

INTERNATIONAL GRB FORUM

report

Going Glocal: Gender Responsive Budgeting in the
Western Balkans & Moldova

Advancing good governance
through empowering CSOs to use GRB tools

October 18-20, 2023
Skopje, North Macedonia

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INTRODUCTION

Forum Objectives:

- To present knowledge and experiences using different GRB approaches in transforming local communities, discussing how these can inform global strategies and methods;
- To devise methodologies and tools based on best global and local practices for tracking international funding towards gender equality through improving and developing new gender marker methodologies;
- To develop methodological ideas for GRB to better inform climate change mitigation and adaptation actions;
- To build synergies among existing networks, experts, and stakeholders working on these issues, towards future joint advocacy and action at national, regional, and international levels;
- To promote how empowering civil society to use GRB tools can serve as a strategy for advancing good governance in the Western Balkans and Moldova.

The [Gender Budget Watchdog Network](#), a network of around 100 civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Western Balkans and Moldova, brought together more than 80 participants from 20 countries at the **Gender Responsive Budgeting FORUM - “Going Glocal: Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Western Balkans & Moldova: advancing good governance through empowering CSOs to use GRB tools”** to link global expertise and local experience in using lessons learned to inform the development of GRB methodologies for tracking international funding for gender equality. Drawing from local expertise generated in the Western Balkans region and in Moldova, supported through different interventions of UN Women, the EU and the ADA and Sida support over the last decade, the forum served as shared space to exchange global methodologies, discussions, ideas and proposed methods for improving upon gender markers used by the OECD, EU, UN agencies and IFIs. At the same time the forum inspired application of GRB tools in regional development, resilience and environment protection/climate change financing. Finally, the conference provided lessons learned and best practices for how good governance can be advanced by empowering CSOs to use GRB tools, taking global experiences to inform future local initiatives.

The GRB Forum was a joint activity, implemented as well within the EU funded project “*Through gender lenses: appraising budgets and policies; watchdogging local action plans for gender equality implementation*” with the main objective to shape policies and budgets to respond to the needs of women and men, especially in times of crisis.

18th October – Opening Launch

The GRB Forum: *“Going Glocal: Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Western Balkans & Moldova: advancing good governance through empowering CSOs to use GRB tools”* started on 18th of October at **Triumphal Arc of Skopje by the Opening Launch of the second phase of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network, supported by ADA and Sida.** The opening emphasized our commitment to strengthen it as an active, recognized network that enhances civil society participation in policy and budget processes related to gender-transformative resilience response and climate change.

The opening remarks and insights during the launch festivity were delivered by the ADA Head of Office, Mr David Muckenhuber, the Swedish Ambassador to Macedonia, Ami Larsson Jain and the regional director of GBWN, Marija Risteska.



Photos: Opening Launch of the second phase of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network

19th October – 1st day of the Forum

The first day of the Forum, 19th of October, Thursday was attended by 82 women and 10 men, all together from 20 countries representing 60+ different international organizations, think tanks and regional and local civil society organizations.

The day started with the opening remarks from Marija Risteska, the regional director of Gender Budget Watchdog Network who opens the GRB forum emphasizing that the gender responsive budgeting is a transformative tool if used by international development organizations, central and local governments, therefore is important that all stakeholders, multilateral agencies, governments, regions, municipalities and CSOs apply the gender responsive budgeting tools. Commitments to this internationally and nationally are given.



Photo: GRB FORUM Opening remarks

The second speaker, Enver Husejin, Deputy Minister of labour and social policy pointed out that strengthening of the system, inclusion of women and inclusion of women means investment into the future for our children. And the third speaker for the opening, Lidija Arsova, Liaison with Member States and External Relations, CEI reminded the audience that all the social and economic hardships that we are facing is affecting the vulnerable groups at most.

PANEL ONE: Gender marking in development assistance: global & country methodologies for GRB

The panel opened the discussion on current methodologies for tracking financing, their strengths, shortcomings, and ideas for improvements, learning from global and local experiences. The discussion brought up the OECD, EU, and UN agencies' respective gender markers, and the use of tools to track financing towards gender equality. The speakers touched upon the weaknesses and benefits of various tools as well as reflected on the avenues for improvements in devising new tools for tracking funding for gender equality. The panel was moderated by Gloria Alarcon Garcia from University of Murcia.

Panelists' key statements:

Mona El-Chami Senior Public Sector Specialist, PEFA Secretariat: *"PEFA works in collaboration between all partners, World bank, EU partnership, UN Women and we all work towards improving the assessment of the data, there is a long way to go, but many things have been achieved."*

- **Mona El-Chami presented the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) program¹.**
- "PEFA Gender" is the PEFA supplementary framework for assessing gender responsive public financial management (GRPFM) is a set of nine indicators that measure the degree to which a country's PFM systems address the government's goals with regard to acknowledging different needs of men and women, and different subgroups of these categories, and promoting gender equality.
- Since PEFA Gender launch in 2019, 25 PEFA gender assessment were completed, 23 out of them are public, 19 are at the national level, 6 at the sub-national level, 7 assessments are in progress and additional 7 are planned.
- Indicator 6 is tracking budget expenditure for gender equality- this indicator measures the government's capacity to track expenditure for gender equality throughout the budget formulation, execution, and reporting processes (only one assessment got an A, one B, five got C, 18 got a D).

¹ PEFA was initiated in 2001 by seven international development partners: The European Commission, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the governments of France, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. PEFA began as a means to harmonize assessment of PFM across the partner organizations. It subsequently established a standard methodology for PFM diagnostic assessments, the PEFA framework. In 2019, the Ministries of Finance of the Slovak Republic and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg became new partners of the program. The PEFA program provides a framework for assessing and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of public financial management (PFM) using quantitative indicators to measure performance, using a standardized methodology. <https://www.pefa.org/about>

Irena Ivanova, EUD Gender Focal Point: *“We are talking about how fundamentals, human rights, social capital and wellbeing of people is being measured through sectors of environment and economy. Generally, we are talking about people.”*

- **The multicultural perspective that GRB Forum brings a crucial perspective for our discussions.**
- OECD markers are working to develop a matrix and better capture whether the trends in environment, human and social capital are sustainable, including the well-being
- The EU has very ambitious agenda until 2030.
- Not all the sectors are requiring the same approach, since women and men are not equally represented in different sectors.
- Measuring for strengthening tools and engaging in gender equality in the enlargement context.
- Using gender-disaggregated data remains the main challenge - we do not have real data for the right progress in specific countries; statistics capacity of the countries should be increased.
- Without the data the indicators are not measuring what we need them to measure.
- Media and journalists, young people as civil society activists, need to understand the knowledge and data on GRB.

