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# GRB CHAMPIONS

## GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:

## THE CASE OF GJAKOVA

Prepared by:

Name of the organization: **Kosovo Women's Network**Name of country: **Kosovo**Sector: **Local Governance**

### GRB tools used:

- Sex-disaggregated Analyses of Budget Impact;
- Gender-responsive Budget Circulars;
- Gender-responsive Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks;

### GENDER-RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Gender-responsive budgeting is a strategy for integrating a gender perspective in government planning and budgeting. As of 2015, the Law on Gender Equality has made gender-responsive budgeting mandatory for all public institutions in the Republic of Kosovo including ministries, **municipalities**, and other budget organizations. Many initiatives towards institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting in Kosovo began long before that. Among them, in 2014, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) created a training curriculum and launched the Practical User's Guide on how to apply gender responsive budgeting at the local level, supported by GIZ and internationally renowned expert Dr. Elisabeth Klatzer. This curriculum was adopted by the Agency of Gender Equality and the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration, and it has been used to train several municipalities on how to apply gender-responsive budgeting correctly.

Among the first municipalities to pilot this methodology for "doing" gender responsive budgeting in Kosovo was the Municipality of Gjakova. In 2015, KWN formed an alliance with the Municipality. KWN experts provided training to municipal directors and finance officers, followed by ongoing mentoring during the process of preparing gender analyses of expenditures in prior years, supported by the

Austrian Development Agency. Gender analysis was used to inform potential objectives, indicators, and actions that the Municipality could incorporate in its budget for 2016.

Since then, the Municipality of Gjakova has continued to work towards improving the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting within their Municipality.

### THE CASE OF GJAKOVA

*"We understand that gender budgeting is not only allocating funds for gender equality," said the Mayor of Gjakova, Mr. Ardian Gjini in October 2021. "It is more than that: the building of kindergartens, social housing, increasing the number of women-led businesses through subsidies, benefiting the whole Municipality, and not just women, though primarily it seeks to improve their position in society."*

The Municipality's continued use of gender-responsive budgeting has resulted from officials' understanding of the important role that this approach plays in enabling them to better meet the needs of their constituents. They therefore consider gender-responsive budgeting an important part of their work.

Moreover, since 2016, Budget Circulars issued by the Ministry of Finance have requested that all budget organisations, including municipalities, should submit a gender-responsive budgeting annex containing sex-disaggregated data related to planned expenditures. The Circulars call for budget organizations to highlight the effects of public spending on gender equality in the budget for the upcoming year. The Municipality of Gjakova has continually submitted this annex since 2017, seeking to allocate their budget based on gender analysis.

One example of their many efforts towards gender-responsive budgeting is integrating affirmative measures in procurement processes. According to the Director of Finance, Mr. Durim Halili, the Municipality of Gjakova provides additional points to women-led businesses during procurement processes for the allocation of state subsidies. This is a temporary affirmative measure, as allowed for by the Law on Gender Equality, towards accelerating the realization of gender equality among women and men in areas where inequalities exist. Considering that women are underrepresented in business and entrepreneurship, this affirmative measure indeed addresses a local need.

With experience over time, the Municipality has observed that some sectors and departments are more gender-responsive than others, and that the Municipality can take further steps to improve gender equality in certain sectors. "We need to focus on supporting women in politics, as they are more underrepresented in this sector than in others, such as in the public administration," Mayor Gjini said.

*"We lack gender-disaggregated data, but we are trying to change this by working together with representatives of each municipal directorate,"* explained Ms. Lumnije Shllaku, the Municipal Gender Equality Officer.

Ms. Shllaku emphasised that the training and mentoring that they have received from KWN and the Agency for Gender Equality, among others, has had a positive impact on their everyday work, especially when it comes to planning public spending. Mayor Gjini attributes the Municipality's success to good communication and cooperation within the municipal institutions in Gjakova. *"Reaching results has to do with cooperation and teamwork, and that is what we do here; we work together,"* he said.

The Gender Budget Watchdog Network has continued to support gender-responsive budgeting efforts in this Municipality through its member organization, Kosovo Woman Initiative, which has monitored and mentored the Municipality in using gender-responsive budgeting tools in preparing their budget requests for 2022. The Kosovo Woman Initiative has presented several recommendations to the Directorate of Finance during public consultations regarding budget appropriations, which have been welcomed by municipal officers.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

Key success factors for Gjakova's work on gender-responsive budgeting have included political will, that is support from key officials in the municipality to institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting in their work; and training followed by tailored mentoring, provided by KWN and its member organizations in this municipality. Learning to conduct gender-responsive budgeting effectively requires time and continuous effort by public officials.

## MAIN OBSTACLES

The main obstacle has been collecting and maintaining sex-disaggregated data. Without this data, it is difficult to conduct gender analyses that will inform the budget. Indeed, the systematic collection of relevant data is a legal obligation under the Law on Gender Equality and is needed to inform the budget proposal.

