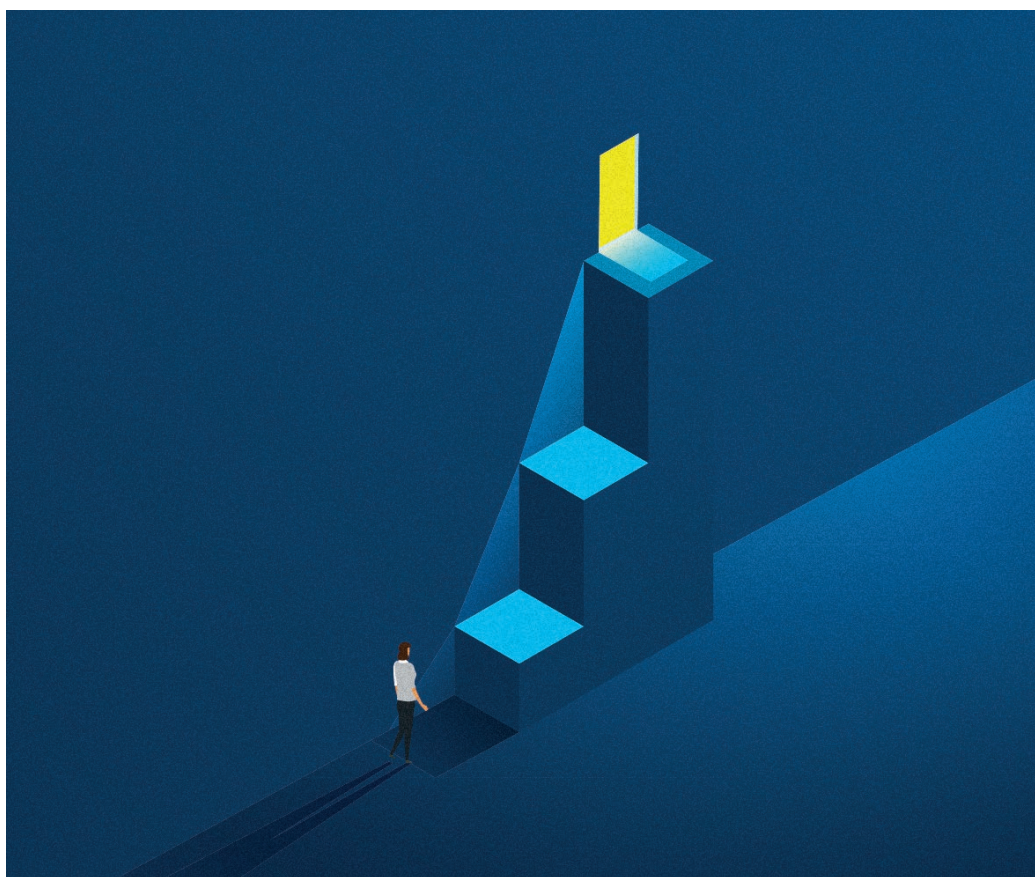


Newsletter #6

# Eight thematic areas and 36 GRB initiatives: the successful stories of the GBWN's sub-granting scheme

in the framework of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network in Western Balkans and Republic of Moldova\*



\*GBWN is a network of CSOs that use gender budget watchdog reports and appraise gender budget initiatives in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova and Serbia



# GENDER BUDGET BRIEF

## Impressum

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## Foreword



Did you know that women in Kosovo spend 11% of their average annual net salary on menstrual products, whereas 29,5% of women in Macedonia do not have regular access to menstrual products due to the high price? Have you heard that men in Macedonia benefit 5 times more compared to women from the state financial support on agriculture? ... or that in the framework of the sport programs in Balti, Republic of Moldova, the enrolment ratio is 75% in favor of boys and only 25% enrolled girls? Yes, these are just some of the critical findings that GBWN sub grantees have detected and work on. Namely, even in times of Covid-19 crises, 36 Gender Budget Watchdog Network members remained active in monitoring and advocating for more tangible budget allocations aimed at enhancing gender equality and meeting different women's and men's needs.

