





Dear Gender budget watchdogs,

Working on policy processes is very exciting as changes you advocate for change lives of numerous people. The gender budget watchdog organizations in our network work on policy research and through use of GRB tools impact on local and national level budget programs and influence changes that decrease the gender gap between women and men.

We at the Gender Budget Watchdog Network monitor the work of all gender budget watchdogs and have identified the influences of their work on policy, budget managerial and professional practices, social behavior or public discourse. Such impact we believe is instrumental for development of also democratic values in the Western Balkans' societies.

So not only that the GBWN members through mentoring made first class analysis using GRB tools, but have in the past 10 months been involved in advocacy to influence policy making and induce changes in budget programs. The following Newsletter takes account of their successes using public forums and conferences to discuss various policy issues; publishing opinion pieces, newsletters, policy briefs, and studies for wide distribution, using social media and holding informal meetings with key policy makers to discuss the gender budget initiatives they developed using GRB tools.

Often, much of the advocacy efforts depend on intangible processes and are context dependent. But the following is a list of tangible results in 8 areas of work of the gender budget watchdog CSOs:

- Improving regular and menstrual hygiene;
- Increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Improved service delivery for victims of domestic violence
- Enhanced access to finance for women farmers
- Empowering women in business
- Improved GRB capacity of policy makers and
- Increased inclusivity of sports and education programs.

We of course keep on watching how the money is used including on these initiatives which we managed to persuade the governments (local and national) to implement in the 2022 budget year.

Best regards,

Marija Risteska,
CRPM Executive Director, GBWN Regional Director

Country**Problem****Achievement****Regular and menstrual hygiene**

- Lack of public toilets in Skopje and along Macedonian highways;
- Tackling menstrual poverty and reducing VAT in Kosovo and Macedonia;

- 100+ installed mobile toilets in City of Skopje;
- Renovated school toilet in Pristina;
- Allocated 32.000 € in City of Skopje's budget on free menstrual products for female high-school students;

Country**Problem****Achievement****Social and child care**

- No gender impact assessment over the Law on Social Cards in Serbia;
- Not-inclusive budget planning in Durres and insufficient allocation for social services;
- Child care duties impact women in Manasufaj village (Municipality of Lushnje, Albania) in labor market;
- Lack of women participation in local decision making in Municipality of Fier (Albania);
- Lack of GRB skills among the local administration in Vlora (Albania);
- No GRB planning in Municipality of Gjakova (Kosovo) and low women's participation;

- Ex-ante gender analysis performed alongside advocacy and promo campaign on the gender blindness of the respective Law on Social cards;
- Allocation of 54.000 € for the Durres Center for Social services and family and child empowerment;
- Allocation of 81.236 € for new / renovation of existing kindergartens in Lushnje's budget and additional 39.000 € on social services;
- Allocation of 124.250 € in Fier's budget for children with disabilities in rural areas;
- Improved gender responsive budgeting and reporting practices among Vlora's administration;
- Enhanced local dialogue on GRB in Municipality of Gjakova;

Country**Problem****Achievement****Disability**

- Challenging access to social services of women and men in Moldova and Montenegro;
- Insufficient funding for employment of persons with disabilities in Montenegro;

- Intensified national dialogue on GRB in social services sector in Moldova and continuous efforts for institutionalisation of GRB in the Ministry of Finance budgeting practices;
- 5% increased allocations for employment of disabled persons for 2022 in Montenegro and setting a target of 250 projects on persons with disabilities to be funded in 2022;

Country**Problem****Achievement****Women's farmers**

- Insufficient support for female farmers in Bratunac (BiH);
- Gender misbalanced distribution of agriculture support funds and insufficient allocation on supporting female farming in Macedonia;

- Increased access to finance for women farmers in Macedonia - Measure 115 doubled its value from 3.000 to 6.000 €;
- Inclusive policy process in Bratunac (BiH) on gender transformative municipal agriculture support measures;

Country



Problem

Domestic violence

- Insufficient budgeting for women victims of violence in Bratunac (BiH) and Elbasan (Albania);
- Low level of familiarity on GRB among women in the administrative unit of Farke, Tirane and Baldushk (Albania);
- Difficult access to labor market for women victims of domestic violence in Municipality of Berane (Montenegro);
- Insufficient funds for the local / national SOS lines on domestic violence in Serbia;