Ermira Lubani, UN Women: *“CSOs are the key partners of UN Women globally and specially in the Western Balkan region.”*

- **Presented the work of UN Women as a UN agency leading the work on GRB globally.** In the Western Balkans present in all of the countries.
- UN Women have gender indicators in each SDGs.
- The UN defined 9 targets for SDG 5.²
- Indicator 5.c.1: Percentage of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The indicator aims to encourage national governments to develop appropriate budget tracking and monitoring systems and commit to making information about allocations for gender equality readily available to the public. Data provided by 105 Member States, as part of official reporting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 5.c.1
- For the first time globally, there is a unified agreed methodology on GRB - UN Women as custodian; OECD and UNDP as co-custodians.
- Big organizations are very bureaucratic, but they are made of people and so the organizations need to invest into capacities of their own staff.
- UN women is working closely with ministries of finances in most of the countries.
- Allocation of funds is well monitored, but expenditure is not being monitored and watchdogged enough yet.

² The UN has defined 9 *Targets* and 14 *Indicators* for SDG 5. <https://sdg-tracker.org/gender-equality>

- We need to have a better assessment of how the budget allocations are changing the lives of people in the field.

Nicole Farnsworth, Kosovo Women Network: *“Through the joint work we can push and advocate for change. We need to see the implementation from the central to local level, to the citizens, which is still a challenge.”*

- **Presented a working paper of GBWN** *“Gender Responsive Budgeting: Delivering on Gender Equality Commitments in Multilaterals’ External Financing”* with the main Research Question: *To what extent have multilaterals implemented gender-responsive budgeting in their financial management systems and mechanisms, particularly in external development spending?*
- The paper uses the sample of three major multilateral funders: EU, World Bank (WB), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) using the frameworks of PEFA Gender Framework and SDG indicator 5.c.1.
- The objective of working paper is to identify recommendations for improving gender-responsive budgeting in development cooperation external financing, including potential improvements to systems and tools used by multilaterals for planning, monitoring, and evaluating expenditures and impacts towards gender equality.
- The findings of the working paper served for the discussion in the parallel working groups after this panel, where the forum participants could contribute to the discussion and help us validate the initial findings.

Panel 1 Conclusions:

- OECD, EU, and UN agencies are working in cooperation.
- We need to involve more men in the GRB topic.
- We all need to make gender equality to become a “culture”.
- There needs to be political will for the change otherwise the strategies are useless.
- We need to implement the change from the central to the local level – the change needs to happen at the level of citizens.
- There is no audit on external financing of the EU.
- How do we measure the impact and how do we measure the money that can make an impact? How much money is being allocated to gender and what can we learn from it? – We need to delve into the details of the systems, so the systems can measure how much money is being allocated to gender.
- Together we could propose a global model for a better measuring change – using the same gender marking system (allocation of money to gender equality, gender-based violence, women employment, and other topics).



Photo: *PANEL ONE Gender marking in development assistance: global & country methodologies for GRB*

PANEL TWO: Tools for gender budget tracking and institutional mechanisms for safeguarding

This panel involved reporting back on the discussions in the parallel working groups³ and further discussing these issues in the plenary session where the institutional safeguarding mechanisms will be unpacked and their effectiveness. This second forum panel was moderated by Ludmila Malcoci, from Keystone Moldova.

Panelists' key statements:

Nicole Farnsworth, Kosovo Women Network

- **Presented the Conclusions from the Working group 1-** Application of EU and OECD Gender markers:
- Reflection of the working group discussion related to Sex and Gender terminology used by PEFA and SDG, who have different terminology. The main question regarding the terminology is - what data are we using? Also, how can the intersectional approach be included?
- Disaggregated data by gender is a good start but can be further detailed and break down into intersectionality.
- Gender equality markers - OECD markers: there are currently 3 markers, and every project has to be analyzed! Gender markers on output level can be included as 4th marker to easily track gender equality. Not counting heads, but can we measure how to use the gender markers if the action is actually gender transformative. Furthermore, we must have actual budget expenditure related to gender equality.

³WG1 - Application of EU and OECD Gender markers – facilitated by Nicole Farnsworth

WG2 - Application of UN markers on financing for gender equality – facilitated by Višnja Bacanovic

WG3 - Application of World bank gender equality tracking in light of the new Gender Strategy – facilitated by Mirela Arqimandriti

- She concluded that we need to further advocate to the multilateral organizations for introducing the 4th marker.
- Gender would be more inclusive as an approach. How to contribute to the inclusivity at the objective level?
- OECD marker does not reflect the change and actual expenditure impact.

Visnja Bacanovic, Gender Knowledge Hub, Serbia

- **Presented the Conclusions from the Working group 2 - Application of UN markers on financing for gender equality:**
- The methodology should be revised in order to explain what is applicable to multilateral and what is not, so the objectives of the advocacy, and the paper itself should be clearly stated.
- We are focusing on public finance rather than on impact. Bottom line is to have estimated impact of the investment? But the question now is what will enable that estimation? The importance of leadership and the content of the gender equality statement is of great importance. In the group, they discussed what should be included in the statement. Also, figures and numbers (sex - disaggregated data) is very important to measure the impact.
- All agreed on providing clarification for the methodology and next steps for utilization of the methodology. There are policies and funds for implementation of 5 C1, but are the allocated funds efficient?
- The internal procedures should be explored - how the policy objectives are implemented at the level of country projects or specific programs.
- The internal system of the UN (swamp, swap, I am not sure) is better to be tracked, but I think it is an administrative system, that maybe enables data, but still is not "methodology" or the system for the implementation of political decisions or policy.
- Participants agreed that a gender budget statement is necessary.
- Data and numbers matter. They are crucial.