Working in eight areas such as Citizen's participation in budgeting and capacity building for GRB, Social and child care, Sport and education, Disability, Women economic empowerment, Regular and menstrual hygiene, Domestic violence and Women's farmers the GBWN members managed to engage more than 40.000 citizens and relevant decision makers. Involving various vulnerable groups and categorizes of women such as victims of domestic violence, female farmers, women and girls in social risk, long term unemployed, underrepresented women on local and central level, persons with disabilities as well as girls and boys from different ethnic background they managed to detect challenges and obstacles that

affect on basic human rights and started drafting feasible GRB initiatives that provide working solutions for them to enforce the right to equal opportunities through the local and central budget allocations for their needs.

Additionally, serious focus has been put on enhancing the GRB capacities and skills of municipalities' and central governments' representatives working on programming and budgeting ensuring sustainability of commitments and institutionalization of the GRB concept in the planning, spending, and reporting on the municipal and central budget.

This gender budget brief gives you a summary of all initiatives that are currently being implemented by CSOs in Western Balkans and Republic in Moldova. As we are in the process of adoption of the 2022 budget around the region, we are of course monitoring on the success in the advocacy of GBWN members and will follow up with other gender budget briefs sharing achievements.

Until the next GBWN Newsletter edition, we wish you Merry Christmas and Happy New Year (hopefully, with more GRB initiatives in our regions).

**Yours sincerely,**

**Marija Risteska**

on behalf of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network



**Ernera Dushica**  
Kosovo Women's Network



**Slavica Striković**  
Women's Action



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# Citizen's participation in budgeting and capacity building for GRB

## CSOs in the region implement projects and initiatives focusing on:

- ✓ enhancing women's participation on local level;
- ✓ echoing women's voice and needs on central level;
- ✓ building capacities for securing gender sensitive funds through planning and execution.



**Ženska Vizija** from Tuzla is working on comprehensive research that could not identify a single GRB initiative raised in the town and that the gender equality concept is applied on a ad-hoc base, without integrated and systematic approach. In addition, women continue to be out of the planning and implementation processes. So, ŽenskaVizija

- ✓ strengthened local authorities' capacities

in order to make them knowledgeable on the GRB topic, both in terms of content and implementation;

- ✓ the CSO already mobilized and grasped opinions and recommendations from various groups from the political, social and public life spheres;
- ✓ Gender Action Plan of Tuzla is the final aim of their intervention.



Similar approach is taken by **Genesis**, in Anenii Noi district of Moldova which have identified that local authorities have insufficient knowledge and capacities to design and implement gender sensitive public policies, so they do not reflect women's and men's different needs and priorities. Additionally, there is no analysis on the extent to which men and women, girls and boys benefit from public finances as local residents remain to be out of the participatory process. Genesis has opted to:

- ✓ engender local development strategy in three villages;
- ✓ approach the District Council Secretary, Finance Directorate and Social Assistance Directorate to discuss the need of GRB introduction and the necessary allocations in the 2022 budget to promote gender equality at district level;
- ✓ raise awareness as well as improve knowledge of public authorities on gender responsive budgeting.



#### Organization for Local Reform EULOC

who are focusing on institutionalizing the GRB component in the regular work of the Municipality of Viti in Kosovo have monitored the work of several municipal departments such as Budget and Finance, Agriculture, Cadastre, Health and other municipal institutions within the Municipality of Viti.

The willingness and readiness of the local authorities for tangible progress towards comprehensive use and application of the

GRB in Viti was demonstrated by signing a Memorandum of Understanding, allowing for 15 volunteers to monitor their work and gender results. As a follow-up to that Memorandum of Understanding EULOC created a watchdog report with recommendations based on their monitoring and presented this report at the closing roundtable where several key stakeholders were present, reflecting on their commitments and obligations.



