

## NETWORK NETWORKED

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

**Content development:** Zlatko Simonovski, Center for Research and Policy Making

**Editing:** Marija Risteska, Center for Research and Policy Making

**Design and layout:** Laze Tripkov

## Networking with other networks

In 2020, just when Covid-19 broke we were connecting GBWN with the prominent **Women's Budget Group** from UK. We signed a Memorandum of cooperation, exchanged and learned about the quantitative analysis methods they use between and within-household gender inequalities in income and employment and the gender impact of work-family and tax-benefit policies across UK. Were introduced with the impressive advocacy work of the Fawcett Society especially on gender pay gap, and the budget impact on women from different ethnic background work of the Runnymede Trust. GBWN experienced how a Budget Day can be organized, as our members participated together with public advocates who monitor the budget, as well as the gender equality advocates and relevant organizations from UK at the screening of the speech of the UK chancellor of the 2020 budget proposal to Parliament. We witnessed how activists provided fast response and comments to the key messages delivered by the Chancellor and the presented measures related to tackling

In the Covid-19 period we have networked online with the **Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice** that is an international women's human rights organization that advocates for gender justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and through domestic mechanisms, including peace negotiations and justice processes. With them and the Coalition of CSOs for the ICC we have participated in the consultation and provided contribution to the development of the first Draft Strategy on Gender Equality and Workplace Culture for the International Criminal Court. Together we are still exploring how to use GRB in the work of 4Gender Justice with women most affected by the conflict situations under investigation by the ICC, and extend the capacities of the grassroots partners and associates across multiple conflict areas they have to use GRB tools.



Photo GBWN: Budget Day at London School of Economics, March 2020

the consequences from the Covid-19 and on the general investments and spending plans of the government. This inspired GBWN members to produce monitoring reports, to analyze the fiscal impact on the crisis on gender equality and to organize itself Budget days in the respective countries of operation.





GBWN have exchanged experiences with **Femme Fiscal**, a network of feminist initiatives working on budgeting, tax policies and gender justice in Austria on the impact of Covid-19 on gender equality and have studied their approach in advocacy for post-Covid 19 recovery. The campaign Mehr für care which seeks for more funding for kindergartens, health care and social services, has been replicated as a mobilization strategy for civil society in 2022 in the Western Balkans and Moldova requesting for end of menstrual poverty and decrease of VAT for menstrual products.

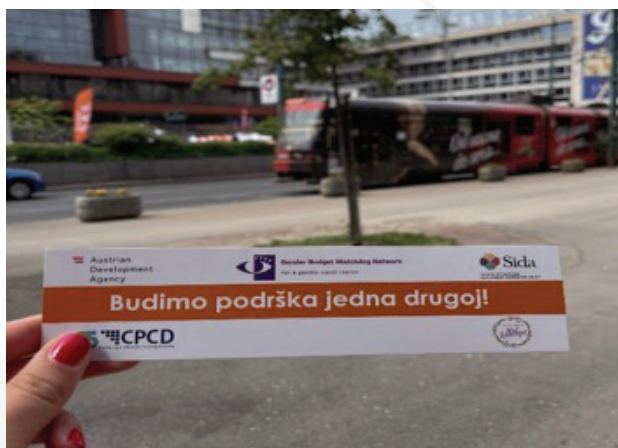


Photo GBWN: Menstrual Hygiene Day Campaign, Sarajevo



Photo GBWN: Menstrual Hygiene Day Campaign, Skopje





*Photo GBWN: Menstrual Hygiene Day Campaign, Novi Sad*

After Covid-19 situation subsided, the GBWN team visited Spain and Ireland to learn from their experiences. Spain is one of 15 OECD countries that use gender-responsive budgeting in its national and sub-national administrative budgets. Thence, the primary purpose of the study tour was to allow the GBWN representatives to gather first-hand GRB information by engaging in knowledge absorption, considering different perspectives and good practices, as well as by tapping into the existing knowledge, skills, and experiences in the field of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and interrelated issues of various stakeholders, such as CSOs, WCSOs, agencies, councils and associations. We learned from two different regional experiences: the region of

Andalucía (met the Ministry of finance, GRB Program representatives and CSOs), the region of Catalunya (met Ministry of finance, Institute for women and CSOs) and the City of Barcelona (City Council Director, Head of Department for Feminism and CSOs). The GBWN team saw in practise how pursuing a dual approach of gender mainstreaming combined with specific measures, moreover Nancy Fraser's gender justice concept, is applied and resulting with integrating women needs in public agenda, whilst transforming the public agenda by promoting preventive and empowerment measures; as well as feminist economy measures placing people at the centre of the policies, reorganization of work and time, using intersectional approach.