Mirela Arqimandriti, Gender Alliance for Development Center, Albania

- **Presented the conclusions from the Working group 3 - Application of World bank gender equality tracking in light of the new Gender Strategy:**
- We have little information about how the budget is divided in Albania, and we don't have access in the meetings where budget is discussed, and they don't have a gender assessment;
- They need to do gender analysis for the small projects;
- Gender analysis should be done for each program, in case of small projects in rural area we found the difference in the gap of gender, in main case the local level has limited amount of money, women that have kids will be left behind if their needs are not take into account;
- Transportation is not taken into consideration by the country, and those who do the investing need to do the assessment and ask them;

- Corruption might be minimized if they use these tools; Mirela stated that PEFA and gender can be used to locate corruption in our countries, following the expenditures and funding, also by analysis done after the implementation. One of her recommendations for the PEFA principles is that each program, big and small, should go through gender analysis and not be done/implemented without it. With this approach, we are linking social and gender aspects and empowering more people that do not work on this topic exclusively.
- Question: How much money are going to man and women is that related to gender equality: Yes, it is, and it has been measured ex post and ex ante;
- World Bank has very weak gender unit;
- World Bank has criteria when their budget is being done, to have a team which has a balance of women and men;
- IF they don't do the gender assessment in small projects they need to do for the program.
- Limitations of this discussion that the participants didn't know PEFA before and have issue to give recommendations.

Alexandra Powels from European Parliament, Policy department for budgetary affairs, connected online.

“Gender budgeting matters as it reveals how policies affect men and women differently. Integrating gender and inequality budgeting into policy processes fosters societal equality and equal opportunities. This benefits society economically, enhances health, and reduces poverty.”

- **The vast majority of the EU programs target gender equality**, but they don't know if they actually do that, the data is depending on the states and the implementation of the programs - the data is depending on the member states. Not all Member States agree on the common terminology and sadly, gender is one of them.
- The EU is reviewing and using the received reports. The EU wants to improve, members of the EUP especially, as well as EC. In addition, there are meetings on which the EC is reporting to EUP if 73% of the EU budget is really targeting gender equality.
- After her presentation, there were several questions raised from the audience related to the OECD markers and if EU external financing is implementing this particular instrument to ensure gender equality, as well as if the EU states are implementing GRB and what are the challenges regarding the institutionalization of gender tracking in the EU.
- The difficulty with the data to show what the impact is.
- The majority of the EU programs could target gender equality.
- The panelist concluded that there is still much to be done for gender equality regarding tracking the funds and their impact. For example, the EU DG budget is going GB and also climate tracking.

Florian Trager Steintjes, German Embassy in Skopje: *“Gender Budgeting has become an integral part of German foreign policy. We are enlarging gender sensitive and gender transformative spending, starting with our project funding.”*

- **Feminist foreign policies and gender markers.** He stated that they have used gender sensitive and transformative approach for many years now, but don't have institutionalized form. GIZ uses gender markers but there are some improvements that need to be done. Gender markers are introduced this year in several ministries/sectors. For every project they have GRB in their systems, gender markers are aligned with OECD markers - neutral, sensitive, transformative, supported by guidelines and checklists. He stated that we do not need numbers only, but rather the effectiveness of the programs.
- Discussion afterwards, for the effectiveness of the foreign feminine policy. The mindset on how we perceive, and act is very important, as is the political will to put it in the system.
- The traditional patriotic system was concluded as a bottom line.
- Gender payment gap is result of that (40% gender pay gap in EU).

Panel 2 Conclusions:

- There is evident absence of men in the room. They give support in the institutions, but the way forward is very low, we are afraid of the back flash. Due to the gender mainstream of funds, we will have some improvements and most importantly is to measure the actual impact. There is a lot of work that should be done.
- Mindsets and changing norms.
- We have to change the systems. Top-down directives (for example work life balance) and mindsets are interrelated. Strict requirements and changing systems and institutionalization will go hand by hand.
- There is a regional problem of the position of women, we need to know what the feminist justice climate principles are.
- We must make the agenda stronger and remember what we are fighting for.
- More advocacy, lobby, changes in the system and the mindsets, learn lessons and to share lessons learned to institutionalize.



Photo: PANEL 2 Tools for gender budget tracking and institutional mechanisms for safeguarding

PANEL THREE: Forging joint strategies for the GRB advocacy agenda

The panel presented current activities and plans, towards defining joint objectives and opportunities for joint advocacy towards improving the use of GRB and financial tracking systems at the OECD, UN, EU, and IFIs. The panelists presented the current activities and plans and explored possibilities towards defining joint objectives and opportunities for joint advocacy towards improving the use of GRB. The panel was moderated by Rebecca Heuvelmans, International Advocacy Policy Officer.

Panelist's key statements:

Marija Risteska, GBWN Regional Director: *“We have very genuine intentions to improve the tracking system of budgeting from a gender perspective we need the global improvement of gender equality.”*

- Presented GBWN and 3 levels of interventions: continuation of the watchdog the national commitments to gender Equality, and execution of the budget on gender equality.
- GBWN will do watchdog work on resilience funding, the 14 CSOs, in the network which are receiving mentoring support working on research and analysis to do monitoring resilience funding. 14 reports will be produced in the next period. The GBWN next year will publish a new call on watchdog in climate change financing for CSO's, after the capacities of GBWN are strengthened to work on the issue of climate change,
- The second level of intervention is the creation of case sites from the region to be promoted on global level, case studies for the Lima program and publish it in the gender and climate Nexus, advocate for PEFA gender to be used, by publishing shadow reports. Plan to be active on international fora, to provide recommendations on EU level, UN level and globally through participation on international events.
- The biggest risk is that we are not working together, but parallel with other movements, we need to make alliances and work together, on the advocacy work, and to treat as partners the

multilaterals we advocacy to. and all of us need to be our allies and partners (internationals) because we share the same values, in order to have a better distribution of funds.