**EUNI** that is working in Municipality of Doljevac – Malošište, Serbia has managed to mobilize 148 local residents, both men and women via 16 meetings in 8 local communities aiming at noting their needs, expectations and opportunities for their welfare in this rural municipality. Consequently, EUNI organized two workshops with local government representatives and entrepreneurs in 8 local communities, at which they presented the gender different needs of the citizens to inform the process of development of the Local Action Plan – LAP. The aim is to support

activities and efficiency of gender equality mechanisms and implementation of gender equality policies and obligations at the local level. EUNI succeeded in:

- ✓ Mobilisation and awareness raising of local people
- ✓ Capacity building and external support to gender equality mechanism
- ✓ Increasing the number of gender responsive budget programmes and amounts planned for gender equality policies, including budgeting of GLAP development!



#### The Youth Association for Human Rights

**(YAHR)**, working with Municipality of Lipjan organized several community meetings aiming at collecting ideas, proposals and suggestions for improving still present underrepresentation of women in the local decision making processes, including the local police unit.

- ✓ YAHR launched their research report titled “Gender Mainstreaming in Local

Institutions in Lipjan” where they recommend strategies that would help the Directorate of Administration and the Kosovo Police Station in Lipjan to improve gender equality, particularly by increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions.

An extensive community advocacy campaign is building on their research and monitoring activities.



**BUM– Becej Youth Association** is analyzing and monitoring the Municipality of Becej's budget and its Local Action Plan on Gender Equality (LAP) in order to foster the gender policies and programs and enhance local gender equality goals. The organization found out that there are gaps in the GRB implementation, annual plans for GRB are not adopted, and the process is not transparent and planned and there are no reports about the realization and the results of funded activities

and projects.

BUM will pave the way to:

- ✓ the monitoring report of LAP implementation with the aim to also inform the process of its revision in 2022.
- ✓ tracking the implementation of planned projects and contributing to LSG accountability.
- ✓ establishment of gender responsive participatory budgeting practise.



**EcHO Educational Humanitarian Organization** from Shtip, Macedonia pioneered several steps for introducing the GRB in the overall operation of Municipality of Shtip by mobilizing a significant portion of the local residents, from different groups such as Roma women, single parents / mothers, social aid recipients, victims of violence, female workers from the leather and textile industry, and etc. Basically, they are applying four steps approach – focus groups, workshops for improving local residents' knowledge on GRB, open days for drafting gender sensitive ideas that will im-

prove the all-day life of women in Shtip and later developing GRB initiatives presenting them to the municipal administration.

The gender budget initiative of EcHO includes:

- ✓ improved street lightning
- ✓ water pipeline extensions,
- ✓ safe children playgrounds in appropriate locations and others.

EcHO managed to mobilize more than 1000 citizens in their activities, a number that is expected to grow with their advocacy campaign.



**Open dialogue network** from Montenegro directs their GRB efforts in three municipalities Berane, Bar and Nikšić. Their initial research is to determine gender gaps by analyzing the number of employed women and men in all positions, identifying gender pay gap, but also the differences in the nature of the work they cover. This will serve to inform the gender action plan of the municipality with which they will enhance gender equality. At the same time, Open dialogue network anal-

yses what part of each of local budget is allocated for women's NGOs and their activities and will compare it to the total allocations for the whole civil society sector in each of the mentioned municipalities to see the ratio and eventual gaps in the allocation processes. This analysis will also allow for generating recommendations on how through public funding for gender equality status of women and men in Berane, Bar and Nikšić can be improved.



**Expert-Grup Independent Think Tank** from Moldova carried out an analysis of the State Budget Law for 2021 through “gender lens”. With no gender sensitive budgeting principles, gender segregated data, lack on impact analysis on how Covid-19 affects students, men and women from the vulnerable groups, rural

women, the 2021 budget failed to address the one who are most in need. Expert Group is expected to result with concrete data and recommendations for the next budgetary cycle and make the next year’s budget more gender sensitive, especially in terms of addressing needs of the vulnerable groups.



Finally, Montenegrin **NGO SPES** developed Guide to Gender Responsive Budgeting for persons who work on creating the budget in 10 spending units of budget of Montenegro and employees in Ministry of Finance - Directorate for State Budget. Guide provides:

- ✓ basic information about national and international legal framework for gender responsive budgeting as well as definitions of budget, program budget and gender-responsive budget, explains the preparation of the Government's Macroeconomic and

Fiscal Policy Guidelines.

