

## Comunitati in Actiune

### GRB tools used: costing analysis and advocacy;

**Overview** - Women's political participation is an important precondition for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Political parties are among the most important institutions for promoting and nurturing such participation. Ensuring women's equal participation in the decision making structures of political parties is essential for promoting gender equality within them and within society as a whole. Superficial efforts to increase the number of women involved in politics that offer no real qualitative influence or decision-making powers are unlikely to produce any new or immediate benefits. Overcoming obstacles in achieving gender equality in politics will require action in many areas. Financial obstacles are often identified as a major factor.

In 2019, the national legal provisions on public funding for political parties were improved to promote political participation of women and youth in the Republic of Moldova. For instance, political parties should use 20% of the annual subsidies received from the state budget to promote and encourage women's participation in political and electoral processes, and 10% - for young people political participation.

However, there is no documented evidence how the provisions on the annual state subsidies for the promotion of women and youth in political processes are implemented de facto by political parties and how the target groups benefit from them. At the same time, the reports presented by the political parties to the Central Electoral Commission shows a lack of transparency in the use according to the destination of the subsidies from the state budget allocated to promote and encourage the participation of women and youth in the political and electoral processes within many political parties.

Initial analysis conducted by Comunitati in Actiune revealed that many political parties did not allocated the necessary resources for this goal. For instance, a half of political parties that received subsidies from the state budget did not report spending on promoting and encouraging the participation of women and youth, and every third party reported spending lower than the special quotas of 30% provided by law in the first semester of 2022. During 2021, the use of financial resources with a special purpose for actions to promote and encourage the participation of women and youth in the electoral and political processes also recorded poor results. Thus, 41.4% of the political parties receiving subsidies from the state budget did not make expenses intended for the promotion of women and youth, and about 44.8% made expenses lower than the quotas established by law and only in the case of 13, 8% of political parties were declared higher expenses.

**GRB initiative** - Comunitati in Actiune CSO started to implement a GRB initiative within the GBWN project to tackle the underrepresentation of women and youth in decision-making positions within political parties and to approach the transparency of allocation of subsidies from the state budget to promote women and youth in political and electoral processes. The organization submitted requests for access to information to the political parties represented in Parliament and to the Central Electoral Commission in order to obtain sex and age disaggregated data on political parties' members. At the same time, Comunitati in Actiune CSO analyzed the annual reports submitted to Central Electoral Commission by political parties that benefited from the state budget subsidies in the last three years with special focus on the use of funds to promote and encourage women's and youth's participation in political and electoral processes.

Following the analysis of secondary data, Comunitati in Actiune CSO organized six focus group discussions with representatives of the women and youth wings of political parties (central and local levels) to identify perceptions on accessing funds for the implementation of activities aimed at increasing women and youth participation. The organization also conducted a survey in order to identify internal and structural barriers for women and youth representation in politics. Thus, 175 members of political parties participated in the survey, 91.4% of whom were women, from the following age groups: 18-35 years - 17.8%; 35-60 years - 75.9%; 60 + - 6.3%. In the focus group-discussions were involved 65 representatives of four political parties that accepted participation of which 93.8% were women.

The results of the GRB report were used by Comunitati in Actiune CSO to develop recommendations for key stakeholders and to organize a public event to discuss the reasons of poor implementation of subsidies from the state budget allocated to promote and encourage the participation of women and youth in the political and electoral processes. Additionally, the organization produced and disseminated a podcast on the importance of transparency in gender targeted public funding for political parties aiming also at promoting political participation of women and youth, including those from disadvantaged groups, and provided targeted training to more than hundred women members of political parties to respond to their identified needs.

Comunitati in Actiune CSO managed to channel public interest on a very sensitive and important topic such as the use of subsidies from the state budget by political parties to encourage the participation of women and young people in the political and electoral processes.

**Success of the GRB initiative** - Through this GRB initiative, the organization raised awareness on the problems related to reported expenditures by political parties that should target advancement of women and youth in politics and decision-making.

Many party members learned for the first time about the funding of political parties from the State Budget, which challenged and empowered party members with leadership positions to see this process as a participatory one, which would respond to specific needs of women and youth. On the other hand, the rank-and-file members of political parties have realized that each of them should take responsibility for ensuring transparency of funds' allocation within the political party and their use according to legal provisions.

The public event organized by Comunitati in Actiune CSO involved in active discussions on effective use of state subsidies to promote women and youth within political parties various stakeholders. The event gathered the Head of Policy Department for Ensuring Equality between Women and Men of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, representatives of the Central Electoral Commission, the Court of Accounts, the Public Services Agency, political parties and civil society.

Within focus group discussions with political parties' representatives, mainly women and youth, Comunitati in Actiune CSO identified a series of training topics of their interest. By the end of the GRB initiative, the organization trained 115 women, including young women members of four political parties on the role of personal brand in advancing their career within the political party.

**Success factors** - Keys success factors of the initiative are considered the previous experience of the NGO in working with political parties and the knowledge of barriers women and youth face in political participation. The participation of Comunitati in Actiune CSO project coordinator in a GRB training and the support offered by the GBWN team for the implementation of the initiative represented another factor that helped the organization to channel the discussion of key stakeholders on possible solutions and facilitators to advance political participation of women and youth.

**Main obstacles** - The main challenge of the initiative was the refusal of three out of four political parties represented in Parliament to provide sex and age desegregated data on their members. At the same time, the Central Electoral Commission does not have sex- and age-disaggregated data on members of political parties, which prevented the application of specific techniques for gender analysis of the beneficiaries of the state budget allocated for the participation of women and youth.