Achievement

- Allocation of 2.500.000 € for social services, safe street lighting, sports and entertainment, people with disabilities, support for the Social Center “Balashe” and decent housing in Elbasan;
- Consolidated budget allocation for social support towards categories in need, support for the National Counseling Line for Girls and Women 116 117 and other organizations in Albania;
- 2,5% increased budget allocations for enhancing employability among women victims in Municipality of Berane;
- Inclusive policy process in Bratunac (BiH) on gender transformative municipal measure for tackling domestic / gender based violence;
- Developed methodology and costing for SOS helpline services in Serbia;

Country



Problem

Women economic empowerment

- Lack of gender component in the national employability measures in Macedonia;
- Inequalities in distribution of subsidies by the Innovation Fund and lack of gender-responsiveness in the implementation of various programmes in City of Nis (Serbia);
- Scarce participation of women in the policy and decision-making processes in the Serbian majority municipalities in Kosovo;
- Insufficient women and men involvement in the decision-making process in Municipality of Mitrovica (Kosovo);

Achievement

- Introduced principle that 50% of beneficiary employment programs should be females in Macedonia;
- GRB integrated in City of Niš's Local Action Plan;
- Informed over 1.000 economically vulnerable women to take part in the public discussions on the municipal budgets (Serbian majority municipalities in Kosovo) on women economic empowerment;
- Increased capacities for Mitrovica municipal officers to undertake gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstream public policies on women economic empowerment;

Country



Problem

Sports and education

- (i)Low level of girls participation in programs offered by the sports schools from Balti municipality (Moldova) and (ii) need for more intensive engagement of Moldova universities in increasing women's digital competences;
- Lack of access to IT devices among vulnerable students in Municipality of Veles (Macedonia) for e-learning;

Achievement

- Raised awareness of sport schools employees, managers and municipal authorities on gender gap in sports in Balti municipality in Moldova and ensured transparency of sports' schools budgets;
- Allocations increased for IT devices in Municipality of Veles for cc. 3.000 €;
- In Moldova the issue of gender inequalities in ICT is put on the policy of relevant ministries;

Citizens' participation in budgeting and capacity building on GRB



- Lack of women's involvement and insufficient funds for women political empowerment in Municipality of Nikscic;
- Lack of information and awareness on national level in Montenegro on GRB and digital transformation;
- Need for more national measures in Moldova to support vulnerable groups;
- Lack of knowledge and awareness on GRB among the Anenii Noi district of Moldova's administration which results in gender blind strategies;
- Insufficient GRB practices in the Municipality of Bacej and Municipality of Doljevac, alongside scarce participation of vulnerable women in the budgeting process (Serbia);
- No GRB practice in City of Tuzla (BiH);
- Lasting challenges of women in Municipality of Stip in numerous all-day life aspects;
- No GRB mainstreaming / practices in Municipality of Viti and Municipality of Lipjan (Kosovo)

- In Montenegro 2.8% increased budget (cc. 64.910 €) for women's organizations in political entities in Niksic;
- Trained more than 1000 people in Montenegro on GRB and digital transformation;
- Increased amount of personal exemptions and the dependents exemptions with a fiscal impact of 290 million lei, supporting employers and employees in the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 with 150 million lei and supporting small domestic companies that are in financial crisis with 15 million lei in Moldova;
- 32 trained representatives of local authorities trained on GRB in Anenii Noi district in Moldova;
- In Serbia (i) for the first time, Municipality of Doljevac is developing Plan for introduction of GRB with allocations for agriculture, political system and social policy; and (ii) Commission and Council on gender equality in Municipality of Bacej established;
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina Tuzla's City Council adopted an initiative to procure a gynecological examination table for women with disabilities and adapt the gynecological ward, whereas two departments adopted gender responsive budgets for the first time;
- In Macedonia accepted budget initiatives in Štip on (i) fitness trainer for women and training space; (ii) psycho-social support for victims of violence; and (iii) Illumination of local road;
- In Kosovo signed a Memorandum of cooperation to gender mainstream all municipal directorates and involve more women in the decision making (Viti) and signed Memorandum of understanding and introduced an idea for new strategy for beneficiary employment programs in key institutions in Lipjan;