- She emphasized that we need to start the global debate about economic model we have at the moment, which is unsustainable as well as we need to think of a new feminist economic model.

Mary Collins, European Women's Lobby: *"We need to see everything from GB perspective."*

- Women's lobby is the largest umbrella of EU, 2000 CSO's across the region with vision to end all forms of violence of women, more women in feminist economic model, where the gender budgeting is embedded. Gender budgeting is gender maintaining in finances, by challenging the system in place and making sure that is transformative approach on how we see finances, public spending, taxation etc. Every single policy has a gender dimension. There are many challenges, antifeminist and anti-gender movement, European election next year, New EU commission. The second big challenge is that budgets mirror political priorities, reallocation of budgets toward security and military because of the wars that we have in the world.
- We need to share and work together to hold on of what we gain so far; the GB also applies to conflicts resolution and peace, and we need to make sure it is applied there, and we need to push more women at the negotiation tables. We need to see how the public spending is moving toward GE and if it's achieved. Procurement is extremely important, and we need to include it in GB as well. Work has started, and we have a long way to us, we have many tools to use in our work and the main question is doing we have the political will, or do we have everything in place, but do we need to push and mainstreaming GB.
- We need more women in leadership roles and moving to feminine economic model.
- Gender budgeting is gender mainsreaming in finances.
- The money if power and it can be very difficult because we are touching the power structures.
- Everthing going on in the world, will It is more urgent than ever for us to hold on together and work towards solidarity.
- Gender budgeting applies to security and peace and we need to ensure that there are more women involved.
- Gender budgeting canot be perceived as secondary. How it is influencing the budget? We need to look at budget overall from a gender perspective.
- We need to demystify the budget, as it is our collective money and we should know how it is spent. It is about democracy, transparency and accountability
- The EU has impact on the redistribution of resources, internally and externally.
- How can we shift power in a power shifting environment?

Liz Hind, UK Women's Budget Group: *"Democracy has to happen all the time and there is no shortcut to it."*

- UK will continue to cooperate with EU, we do prepare gender budget assessment, and policy statements on monitoring and budget policies, and publishing it, however the UK politicians do not talk of gender markers and other GE issues. There are a lot of testimonies about how bad the situation is with care in the UK but no proposals for spending money on this issue. We turn budgetary statements in to something grassroots women organizations can understand, and we are listening what they have to say to know what is sufficient. So, political movement building is very important to be working on.
- She emphasized the need to include grassroots to bring about GRB in the UK. She also emphasized the need to be teaching women about budget and using practical examples with economic arguments.
- Good Examples from other countries, economic arguments, arguments of social justice are helpful in working with education of women. Simple examples on one page that will show that it works, showing that there cannot be good economy if it's not based on values, radical ideas, assign resources, we are winning with economic argument, and we need to do detailed work and show it. The idea is to talk in the same language to the person you are talking to in order to understand what the real issue is.

Panel 3 Conclusions:

- Most of the countries have signed many GE declarations and have more or less the legislative and strategies in place, but what is needed is practical implementation.
- WB countries depend form political will, and we just need to remind the governments that we have all action plans and GE strategies and that they need to be implemented -we must focus on these instruments as an instrument that can deliver because this is our hope for implementation.
- WB countries are giving huge amount of money to the development agencies, because the lack of capacity for implementation of different programs, and it is very important to work together with internationals on gender mainstreaming in the programs to reach gender equality.
- The EU has the power on conditionality, and they should practice it the region to improve the status of women in the region.
- The solidarity among women is lacking, as well need of understanding the essence of GE among women participating on the high political and institutional positions – we need to be active and adding the pressure on the institutional level.
- GB is when your needs and problems are heard and addressed, so everyone benefits from the solution.
- Inclusion of women in the policies related to GB, their education on all levels including rural women by using simple and understandable language has to be implemented.

- GB is smart spending, even more crucial than ever, we need to make sure we make the best decisions about priorities and about wellbeing of all. Women make a half of the population and is it normal to be left outside of equation.



Photo: Panel 3 Forging joint strategies for the GRB advocacy agenda

Summary of the first day

The first day of the forum was attended by 82 women and 10 men, all together from 20 countries representing 60+ different international organizations, think tanks and regional and local civil society organizations.

The first day of the GRB Forum presented an opportunity to discuss global methodologies for tracking financing towards gender equality in an international setting!

Our panelists and participants evaluated existing gender markers, financial tracking systems, and commitments related to gender-responsive budgeting, through the discussions about the PEFA Gender Framework, EU Gender Action Plan III, and the Gender Equality Marker (GEM). On the other hand, the working group discussions presented an opportunity for everyone to provide their opinion on the current issues in the field of GRB.

Concluding the day with a panel on forging joint strategies for the GRB advocacy agenda, we set the foundation for collaborative efforts in institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting.



Photos: GRB Forum 19th of October 2023

20th October – 2nd day of the Forum

The second day of the forum, 20th October, Friday continued with four more panels and one working group on developing GRB methodologies related to climate change.

The second day of the forum was attended by 80 women and 9 men, all together from 20 countries representing 60+ different international organizations, think tanks and regional and local civil society organizations mostly from CEI region.

PANEL FOUR: GRB as a powerful tool for transforming local communities

The panel presented the use of GRB on local level and the transforming power it has on local communities, towards informing future global and local GRB initiatives. Representatives of local CSOs and local governments shared their experiences and lessons learned, invigorating debates on future needs and strategies for development. Moderator of the panel as Ljupka Trajanovska from CRPM.

