kawtar Abendag, UN Youth Volunteer with UN Women in Morocco.

Kawtar believes that there needs to be a mandatory part in budgets to respond to gender-specific needs and contribute to closing persistent gender gaps. She supports the Ministry of Economy and Finance to promote gender-responsive budgeting through the Center of Excellence for Gender-Responsive Budgeting, established in 2013 with support from UN Women.

People don’t usually understand the connection between gender equality and public expenditure, but the two are closely interconnected. When investing in making institutions considerate of the needs and vulnerabilities of women, they become more beneficial for the entire population.” -- Kawtar Abendag, UN Youth Volunteer with UN Women in Morocco.

Ariane Massy, UN Volunteer Specialist serves as Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Programme Assistant. She supports the collaboration between UN Women and various sectoral ministries in Morocco, and carries out gender sectoral analysis. This type of analysis identifies gender gaps, and the necessary sex-disaggregated data important for strategic planning and gender-responsive budgeting.

While identifying the main gaps to effective gender mainstreaming in budget programming, Ariane also makes recommendations to address these gaps. She refers to one diagnosis that says exposure to harassment is one of the risks women face when seeking public administration services.
Offering online service delivery tools was found to reduce and mitigate the risk of women being harassed or feeling intimidated. However, it’s important to maintain the digital sphere a safe space for women.” -- Ariane Massy, UN Volunteer Specialist with UN Women in Morocco.

Ariane organizes awareness-raising and training sessions on gender-responsive budgeting for public civil service and administration, where she explains the usefulness of the tool and how it can be utilized.

Highlighting how these new practices could positively impact the entire society, not only women, help in advocating for budget programmes with a gender dimension.” -- Ariane Massy, UN Volunteer Specialist with UN Women in Morocco

Kawtar and Ariane add a gender lens to public finance management. Through their UN Volunteer assignments, they bring gender equality under spotlight in Morocco and say, "Education, healthcare and other services are available, but equal access to these remains a challenge. The essence of volunteering lies in leaving no one behind and making things easier for everyone. And that’s what we aim to achieve!”

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Arab States

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Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 5: Gender equality** **SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**