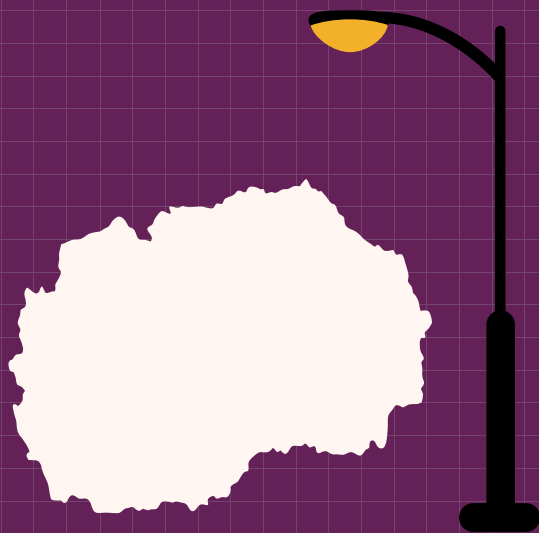


GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:

The street lighting program in Municipality of Bogdanci for 2022



Overview of the issue

In N. Macedonia, **during the energy crisis in 2022, the government adopted series of measures and activities both at the national and local level, in order to reduce the costs and to save energy.** In that context, in August, the Government adopted recommendations for electricity savings of 15 percent, whereby the measures apply to households, companies and state institutions and will be applied from September 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

Due to the specific situation with the energy crisis and due to the large bills for street lighting, the LSGU in Municipality of Bogdanci decided to turn off the lights on entire streets alternately every 2 days, not turning them on at all during the entire evening. This was applied at places such as parks, children's playgrounds and parks with urban equipment for young people. **During the evenings, mothers with children and young people, could not socialize nor recreate feeling, and in addition, their safe was disturbed. In the peripheral parts, where on certain days there was no street lighting, women and young people did not feel safe at all.** The central areas, where street lighting was also omitted, were not in a state of total darkness due to the existence of shops where the windows were illuminated, but the residents did not feel safe.

GRB Analysis Findings

- The GRB analysis of the street lighting Programme for the year 2022 in Municipality of Bogdanci shows that the **gender perspective is not integrated.** The qualitative analysis, through focus groups discussions and interviews with the responsible persons for creating and producing this program, was performed to assess their capacities and previous gender mainstreaming practices within the programs and the budget, answering the following questions: to what extent have the provisions of the Law on Equal Opportunities been taken into account, as well as the Strategy for Gender Responsive Budgeting; and how the whole process was carried out;
- It was concluded that there are **no clearly defined gender goals and priorities**, even though the planned activities with a specific budget can contribute to the promotion of gender equality.
- During the preparation of this Program, **the different needs of men and women were not considered.**



Recommendations



- **Clear definition of gender goals and priorities** with full implementation of the gender perspective in the Programs, Plans and Budgets;
- **Using gender-sensitive language and collecting gender-disaggregated user data;**
- Raising the **capacities and education for GRB** and using gender analysis of needs and gender gaps, not only of the Gender Equality Units and the members of the council, but also **of the entire municipal administration.**

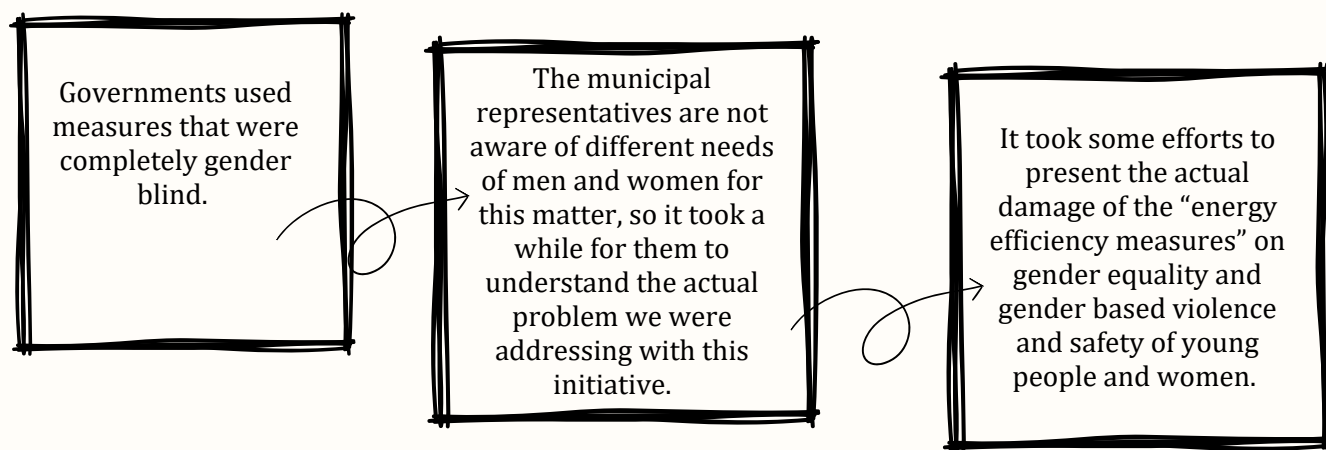
Advocacy impact:

The planned maintenance and reconstruction of public lighting leads to a significant improvement of the safety of women in the municipality.

According to the calculations, if the time of turning off the lights at the municipality level was extended by 90 minutes only on weekends, that is, on Fridays and Saturdays, a total of 9 days a month, the bill would increase by 3675.67 MKD (approx. 50 EUR). This calculation showed that the amount by which the electricity bill for street lighting in the municipality of Bogdanci will increase is minor compared to the safety of girls, women and young people. **The main success of the advocacy initiative is that ALL recommendations were accepted by the Mayor, the Council.**

There was a decision made by the Council, supported by and the energy efficiency unit and the street lightening was longer during the whole week (till 2AM), not only on weekends.

Main challenges:



GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:

Using the GRB tools and rising awareness about the consultation process in Municipality of Probishtip



Overview of the issue

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of North Macedonia, which in content corresponds to international and European regulations on equal opportunities and equal treatment, defines equal opportunities for women and men as “**promoting the principle of introducing equal participation of women and men in all areas of the public and the private sectors, equal status and treatment in exercising all rights and in the development of their individual potentials through which they contribute to the social development, as well as equal benefits from the results derived from that development**”. In order to achieve some balance in the equal opportunities for everyone, the participative creation of national and local policies through citizen participation is of particular importance. Civic engagement implies the active inclusion of male and female citizens in the processes of creating and adopting public decisions.

Main objective in Municipality Probishtip were to **perform gender budget analysis in order to identify to what extent participatory process was integrated** in the creation and implementation of the Municipal Program on Social, Child and Health Care Protection for 2022 and the Municipal Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2022. The findings from analyses were aimed to serve as basis for advocacy processes for the following year’s programing and implementation.

The census data from 2021 states that men and women in Municipality of Probishtip are almost balanced with 50.7% of population men and 49.3% are women.

In spite of this balanced population **the situation in the local self-government is not balanced. Namely, out of 15 elected representatives in the Council of the Municipality, 9 are men and 6 are women**, which shows that only the legally stipulated minimum with a quota is observed and women have little influence on local politics and decision-making. Out of a total of 46 local communities, only 1 woman is a member or president of a local community.

Gender equality relevance

The gender equality objective of this **GRB initiative was to analyze, identify and propose set of recommendations to municipality for improvement of participatory development and implementation of its gender centered policies** and programs. Meaning that GRB analysis of the programs were up to determine level of consultation and participation of men and women in the programs’ design. Another objective was to identify to what extent the relevant bodies (Commission for Equal Opportunities and the Coordinator for Equal Opportunities) reviewed the Programs and provided an opinion on the Programs. In addition, the objective was to identify if the programs have been made upon preliminary analysis of the conditions of women and men and who were beneficiaries from their implementation.

Policy analyses, Survey analyses, and Budget analyses were used during the process. In addition, Gender beneficiary assessment was proceeded about how inclusive was the process of development of the programs.

There was identified need for improvement of the participative decision-making during constitution of programs in the municipality of Probishtip. It was identified that the municipality has successfully developed both programs, but the analyses from the survey showed that there is a need for improvement of the women's participation in the development of the programs and plans. This was **result of survey made with 181 women where 97% stated that they have never been contacted** to participate in the design of the programs while only 3 % responded that they were contacted to take participation in the design of the programs.