Panelist's key statements:

Blai Martí Plademunt, Barcelona Gerència Municipal: *"If you are gender-neutral you are reproducing the gender inequalities. Closing the gender gap for 1% is better than staying in place or shrinking the gap."*

- Presented the municipal mandatory regulations for gender equality and budgeting equally in Barcelona and the special tools developed.
- It is the seventh year in which Barcelona is implementing GRB which is now regulated, however in the first three years GRB was implemented due to the crucial political and managerial will the municipality representatives had.
- In order to make sure that GRB is implemented as well as to measure the results for the municipality it is mandatory to prepare an annual gender budgeting report, however the report is not binding, and they are looking forward to making it binding. In order to achieve this there is a methodology guideline for GRB. In the first analysis they were using the concept of gender-neutrality but due to the feminist movement, the concept has been changed to gender-blind.
- Markers are not being used, however, for each reported activity the reporter needs to state if they are closing or producing the gender gap.
- What has been improved in Barcelona? In 2017 in Barcelona, they were analyzing only 13% of the budget and now in 2023 they are analyzing 50% of the budget and they are willing to get to 100% of budget analysis. They are currently halfway through. In the first year, only 15% of the budget in Barcelona was closing the gender gap, but now in 2023, 84% of the budget implementation is closing the gender gap. Regarding equality bodies, the budget spend should be 1% of the whole budget and

Barcelona is currently at 0,63%. Regarding actions to strengthen gender equality Barcelona should reach 5% of the budget spending and currently they are at 4,36%.

- This budget spending is not easy to count but it is not impossible.
- What Barcelona lacks currently is more participation of the civil society and monitoring the municipality and supporting them to do more.

Nadine Unger, City of Vienna, Department for Gender Budgeting:

“Vienna also has a network of departments for gender equality which mean gender is mainstreamed throughout the whole municipal areas”

- **Presented Vienna’s example in terms of GRB implementation especially when it comes to service delivery.**
- She shared some of the challenges in the City of Vienna they have faced and what lessons have been learned. In Vienna there has been clear political commitment to implement gender responsive budgeting, however, at the beginning in each of the different departments there has been an absolute resistance to GRB due to the huge workload as well as lack of knowledge.
- Guidelines on how to implement GRB in the municipality have been provided to the employees and this has been done through the gender mainstreaming section positioned at the Chief Executive office.
- GRB is now mandatory in Vienna and a gender budgeting officer has been appointed in the financing department to work on this issue. Vienna has developed 5 principles for gender mainstreaming: gender inclusive language; gender specific data collection and analysis; equal accessibility for services for women and men; equal participation of women and men in decision making processes and creation of gender balance in management roles.
- In the first years of implementation there was lack of gender disaggregated data and the first gender responsive budgeting has been limited and improved throughout the years. The gender responsive budgeting report is adopted by the City Council and is included in the budget of City of Vienna.
- Vienna transformed to a better place to live for women since a non-contra-territorial kinder garden attendance has been adopted so the employment and emancipation of women has increased.

Boran Ivanovski, NALAS: *“There is a crucial importance to implement GRB in all sectors in the municipalities as well as to collect and publish gender disaggregated data.”*

- **Shared the experience from Bjelina in Bosnia and Herzegovina where NALAS applied engendering solid waste management services.** Engendering local services started 5-6 years ago and it was developed from scratch. The main question was how to identify the gender aspects of the local services with focus on the solid waste management service. Even on a global level this method was not well developed and there were not many positive practices.

- The companies that were approached by NALAS started with measuring representation of men and women inside of the companies, but this wasn't enough.
- NALAS developed a methodology for identification of gender aspects in the solid waste management in the municipalities. In Bijelina they identified the gender perspectives connected to the clients i.e. the citizens. First of all, the municipality was approached and there was political will to initiate a pilot program. There was research made through a questionnaire to determine the customers' habits regarding solid waste management and some of the main questions were related to: shopping behavior of the citizens; who is selecting and disposing the waste as well as the readiness for introducing new services. Due to the traditional roles, they found out women are much more involved in the collection and management of waste in the households.
- Women as well were more involved in disposing the waste, and with it very dissatisfied with the waste services that the municipality had due to lack of accessibility and safety. The project was implemented in 13 months and a gendered model of waste management was developed in Bijelina.
- For NALAS the end-line survey in Bijelina has shown huge satisfaction among the citizens due to the implementation of the engendered model of solid waste management. All women interviewed were satisfied while only 5% of men were not satisfied. Due to the intervention, men have initiated to get more involved in the disposal of the waste with an increase from 28% to 44%. Moreover, children were motivated to get involved in solid waste management.

Liz Hind, UK Women's Budget Group: *"Communication of data is not about having huge quantities of data but having couple of bits of the right data so when you are in a room talking to a decision maker-who is probably going to be a man- you will be able to quote the data, explain the case in this local area and ask him what are they going to do about it?"*

- **Shared experiences from the UK and why there is a need of capacity building among grassroots** to use GRB.
- Local data is trying to get on-ground knowledge on how local services are delivered by local Councils in the UK. In UK counselors are not paid for the job of a councilors so as a woman if you want to work as a counselor you need to balance it with your daily job, child care and it is possible for you only if you don't have children or they are old enough to take care of themselves or your partner is taking care of. Moreover, parental leave is not being covered or it is possible if you are a counselor so you will need to abandon this role.
- Huge range of women are excluded from the possibility to be involved in the decision-making processes on local level in the UK.
- Women are more likely to be working in public services, which are highly gender segregated. The essential public services are the ones that usually get cut out due to lack of finances and the first one that get cut out are usually children services on which women are dependent if they want to be able to work.

- Dr Liz Hind explained how capacity building change local realities can and change local communities. The real difference is made in the way local services are planned and delivered, therefore, public consultation on neighborhood planning is of great importance.

Panel 4 Conclusions:

- Political will is a must if we want to achieve gender equality and implement gender responsive budgeting on local and national level.
- Gender mainstreaming has to be done on a sectorial level if we want to see sustainable changes and strengthen gender equality.
- Participation of women and men, citizens, in decision making processes is crucial to identify the specific needs of all the diverse groups of marginalized people that live in a municipality.
- Collection and publication of gender disaggregated data is a critical aspect to gender responsive budgeting.
- CSOs involvement is essential to keep the local governments accountable in the process of GRB.



Photo: PANEL 4 GRB as a powerful tool for transforming local communities

PANEL FIVE: Gender mainstreaming in policy and budgeting for country, regional and local development

The panel discussed the gender mainstreaming of investment policy and budgeting as essential for creating equal development opportunities. The panelists presented their strategies to involve support to job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life and sustainable development. The panel was moderated by Slavica Strikovic from Women Action, Montenegro.