- ✓ The chapter GRB from circular to implementation provides guidance on how to introduce gender mainstreaming in all phases of budget cycle.

Their conclusions also shows the benefits that Montenegro would have by introducing gender-responsive budgeting at all levels of government where the budget is planned, drafted, adopted and executed.



## Social and child care

Variety of projects related to strengthening the communication channels between local authorities and communities aiming at enhancing gender equality, restructuring the social schemes and subsidies and ex-ante gender analysis were just some of the activities that GBWN sub grantees have focus on in relation to this strand.



Partneri from Serbia are applying gender impact assessment over the Law on Social Cards. This Law has been adopted without ex - ante gender analysis and with limited participation of women's groups although the Law itself greatly affects women.

There are several unfavourable consequences of the Law on the wellbeing of women: The Law introduces the term "related persons" which, even for women who are victims of partner violence could be a former spouse or extramarital partner (Article 12, paragraph 4) and could potentially limit access of these women to the

right to social protection services. Also, the intention of the Law is to reduce social protection rights expenditure which will impact women substantially by reducing the income from social protection rights and increasing women's poverty unpaid care work.

The project will also result in an example of ex-ante gender analysis and Partners Serbia will advocate for its application in the process of public policy development, foreseen by the Planning System Law and accompanied methodology.



**Citizens' Voice** researched that women and girls in Municipality of Lushnje are poorly informed on the GRB as a concept. After comprehensive trainings and workshops, "Citizens' Voice" successfully organized joint meeting with the representatives from the Administrative Unit "Manasufaj" on the topic of GRB. The meetings resulted in:

- ✓ strengthening the collaboration between

the CSO "Citizens Voice" and the local officials;

- ✓ a joint letter was sent from the women who live in Manasufaj village requesting the opening of a kindergarten in the village which will facilitate the access of rural women to the regular labor market.

The costing of the intervention is under way.



The CSO **New Epoch** in the Municipality of Fier in Albania, echoed citizens' voices in the villages of Shtyllas, Levan, Ferras, Topoje and Seman on the need for municipal funded programs and projects on gender equality. This resulted with the following changes at the Municipality of Fier budget for the year 2022:

- ✓ 500.000 (five hundred thousand) Albanian Leks (approximately €4100) in the 2021

budget, that will be distributed in the form of grants to the CSOs based on the submitted proposals with a focus on vulnerable women;

- ✓ mobilized more than 1000 local women during the implementation of their activities through informal meetings and media campaign;



**Vlora Youth Center**, a sub grantee from Albania is bringing together the Strategic Management Group (SMG), the staff of the Economic Assistance and Social Care Directorate, the Directorate of Financial Planning and Budget of the Municipality of Vlora in one place in order to secure that the municipal social services programs planning and their funds execution are taking into consideration the needs of marginalized women and other beneficiaries. By performing gender budget expenditure analysis, Vlora Youth Center is advocating for unified social care budget programs in a single document, in which all expenditure, both the salaries for in house staff and CSOs transfers will be projected to ensure easy going monitoring.

Vlora Youth Center's also combines capacity building activities by preparing an informative leaflet for local citizens on the importance of GRB, regular community meetings and building communication channels and precise consultation calendar that will secure that 2022 municipal budget will be drafted in a manner that meets and fits both men and women needs. Vlora Youth Center has:

- ✓ mobilized more than 106 (84F/22M) local residents in Vlora;
- ✓ paved the way for systematic inclusion of all costs and transfers under the social care budget that will ensure better monitoring;
- ✓ built capacities of citizens and raised awareness for participatory budgeting;



**Kosovo Woman Initiative (KWI)** was watchdogging the Municipality of Gjakova's budget for 2021, conducting gender beneficiary assessment of their social schemes and subsidies. KWI has concluded that GRB is not adequately present in the planning and execution phases, whereas women are not beneficiaries of the social scheme and subsidies provided by

Gjakova budget. With their insights from the execution of the 2021 budget, KWI has monitored the drafting of the 2022 budget alongside citizens' mobilization and has presented their recommendations that will make next year's budget more gender sensitive to the key stakeholders in the municipality.