*Picture GBWN: Junta Andalucía*



*Picture GBWN: Municipal Council Barcelona*



In Ireland we met the most crucial actors for GRB – Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, MP Neasa Hourigan who serves as a Chairwoman of the Committee on Budgetary Oversight, representatives from the Higher Education Authority, focal points from the Women's Collective as well as with the director of the Irish Commission on Human Rights. Our official host was the National Women's Council

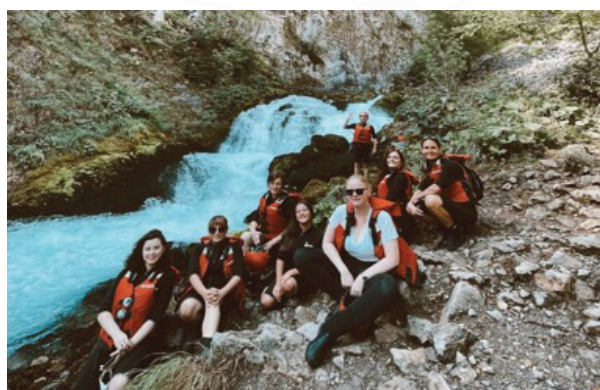
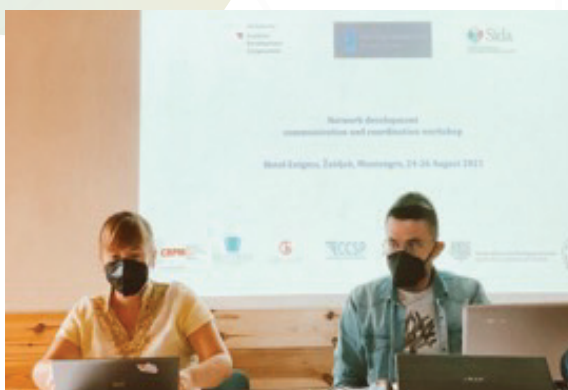
of Ireland, a sister network with which GBWN signed a Memorandum of cooperation. We have studied their four step budget watchdogging – late winter shadow reporting in light of the European budget semester, early spring membership meetings to echo citizen's needs and expectations, summer GRB pre-budget submissions, early autumn public meetings and events; and finalizing the advocacy / lobbying activities during the Budget Day in late October.



Picture GBWN: Signing memorandum with the WBG (2020) and NCWIE (2022)

## Networking within the network and team building

Despite networking with other networks GBWN organized networking meeting within the network leading towards the development of the founding documents of the network: Statute, communication guideline, Code of conduct and Value proposition funding model of the network. The network development meetings were also used to build closer relationships between the network members facilitated through team building excises and activities.



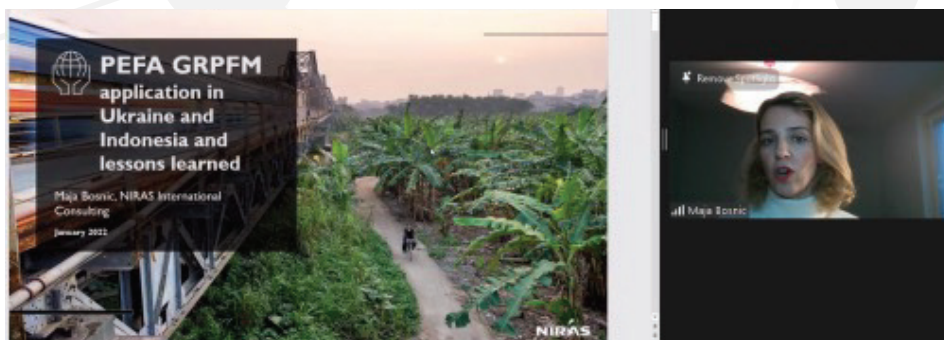
Picture GBWN: Network meeting in Žabljak, Montenegro (2021)



Picture GBWN: Network meeting in Durrës, Albania (2022)



In order to facilitate exchange and collaboration between network members and fellow CSOs from their country and the region on topics relevant to gender balance in public finance management, the GBWN has organized 3 webinars.



**“Ensuring Equality - Gender Responsive Public Finance Management and the Role of CSO”** - The goal of the webinar consisted in discussing public expenditures and financial accountability, also known as PEFA, specifically the supplementary framework for assessing gender-responsive public financial management and the role CSOs can have in enhancing the application of this methodology in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova. Some of the key messages from the networking on this topic to CSO members were that: budgets are not gender neutral; gender budgeting is better budgeting; building coalition can make us stronger; do not only advocate, put pressure on the government to use PEFA.



**“Quest for feminist post-COVID-19 recovery”** was the second webinar organized by GBWN to discuss the impact Covid 19 response has on gender equality, internalize the feminist roadmap for post covid recovery and mobilize for advocacy per the example of Femme Fiscal. As a result of webinar discussions the GBWN key advocacy priorities would be the following:

- To organize meetings with gender equality machineries and start a dialogue about their role and possibilities to influence governmental measures and plans;
- To do mapping of the measures for unpaid work reduction and unpaid work share between men and women and using Covid-19 recovery as a gamegoer;
- To start a campaign for increasing the value and visibility of unpaid work and the care economy;
- To continue watchdogging the public spending on recovery measures from a gender perspective and use the results for advocacy purposes



**“Gender Responsive Budgeting in Climate Change Action Funding”** was the third webinar organized with an aim to: increase understanding of linkages between gender equality, gender transformative actions and climate change response; discuss the approach to gender responsive budgeting watchdogging in climate change actions funding; explore CSOs’ intersectoral cooperation possibilities in the WB region. The following recommendations from civil society were defined:

- Simplify the language because it is too technical, not clear nor understandable to people who do not have knowledge on climate change issues;
- Reduce and recycle waste considering it is a factor that affect and harms the environment and climate; as well
- More info gathering on what the Government is doing and financing on climate change so CSOs know which indicators to use for tracking and monitoring its work.