Panelist's key statements:

Aurelia Bulat, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Deputy head of the gender equality department, Republic of Moldova: *“By investing in projects and programs that take into account the different needs of women and men, we build a fairer future for all.”*

- **Introduced the work of the ministry and its measures supporting gender equality in the country.**
- Moldova has most refugees from Ukraine and the activities are focused on providing infrastructure for the refugees.
- Moldova is following the SDGs and especially objective 5 related to gender equality, empowering all women and girls. What we want is the policy that is to be not only on paper.
- The department is Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls;
- They are preventing and eliminating violence against girls and women, including trafficking; and eliminating early and forced child marriage;
- Aurelia presented also family-friendly polities in the Republic of Moldova and spoke about the program for violence prevention in Moldova. The concept includes geopolitical aspects. The aim of the activities is to have certain percentage increase in the future.
- There is an economic council in Moldova that prepares to analyze programs on state level, including all expenditures related to budgeting. This is not represented in other countries. This is a model to follow. Women will be provided financial grants.
- We should ensure policies and programs are implemented on the local level and all levels.
- The ministry of finance needs to consider financial needs by the commission- providing local financial support.

Merita Zulfu – Contemporary Social Sciences, South East European University: *“Gender Responsive Budgeting is important because it helps in creating a fairer and more just society for everyone, regardless of gender. This benefits individuals by providing equal opportunities and reducing discrimination.”*

- **Presented the research done by the university in the Municipality of Brvenica** (questionnaire, interviews, focus groups in the municipalities were conducted as part of the research) - The energy efficiency program.
- The gender data on the websites of the municipalities were missing.
- The focus groups showed that the training was done on how GRB can be applied, but when it comes to implementation they are lacking the application.
- 20-30 % of the household income is spent on the energy costs of the household -20% of citizens face the energy poverty.
- The data on potential beneficiaries should be added, how the households can be added to the program.
- More trainings needs to be implemented in order to improve the situation.

Diana Kobas Deskovic, Mamforce: *“I’m on a mission to change the paradigm that women should change themselves to fit into the traditional way of doing business to the new paradigm that we have to change the system to allow women to flourish. For that to happen, we need an evidence-based approach on all levels.”*

- **Presented a work-life balance concept, knowing the corporations’ environment** - starting with more flexibility in the workplace for the professionals who had a career before.
- MAMFORCE has a tool that measures existing policies and practices of the company – “diagnosing a DNA of the company”.
- There are a number of auditing tools in international organizations.
- MAMFORCE looks at 3 fields of data (HR managers) – 1. Policies and procedures (culture code) 2. DNA of the company (workforce analytics) 3. Employees experience (whether the policies are successful or not).
- Diana presented 6 areas of the MAMFORCE company assessment. Including the indicators that are gender mainstreamed.
- What does the company do to attract women, to train, educate and promote them? Without the data we have no evidence for the companies to change. The HR processes are the bottom line of the pyramid. We make companies to set targets for gender equality and inclusion of women.

Marija Šuković, Secretariat of the Competitiveness Council of Montenegro: *“The lack of data makes it difficult for to design specific gender-based exceptions and incentives for women in business.”*

- **Presented the work of the Secretariat, improving the business environment** in general, by inclusive economy and women economic empowerment – as the tool for reaching the equality in the society. The power of money is clear.
- The secretariat is regularly preparing the report collecting the data on the needs of women in business, for better understanding of key challenges, specific for women and making roadmaps on gender-responsible investment climate on the annual basis.
- The secretariat is analyzing the Competitiveness program funding, implemented by the ministry of economy in Montenegro.
- The latest roadmap shows the lack and the need for gender-disaggregated data on companies – for further activities such as policy improvement, strategic planning, etc.
- The format of the public data is not user-friendly, and it is not easy to work with them.
- Sex- disaggregated data is not collected sufficiently. Sex- disaggregated data on earnings is not published regularly. The data on consumption is not collected and disaggregated either, which makes it difficult to design specific gender-based tax (e.g., exceptions and incentives)
- Gender analysis is limited.
- The opportunity in finding key partners in new governments in Montenegro.

Panel 5 Conclusions:

- It is important to localise the issues- we need women on all the levels, we need them to bring topics relevant for them to the spotlight.
- The situation of global procurement that is mostly men-led and usually smaller companies are led by women and they do not have so much power.
- We need to improve business environment in general, by introducing inclusive economy and women economic empowerment – as the tool for reaching the equality in the society.
- More trainings need to be implemented in the local level (municipalities) in order to improve the situation of gender budgeting locally.
- Support strategically women participation in the development of investment policy and in the management of traction promotion and protection.



Photo: PANEL 5 Gender mainstreaming in policy and budgeting for country, regional and local development

PANEL SIX: Climate change financing and gender justice

Climate change is not gender neutral. Its effects affect diverse women and men differently. Moreover, the roles of women and men in the adaptation and mitigation measures to address climate change differ. The panel explored the strategies and methodologies for utilizing GRB towards accelerating improved, gender-transformative financing of climate action that will contribute to a more just world. The panel was moderated by Natasha Dokovska from Journalists for Human Rights.

Panelist's key statements:

Rebecca Heuvelmans, International Advocacy Policy Officer, WECF International: *“There are two crucial needs, one to invest into gender just solutions and another to remove the barriers in public funding and reporting requirements for grassroots CSOs.”*

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- Started with a **presentation of the WECF International work – being an eco-feminist network** organization with about 100 members and around 150 strategic partners in 70 countries.
- Holistic approach to topics like climate change, sustainable development, fight for toxic free world.
- Actions support and advocacy approach with the members.
- She gave an example from one of the partners WECF works with – Camjou working on agroecology, forest regeneration and protection, sustainable job creation, women entrepreneurship and climate literacy. Their main problems are bush fires and women non owning the land. They have included in regular community gatherings the talks about forest protection. Initiatives like this from the local- community level need to be presented on the global stages and to decision-makers.
- Climate financing comes also with the element of debt.
- Climate financing and gender have different streams of negotiations. It is important to know about their intersections.