Another success is coming from the City of Durres, achieved by the **Civil Society Development Center (CSDC)**. Through series of community meetings, close cooperation with local authorities on the importance of GRB, and community engagement in the administrative units of Sukth, Katundi Ri and rural areas of Durres, they increased the knowledge among the relevant stakeholders for promoting and monitoring on GRB. In addition, CSDC collected several ideas on improving the lo-

cal services based on the different needs of men and women in the sphere of care, road infrastructure, education, housing and sports. Suggestions for including some of the citizens requests in the upcoming budget plan were drafted and submitted to the municipality.

- ✓ With more than 1200 mobilized citizens in the abovementioned administrative units, out of which 812 were women, they are on the right path of enhancing the GRB concept in the City of Durres.



## Sport and education

Sport, education and STEM remain to be critical areas where women remain to be under-represented, in almost all project/activities cycles. Having this in mind, GBWN sub grantees are trying to change the situation via monitoring reports, advocacy and lobbying in order to shape local programs and activities to be equally accessible for all.

Asociația pentru Drepturile Omului

### Lex 21

The first one is from **ADO LEX XXI** from Republic of Moldova are working on reducing the gender-based disadvantages in accessing local sport programs and modifying those programs in a way that will ensure equal access as well as equitable funding both for boys and girls in the schools in Balti. ADO LEX XXI's initial research shows that enrolment ratio in the respective programs is 75% in favor of boys and only 25% enrolled girls. They have:

- ✓ involved about 40 employees of four sports schools in their research activity to raise awareness on gender responsive budgeting in sport;

- ✓ developed a watchdog report based on their monitoring of sport school's expenditures and presented the report to the administration of sport schools and to the Municipal Directorate of Education, Youth and Sport requiring to rebalance the sport schools spending for ensuring gender equality in sport;
- ✓ filed a lawsuit together with other social activists on the Municipal Council that failed to ensure a fair and gender responsive allocation of funds for sport teams and favoured only one small group of male football players.



**Fokus** from Veles, Macedonia assessed the gender impact of e-learning during the Covid 19 crises and recommended:

- ✓ different and just division of the smart devices for e-learning aiming at including everyone in the education process, leaving no one behind;
- ✓ educational and training activities for

teaching staff in order to increase their knowledge and familiarity with the gender equality principles and apply it in the teaching

- ✓ advocating for 802.424 Macedonian denars to be allocated to these activities in the Veles budget for 2022.



Mitrovica Women Association for Human Rights gender budget watchdog report detected:

- ✓ Non-compliance of Municipality of Mitrovica's programs and budget allocations with GRB,
- ✓ insufficient implementation of laws on gender equality by the local authorities,
- ✓ absence of women in participation in decision-making positions,
- ✓ gender imbalance among the beneficiaries of subsidies,
- ✓ favoring grants to non-governmental organizations and sports clubs run by men

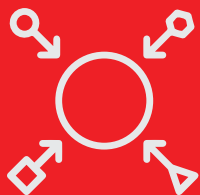
and lack of skill among municipal servants were the main highlights from the research done

It's members are now focused on increasing the capacities among the local municipal servants on the GRB institutionalization and implementation phases, simultaneously mobilizing citizens to be knowledgeable and capable to perform "pressure" on government for more accountable budget planning and budget spending responding to their needs. TV debates, extended social media presence, press articles are just some of the tools to reach to as more citizens.

## GENDER-CENTRU

Gender - Centru from Moldova is working on improving the role of universities in increasing women's participation in society. Their initial investigation shows urgent need for enhancing policies and budgets of universities to address the needs of boys and girls in ICT having in mind the gender gap in ICT sector, where women are still underrepresented. Namely, according to the National Bureau of Statistics,

only 4.6% of the girls studying in higher education choose STEM (Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics) as their study profile; in addition, women's salaries in the ICT sector are by 33% lower than the salaries of men. They are still in process of developing a concrete recommendations and plans for overcoming the current situation, upon which intensive advocacy camping is expected.