Impact of the process

This initiative was aiming at provision of equal access to resources to men and women, girls and boys, from the budget where allocations are made for usage of funds in the frame of the Program on Social, Child and Health Care Protection. The analyses identified that is not clear from which budget line the funds were utilized, which pinpointed the need for advocacy that the following years budget should have a clear budget line from which the funds will be utilized.

Furthermore, the process of analyses showed as good practice since it has pinned the key recommendations for the following year planning. This was especially important as the municipality had all developed programs and documents but has not included the women in the process of consultation but they considered the consultation process sufficient as it was made mainly with local institutions.

The recommendations were accompanied with the good practice from another municipality which implements process in a very inclusive and accurate way.

The impact of the initiative is on both levels:



At municipal administration level, which needs further development of capacities for use of gender tools in development of local programs.



On the community level, where awareness was raised about importance of participation in the decision making during the design, implementation and monitoring of the relevant programs.

There were no obstacles in implementation of the practice as both local self-government in Probishtip and women were open to cooperation.



GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:

Social protection of persons with disabilities in the Municipality of Tearce



Overview of the issue

Municipality of Tearce is located in the north western part of the Republic of North Macedonia. There are 13 settlements in the Municipality of Tearce, four villages are hilly-mountainous, while the rest are located in the valley part of the Municipality.

There was **noted general underrepresentation of women in the municipal decision-making positions. The Council of the Municipality of Tearce was composed of 19 councillors, 15 men and 4 women.** There were total of 85 persons in the composition of the commissions established by the Council of the Municipality, of which 59 were men and 26 women. **A gender imbalance was determined in the municipal administration of the Municipality of Tearce.** Out of a total of 43 persons employed for an indefinite term, 31 are men, while 12 are women. **Only one woman holds a managerial position.**

The underrepresentation is present in the number of heads of primary schools. Out of five directors in MPSs, only one MPS has appointed a female director. Gender stereotypes are also recognised in the participation in the teaching staff, i.e. out of 246 employees, 159 are women and 87 are men.

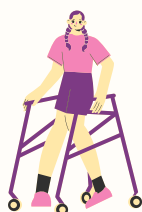
This was case in spite of the existence of the Commission for equal opportunities in the Municipality.

The number of female students in the primary schools in the Municipality of Tearce is 3% lower than the number of male students. Out of a total of 1,768 students, 838 are girls and 930 are boys. There is no official number of registered students, and in general persons, who have some type of disability in the Municipality of Tearce and there wasn't gender disaggregated data available. **Only 6 students with disabilities who attend regular classes are registered in the primary schools on the territory of the Municipality.** The Municipality of Tearce did not allocate financial resources for supporting persons with disabilities within the framework of the Program on Social Protection until 2022.

Objectives of the initiative:

We started using the GRB having several objectives:


- 1** To **integrate the gender perspective in the short-term and long term planning of the local policy** and the budget allocation of funds and the strategic development documents of the Municipality during the creation of the budget policies;
- 2** To **identify the access of women to managerial positions and the effective exercise of women's rights in the decision-making process** in the institutions under the jurisdiction of the local government;
- 3** To **identify needs of local women and men;**
- 4** Contribution to the **identification of the main priorities for students with disabilities** who attend classes in the municipal primary schools on the territory of the Municipality of Tearce.




We wanted to **prioritize and propose recommendation for improving conditions for students with disabilities** in municipality Tearce, meaning their inclusion in the existing or development of new local policies and programs for support of students with disabilities.

Gender equality relevance


Through the problems of students with disabilities, the gender relations in the community were set to be improved. The common identification of problems as well and creation of solutions would bring new dimension in the community's decision making with equal representation and participation of men and women. **The objectives were to improve the position of students with disabilities in the local policies and strategies as well to include the identified needs of students with disabilities, both of boys and girls in the local municipal budget.** Our aim was to provide access to support and respond to the needs of students with disabilities. The process of defining their needs brought up at the same time the provision and access to goods and resources also to men and women, meaning elderly and adult persons with disabilities. The initiative was in line with the gender equality strategy of municipality and it additionally improved it.



The community's defined priorities and proposals were undertaken in the preparation and adoption of completely new Annual Program on Social Protection for the Needs of the Citizens of the Municipality of Tearce for 2023. With this programme there was initial budget allocation for students with disabilities attending the primary schools in the municipality as well and for the families at social risk.