Natasha Amdiju – Green Institute: *“Rural women do not participate at the programs of the municipalities. How do we involve them?”*

- Gave insights into findings from the **monitoring in municipality of Struga in North Macedonia for climate change protection using intersectional approach** through the program “Through Gender lenses”.
- Do women have access to information and access to funds? We access the involvement of women on the local level in municipality of Struga. Whose priorities are met?
- 66 percent (2/3) of women do not know if their needs are met (related to public hygiene, management of water systems, public green spaces, etc.).
- To the municipality of Struga the Green Institute gave a couple of recommendations such as one of the main initiatives refers to intersectional cooperation, to organize training on gender equality and environmental protection, and involve an equal opportunity coordinator and to strategically involve the rural women.

Emil Angelov – SALAR: *“Challenging the societal norms that validate fixed gender identities brings us closer to equality and freedom from discrimination.”*

- **Introduced the program on waste management of SALAR in cooperation with ZELS.**
- Gender is an integral part of every aspect of our lives and is key in how we define power, privilege and opportunities in our society. Challenging the societal norms that validate fixed gender identities brings us closer to equality and freedom from discrimination.
- Waste management program – gender perspective in integrated in all we do.

- We work on institutional changes. We have integrated a holistic approach with institutions but including citizens too.
- Women and men have different needs. We bring services to citizens. Special groups have special needs. We live in a world where the decisions are mostly done by men.
- Waste management is not gender-neutral like many other fields of society. If we implement the continuity of the program, the gender perspective will be involved.

Ivana Angelova, Center of Excellence in Finance: *“Women are placed in a unique position, even if they are more vulnerable to climate change. They show different qualities in the leadership, they show more empathy, women have lower carbon footprint.”*

- CEF is an international organization based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, working in 12 countries in Southeast Europe, working with the national level institutions, serving as a knowledge hub for the region.
- There is a need for holistic approach – with social and governance perspective into mitigation of climate change debate.
- CEF “Greening human capital” project – designed to show the role people have in transformation. Focused on 3 levels: 1. skills and knowledge individuals need to lead the green transition; 2. teams working together (including intra-institutional collaboration); 3. institutional level – officials will develop skills like collaborative decision making, participatory governance and similar that can help them lead the change.
- CEF developed a methodology focusing on strengthening the institutions – transforming them into learning institutions, in which HR managers and strategy departments are crucial to work with.

Panel 6 Conclusions:

- We need a holistic approach to gender and climate change / sustainable development.
- GRB and financing – access to information and its sharing is the key.
- We need to develop synergies and collaborative approaches when it comes to gender, and climate change overlap.
- Women are more connected to the environment, many of them are coming from grassroots and we need to support them more to lead the change.
- We need to support more women in STEM in climate change debate.
- Barriers in applying for funding and reporting for many (grassroot) CSOs is very exhausting.

Parallel sessions

PANEL SEVEN: Gender and resilience programming and budgeting

Gender dynamics need to be encompassed in resilience response programs in order for them to increase social inclusion and improve equality. To do so the systemic nature of gendered power relations and their prevalence and adaptation over time is to be studied, as well as the responses of individuals, communities and institutions to the gendered effects of disasters and conflict. The panel explored both gender participation and gender mainstreaming of resilience measures and budget in the CEI region. This panel was moderated by Gulay Gunluk from the University of Istanbul.

Vesa Reznijqi Pallaska, UNDP Kosovo: *“We need numbers, which help the markers of tackling gender equality, and are very important for our institutional partners that the work is distributed among all.”*

- **Presented the work of UNDP Kosovo office which is focusing on two aspects of GRB:** Internal – how it integrates in the work of the institutions and External – the budget that is dedicated for realization of gender projects.
- For example, 17% of the budget has to be for projects about gender.
- A gender equality certificate was introduced, as well as a gender equality stamp for civil servants.
- For transformation, we should have an approach through thematic areas, that is, the government should have cooperation with appropriate civil society organizations.
- Gender budgeting is not only about spending, but also how finances come in. It is important to see who pays tax and how much, and how much of it is returned to those groups through changes at the local level.
- It is always recommended to work at the local level and to always plan in this way, because it best meets the needs of the citizens.
- Gender analysis is part of GRB that needs to be done in collaboration with CSOs (women CSOs) – crucial on the local level (closer to citizens).
- UNDP we work closely with financial institutions – collaboration on investments with UN Women.
- By making a rule that a certain percentage must be for gender projects, responsibility is given to all persons involved to pay attention to this aspect, not only to the gender equality officer.

Beti Tolevska – KHAM Delchevo: *“Gender-based statistics are needed – in our experience, officials have provided data but have no collection system. There is not enough staff, so it is necessary first of all to ask the municipalities to demand quantity - to include women in structures, and then to demand quality.”*

- **Presented monitoring of activities (strategy and action plan for gender equality) one in the municipality of Delchevo, North Macedonia** as part of the project “Through Gender Lenses”.
- To monitor programs that do not have a gender indicator is difficult.
- The main conclusion is that women generally want to participate in trainings for career advancement, but this is not a coincidence, because some job positions are mostly held by women.

- Recommendations: gender perspective should be included in all programs and strategies, at least every year to have a new gender sensitive program, women and marginalized groups should be consulted when making the programs, gender perspective in planning the budget is not implemented because they do not know how to do that and organizations should help them by giving them tools, setting up a table to monitor spending by gender-to have an insight into what was spent, how much and for whom, integrating social benefits and assistance with gender records, local and urban communities with gender representation - now in the municipality there is not a single woman president of the municipal community, cooperation of a municipality with a CSO - a small number of organizations working on the issue of GRB in the eastern part of Macedonia.
- 80 percent in the training were women in municipalities - this refers to the fact that administrative positions are more women occupied.
- Municipality every next year should have at least one more program (yearly) in gender budgeting. Continuous improvement of infrastructure from the gender perspective.