# Disability

The lack of serious reporting and monitoring on the local and national disability programs cause stagnation among disabled persons while practicing their basic human rights, whereas existing programs remain to bring limited progress in this filed, especially now in times of Covid-19. That is why, our sub-grantees are suggesting revision and improvements based on recently gained data and evidences.



## The Alliance of Organizations for People with Disabilities from (AOPD) research shows that

- ✓ disabled persons faced increased vulnerability and risk of discrimination as a result of Covid-19, simultaneously struggling with the sill present challenges while communing due to the poor public infrastructure.
- ✓ the National Program on Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2017-2022 has been developed without ex-ante analysis, and lacks crucial elements which results in being gender blind, both in terms of the

programs and monitoring indicators.

- ✓ no mid-term evaluation has been conducted which causes serious concerns alongside with the lack of gender disaggregated data which significantly affects the forecasting and planning processes.

The gender budget initiative of AOPD will suggest revision of the Budget Program 90 “Social Protection” aiming at establishing gender sensitive performance indicators and tailor-made state help in line with disabled women and men needs.



**Udruženje mladih sa hendikepom** from Montenegro researched that out of 323 projects funded from 2018 to 2020 from the public funds directed towards people with disability and found out that only four were related to rights of women with disabilities. That is why, they

are developing strong advocacy campaign that will result in improved planning of policies and funding of projects and programs for NGOs in order to meet and address the needs of persons with disabilities, especially women who face with multi level discrimination.



**The Initiative of Youth with Disabilities of Boka** is trying to eliminate the inequality of employing persons with disabilities in Montenegro. The organization determined that though relatively comprehensive legal framework is in place, fund are not equally distributed and do not result with gender balanced entry to the labor market for women with disability. They conducted beneficiary assessment, cost-benefit and efficiency analysis over the Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. Final results were used to intervene in Draft Strategy

on Development of Women's Entrepreneurship for the period 2021-2024, prepared by the Ministry of Economic Development.

The success from this intervention is obvious – the respective authorities accepted almost all of the recommendations making the document more sensitive to women with disabilities on the information and financial support needed to start their own businesses, as well as on the educational component for stakeholders at local and national level on needs of women with disabilities for strengthening the support in the entrepreneurship area.



# Women economic empowerment

The consequences of Covid-19 to women's position on the labor market, the lack of knowledge and skills for career progression among women, unequal capture of the managerial positions between men and women were just some of the topics that GBWN sub grantees were interested for investigating presenting effective ideas and recommendations for budget interventions on local and central level for overcoming current obstacles and challenges.



**Finance Think** from Macedonia conducted beneficiary assessment of the implementation of the Operational plan for active measures and programs on employment and provided recommendations how it can better respond to women's needs considering that the prevailing stereotypes, the lack of professional skills as well as Covid-19 influence for higher number of men to benefit from the state measures, whereas more women beneficiaries are using measures

that do not guarantee long term employment. FT suggested budget modifications for the Employment Agency in terms of increasing women's labor activity, better inclusion of women in entrepreneurship development programs, and accessing education through reconciliation of household and family responsibilities so that the active employment measures for 2022 result with at least 250 female beneficiaries.



**Protecta** from Serbia are focusing on assessing the effectiveness of the local policies in the field of support to small and medium enterprises and social entrepreneurship at the local level, in the City of Nis. The rise to the analysis is given by COVID 19 impact on female entrepreneurs and gender analyses that showed huge inequalities in distribution of subsidies by the Innovation Fund and lack of genderresponsiveness in the implementation of various programmes aimed at entrepreneurship development and support.

- ✓ Protecta found out that in the City of Nis sex segregated data are not available and LSG do not know how much money have been invested in women's entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Protecta prepared recommendations and concrete ideas for LSG on how to support women's entrepreneurs
- ✓ Protecta prepared a guide for GRB for the local gender equality mechanism, held meetings with LSG representatives and promoted GRB in local media and events.



Women Business Association (Udruženje Poslovnih Žena) from Kosovo has monitored the funding for the Gender Equality Office and women economic empowerment with a focus on subsidies for women entrepreneurs in the four Serb-majority municipalities on the northern part of Kosovo. Namely, they are

giving special attention to the procurement policies and start-ups. They have assessed that gender is not a priority in these municipalities and are compiling a watchdog report with their findings on this matter, upon which an advocacy campaign will be implemented.