The municipality has adopted: Two-Year Action Plan for Gender Equality of the Municipality of Tearce for 2022- 2023; New Rulebook on the Method of Providing One-Time Financial Aid and Financial Support for Natural Persons; Decision on Determining the Right to Benefit from a One-Time Financial Aid or Aid in Kind for 2023



The initiative had a positive impact on the gender equality in the municipality especially since the GRB tools were used and the process was carried out with the gender balanced approach and was women led.

Methods and tools that were used during the process included Policy analyses, Budget Analyses, Stakeholders analyses. The practice has been developed in this way since the analyses were included in the process. The outcomes of the initiative are now easy to be analysed with these methods.

Budget allocations and expenditures are now tracked with gender disaggregated data. **The application of GRB tools have changed the measure to be gender inclusive.** This would not have been possible if the process has not included GRB tools and have not been made in a gender inclusive manner. The measures that are now in implementation are equally targeting boys and girls and also provide data on distribution of funds among boys and girls.



Impact of the process

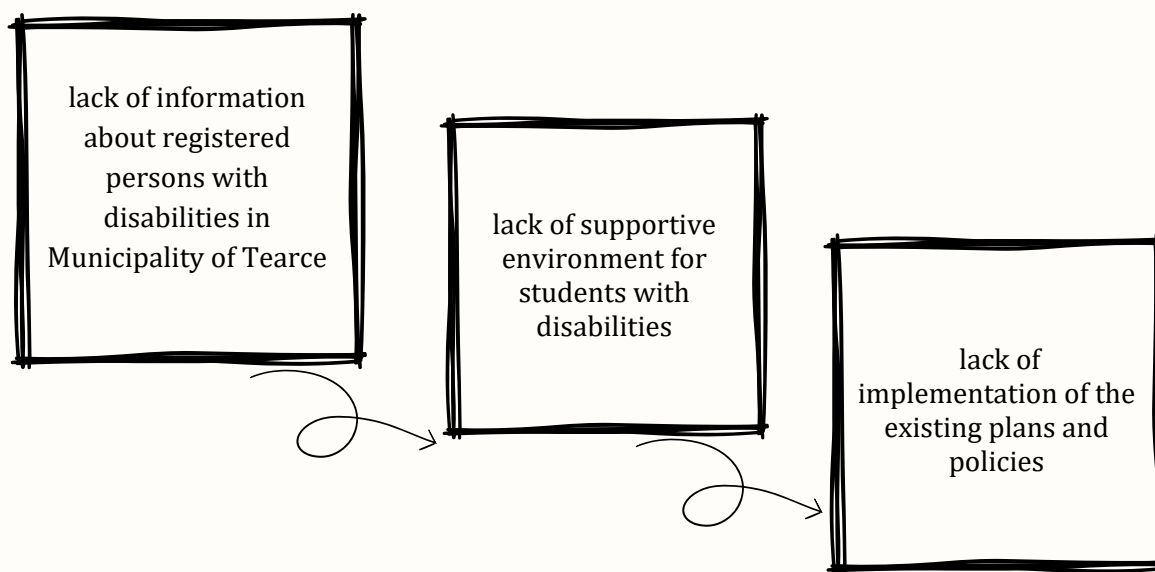
As a result of the implementation of the project *“Preparation of a monitoring report using tools for gender responsive budgeting”*, an increase of financial resources was achieved in the Budget of the Municipality of Tearce for 2023 in the Program on Social Protection for the Needs of the Citizens of the Municipality of Tearce for 2023.

Main Successes

- The process used GRB tools and analyses of set of local government strategic and operational documents.
- The major success of the process were **forum discussions** through which the equal participation of men and women made the decisions gender inclusive and brought gender inclusive solutions to the problems that students with disabilities had.
- The **number of students with disabilities was updated** which led to higher utilization of funds dedicated to them in the programme.
- **The Action Plan for Gender Equality** of the Municipality of Tearce was revised and improved.
- **Municipal council adopted new Rulebook** on the Method of Providing One-Time Financial Aid and Financial Support for Natural Persons, as well and Decision on Determining the Right to Benefit from a One-Time Financial Aid or Aid in Kind for 2023.