Valeria Babără, For gender justice: “Conflicts are always gendered”

- **Illustrated why conflicts and crimes are gendered and how resources distributions are also gender impacted.**
- Budgets are gendered in the sense how the resources are allocated for men and women differently in a more favorable and unfavorable way.
- Conflict becomes gendered in two ways – it either exacerbates pre-existing inequalities and systems of the oppression in a certain country or it imports the inequalities from the oppressor country – in case of Ukraine both applies. Ukraine was patriarchal society before the conflict (traditional way of division of women and men roles).
- Changes are needed in the criminal provisions/laws, which must be gender sensitive, as well as the persons involved in the investigative processes, the judges should be trained and be gender sensitive.
- Gender also influences how the victim experiences the violence as well as how the victim experiences the criminal justice system.
- Having gender perspective in the crime also applies. Some categories of crimes can appear to be gender-neutral, but when you look into details it is not. We should move to more intersectional approach.

Rade Rajkovchevski – Faculty of Security: “We need to work more in the field, so that we can know what the real needs are, especially of the women in the rural communities.”

- Spoke about the insights of UNDP program in Polog region in Macedonia for aligning the prevention and protection approach with Sendai framework.

- The municipality has 3 types of plans – 1. Local plan for Protection and Rescue, 2. Plan for Floods Protection and Defense, 3. Flood Risk Management Plan – gender needs are not reflected in the plans.
- Several documents that are being created, such as the Crisis Management Plan, are not gender sensitive and our role is to review such plans and establish gender sensitivity.
- When revising the plans, we go deeper towards vulnerable groups such as women, children, people with disabilities, etc. It needs to be overlooked beforehand to better manage crises. It is especially important to include women from rural areas and women who will operate/work in the area of crisis management.
- According to the legislation, 3% of the budget is set aside for people that deal with disasters. These are calculations that are not known how they were made. The municipalities are not aware of this 3%. They wait until the end of the year and if they are not used, then they are repurposed for some other priority.
- When a municipality gives packages to people who are in a crisis situation, the boxes they give do not contain, for example, hygiene packages for women.

Panel 7 Conclusions:

- Cooperation in the crisis settings, that covers both wars and environmental crises it is crucial to work with CSOs (women organizations, peace makers and human rights defenders).
- Transformational progress needs an integrated approach – taking into account that working in times of conflicts means working with dysfunctional governments too (having urgent and emergent priorities).
- Need to train and include (vulnerable) women, e.g., single mothers, rural women and similar in the disaster preparedness.
- Collecting data in a crisis context is difficult but we can talk to people in the field and bring up the voices of diverse groups.
- To use digital tools for communication with the most remote communities, because we do not have adequate communication channels and to have enough data.
- Appropriate disaster management is needed through spreading awareness and education.



Photo: PANEL 7 Gender and resilience programming and budgeting

Working group 3 on developing GRB methodologies related to climate change

The Gender Budget Watchdog Network develops a methodology for watchdogging climate change financing from a gender perspective. The workshop engaged experts from the conference in sharing ideas and strategies for this methodology. This working group was moderated by Biljana Matevska from CRPM. At the beginning, Biljana shared brief information on the project activities, focusing on the developed modules and e-learning platform. Then, the Methodology for gender budget watchdogging in climate change financing was presented. As the Methodology provides clear guidance, all three working groups were given the same task, which was to develop a structure, that will further be attached as an annex to the developed Methodology. There were 18 people in total present at the workshop.

TASK: How to structure a GRB watchdog report for financing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures? Develop the structure of the chapters and provide their content with bullets. The report should be limited to max.5 chapters.

The participants had 40 minutes in total to develop the structure of the monitoring report. Afterwards, they all presented their group work.

PLENARY SESSION AND CLOSING REMARKS

Moderated by Mersiha Jaskic from CPCD.

Marija Risteska, Center for Research and Policy Making

- We are lacking meetings and exchange of ideas to operationalize our cooperation further.
- We should think together jointly about strategies how to diffuse this work in the ENP further and spread our network in Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and relevant organizations in the global South, Turkey.
- We will be growing the network further and continue spreading gender perspective in budgeting.

Nicole Farnsworth, Kosovo Women Network

- Build a larger global coalition to change the OECD gender marker to better track spending towards gender equality;
- Advocate together with the European Women's Lobby to the EU to make gender budgeting obligatory in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, to set clearer targets linked to financing in the next Instrument for Pre-Accession and Gender Action Plan IV, and to improve internal financial management systems to better tie outputs and impacts to actual expenditures;
- Establish a coalition together with UN agencies to advocate for further improving GRB in UN agencies' systems as part of the upcoming 2024 Commission on the Status of Women on financing for gender equality;
- Provide recommendations to inform the World Bank's new Gender Strategy so that it includes institutionalizing gender budgeting in all of the work of the Bank;
- Collaborate to influence climate change financing from a gender perspective. Panelists agreed that continuing to build coalitions and expanding the network are crucial for future actions.

Vishnja Bachanovic, Gender Knowledge Hub

- We need to advocate for gender transformative climate funding in our countries and governments. Also including multilaterals like EBRD and their programs for energy efficiency, construction where women are in these programs
- Revival of the Resolution 1325⁴ and funding of efforts for the resolution to be implemented and bring women's voices into building today's world

Ljupka Trajanovska, CRPM

- Collaboration is the key because without the support of the municipal administration, without the support of the mayors and members of the council, the local CSOs wouldn't be able to implement and show how gender responsive budgeting should be implemented in the municipalities.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

- We must have political will if we want to see gender responsive budgeting being implemented.
- We need to make all the dispositions accessible for women, only in that way we will have gender responsive budgeting in the municipalities.



Summary of the second day

The second day of the forum concluded with a strong impression that it provided a much-needed platform for engaging discussions and exchange of valuable experiences.

- The experiences shared by representatives of local CSOs, and governments emphasized the transformative power that GRB holds for local communities.
- Gender mainstreaming is crucial for realizing equal development opportunities, including support for job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life, and sustainable development.
- We highlighted the connection in addressing the different effects of climate change on women and men so we can contribute to a more just world. Thus, there is a pressing need to integrate gender dynamics into resilience response programs and budgets in the CEI region.

We thank the panelists and participants for their perspectives that will contribute to the ongoing dialogue on gender-responsive budgeting, fostering a more inclusive and equitable approach to policy development.



Photos: GRB Forum 20th of October 2023