# Domestic violence

Within this year's 16 days of activism against violence against women, the GBWN members have implemented diverse actions that aim both at prevention from violence as well as support to the victims.



**Women's Association Priroda** from Bosnia and Herzegovina upon detecting that the Municipality of Bratunac's support system has failed during Covid-19 and the rapid increase of reported (19 in total in the given time) and unreported cases have been noticed, are working on its upgrade in order to provide full support even in case of an emergency. With relevant GRB tool, Women's Association Priroda are engaged in integrating the support system on

victims of domestic violence in the budget allocations for 2022; as a first step towards that direction was enhancing the signatories of the relevant stakeholders to the Protocol on ending VAW in the Municipality of Bratunac. Parallel with the lobbying, this organization is performing intensive "street" campaign distributing 100 leaflets about information on what is violence, how to recognize it, how to prevent it and how to act/address in case of an incident.



FORUMI I GRUAS ELBASAN

**Woman's Forum from Elbasan**, Albania has managed an emergency shelter for women, girls and survivors of domestic violence for many years. However, during August 2021 the rent of this emergency shelter was not funded by any donor, putting the organization in difficulties to keep it going on. Through the project supported by the GADC in the framework of the regional project "Gender Budget Watchdog Network in Western Balkans and Republic of Moldova" and this CSO, representatives consistently and with perseverant lobbying and advocacy activities, achieved to convince the mayor and the municipality of Elbasan council to support for 10 months the

rent of the emergency shelter.

In addition, Woman's Forum monitored the current budget programs and the Municipal Gender Equality Plan (2016-2020) and detected the need to:

- ✓ Increase the budget of the municipality for the women's social services centres;
- ✓ Support of survivors of domestic violence with social housing and possibilities for decent job places;

The organization also recommended the Elbasan municipality to support the local female football team through a budget line within the 2022 budget.



**Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy (KZLN)** from Tirana

worked both with women, girls and survivors of domestic violence of the administrative unit of Farke, Tirane and Baldushk to educate them on the importance of GRB. Additionally, KZLN was working with the municipal authorities on the matter of protection and support mechanisms for survivors of domestic violence. Their lobbying and advocacy resulted with:

- ✓ A specific program of financial support directly related to victims of domestic violence (DV), in the local budget of City of Tirana;
- ✓ Increase of capacity of a group of the so-

cial service workers of the Municipality of Tirana in regards to gender response actions, meaning that social workers now have more knowledge, they know how to interpret the budget. Before they had no idea how to and therefore faced difficulties to include the different requested receiving from the citizens.

- ✓ DV survivors database to address their immediate needs.
- ✓ Multidimensional support for survivors of DV through the Municipality/administrative unit office that deal with and have an active role in regards to domestic violence.



**Fenomena Association** from Kraljevo, Serbia is working on data collection about the investment in the protection of women and funding services for victims of GBV and GBV prevention. The focus is on funds and budgeting for SOS helplines, sustainability and availability of these important services for women.

Data will be collected about programs for prevention of GBV and SOS helplines from the line ministries (education, youth, social poli-

cy...) and for selected LSGs in which women's CSOs are working.

The framework for analysis are national laws and policies and the Istanbul convention ratified in Serbia in 2013.

The aim is to:

- ✓ increase sustainability of services for women and
- ✓ scale up systematic and structural prevention programs.



**Dragulj** from Montenegro are currently completing an analysis on the support for gender-based violence in two municipalities in northern parts of the country, as well as overview on the local budget allocations for the Multisectoral Local Team Combating Gender-Based Violence. The analysis so far shows that the allocations of local budgets for activities in the fight against

domestic violence are less than 0.002%. Such data will be the basis for:

- ✓ advocacy activities among local authorities to determine a fixed percentage of the local budget for next year, which will be intended to combat violence against women and children, which increased during the Covid-19 lockdown.



## Regular and menstrual hygiene

Aware of the importance for advocating the end of menstrual poverty the GBWN supports several civil society organizations that work on these issues.



**EcoKos Women – EKW**, from Kosovo have produced a gender budget report in which they calculated that each Kosovar family has, on average, 2.4 girls and women that have monthly menstruation. On average, a girl/woman spends €55.77 per year on menstruation products, amounting to €2,063 during her lifetime. This shows that 11% of the average annual net salary in Kosovo women spend on menstrual products (in 2019 it was €430, and €372 for employees in the private sector).

- ✓ EKW approached the Ministry of Finance, Tax Revenue and Customs Revenue offices in Kosovo to lobby and advocate for reduction/waving off the tax on menstrual products in order to make them more affordable for the Kosovo girls and women.
- ✓ EKW is working on providing support and action from the City of Prishtina for increasing the budget allocations for toilets renovation in the public schools which is closely related to regular, safe and timely management of the menstrual hygiene.



### Journalist for Human Rights from Macedonia

shows that in 74 schools in Macedonia, toilets have not been renovated for more than 15 years, whereas the rest for almost 10 years. One in three women do not have regular access to menstrual products for regulating their period and 75% have pointed that high prices of pads and tampons is the main reason for it. JHR is advocating for:

- ✓ lowering the tax rate of these products from 18% VAT to 5%VAT
  - ✓ subsidies for menstrual cups for the vulnerable women
  - ✓ free menstrual products in public schools.
- The Macedonian budget will need 2.6 mil € on an annual level for every girl in primary/secondary school to have free products according to JHR estimations.



**Radar** is a CSO that performed on the spot check on Macedonian highways, conducted focus groups with drivers (men and women) and received official data from the relevant institutions on the frequency and quality of the toilets along the highways. The watchdog report findings are following:

- ✓ the number of toilets is low,
- ✓ their quality of service does not provide safety standards and
- ✓ most of them are not accessible for people with disability. This reflects of

course the willingness and readiness of women to travel.

The costing of the initiative for gender sensitive public toilets that comply with relevant environmental, hygiene and disability standards showed that 2.5 mil Macedonian denars are needed for construction and 250.000 MKD for its maintenance. Radar developed scheme for financial feasibility and sustainability of its gender budget initiative and is currently conducting advocacy campaign to impact the 2022 Budget which is being discussed in Parliament.



## Women farmers

Agriculture was seriously affected in recent times, both economically, but also socially due to the increased workload and unpaid care that female farmers perform in their households. That is why GBWN is supporting organizations that will advocate and lobby for reforming the subsidies and state aid schemes with joint final aim - making them more accessible and achievable for female farmers.



**Women's Association Maja** has researched that women in Bratunac Municipality, as well as in general in the country, are often sidelined when it comes to ownership of land, businesses, etc. Namely, they have been monitoring local and central budgets allocated for agricultural development and figures show that do not meet the criteria for agricultural and rural development subsidies due to the fact that

- ✓ women rarely registered their businesses in agriculture and

- ✓ rarely have ownership over agricultural land
- ✓ their work remains to be treated as unpaid family support on the agricultural households

Women's association Maja will suggest modification of the granting schemes aiming at women empowerment, promotion of women's economic independence through women business ownership in the agricultural sector and local tourism.



## РУРАЛНА КОАЛИЦИЈА KOALICIONI RURAL

**Rural coalition** from Macedonia have identified only one measure, measure 115, which targets women and provides 250 women to access public money for their agricultural work. However, due to

- ✓ low level of information about the existence of supporting measures among women
- ✓ no land property registered by women which hampers the application process as property ownership is one of the criteria required
- ✓ the unpaid care work in the household women remain in marginalized position in the Macedonian agriculture sector and access less public finances provided by the

state budget. Therefore, Rural coalition proposed bigger support for women farmers through financial package in amount of 4.716.625.200MKD that includes

- ✓ trainings,
- ✓ increasing of state aid for supporting female farming,
- ✓ information and awareness raising campaigns on the existing supporting measures

They mobilized more than 200 rural women, but now are focusing on advocacy at the Ministry and the Agency for Financial Support in Agriculture and Rural Development for their recommendations to be embedded in the 2022 annual working plans and budget.