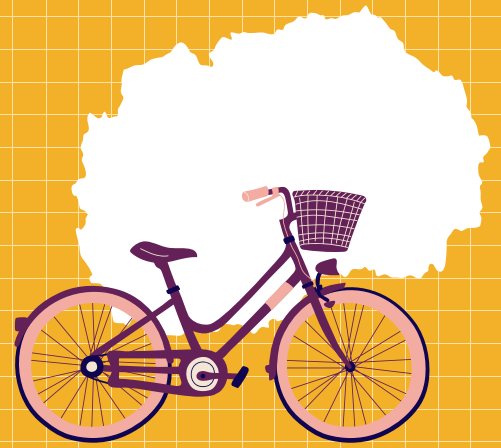


Main Obstacles



GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING:

VELO SUBSIDIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS IN KOÇANI MUNICIPALITY



Overview of the issue

Air pollution is the major environmental issue in Kocani. The continuous air pollution is due to the use of non-ecological fuels by some industrial facilities, illegal waste burning practices and outdated diesel vehicles. In 2021, more than 9,000 vehicles were registered in the Municipality of Kocani, which, according to the number of residents in the Municipality of Kocani, means that every third citizen has a registered vehicle, in contrast to the national average, according to which every fourth citizen has a registered vehicle. Kocani is a city, in which an **insignificant number of inhabitants use eco-transportation such as bicycles or electric scooters, due to the infrastructure and the absence of urban mobility infrastructure**, due to which citizens do not even use these means for recreation and sport.

In order to reduce the air pollution, Municipality of Kocani developed a subsidy program for bicycles. In the drafting and adoption of the environmental program and the determination of the **bicycle subsidy measure, there are no positive or encouraging measures for the inclusion of women, they do not reflect the needs of women nor does it promote gender balance** and increase the participation of women in the use of budget funds for this purpose equally as men. The program does not take into account the needs of vulnerable categories, such as women who are single mothers, women with large families, women of Roma nationality or women farmers.

The main beneficiaries of the bicycle subsidy measure are the citizens - residents of the Municipality of Kocani, regardless of gender and age, on a first-come, first-served basis.

The only condition is that the bicycle was purchased during the period when the advertisement was published, and the citizens who apply are not related, that is, only one member of the family can be entitled to the subsidy. Decisions on granting subsidies are made through a committee formed by the Mayor of the municipality consisting of three employees.

GRB analysis

When distributing the subsidies, the municipality does not take into account the gender component and the equal distribution of funds. Having in mind that bicycles use is a need for both men and women, we analysed the allocation of budget funds for subsidizing bicycles in the Municipality of Kocani.



The analysis consisted of a **review of program documents, announcements, reports from implemented subsidy procedures**, the participation of gender-sensitive bodies in environmental decision-making, transparency, as well as the degree of promotion of equal opportunities in the application of this measure.

With research and analysis of the problem of bicycle subsidies through the use of GRB tools together with representatives of the municipality, we made an **analysis of programs: Local action plan for equal opportunities for women and men for the year 2022 of the Municipality of Kocani and Program for the activities of the Municipality of Kocani in the field of environmental protection in 2022.**

General recommendations



- By summarizing the results of the needs assessment research and programs analysis we prepared a GRB report, used to advocate for introducing gender responsive criteria in awarding the subsidies. Moreover, as the ground research showed, **children's bike seats should be included under the same subsidies in order to avoid gender discrimination.**
- It is necessary to encourage the commission for equal opportunities for women and men for more active participation in the environmental program.
- **The subsidization of bicycles** and the determination of budget frameworks should be **based on a previously prepared analysis of the needs of women and men.**
- There is also a **need for a campaign for greater participation of women in bicycle races** and the inclusion of female cyclists in the preparation of the program, plans and determination of the budget framework of the municipality of Kocani. In addition, the campaign should raise the awareness among women about the use of bicycles, as an opportunity to reduce air pollution in the municipality of Kocani and to break stereotypes about cycling as a "male sport" and its promotion, as an opportunity for free fitness and recreation.
- **Mandatory gender sensitization of the councilors in the municipality** of Kocani through trainings for gender equality, as well as the application of a gender-sensitive tool in determining the budget funds intended for the general public;

Advocacy instant impact:

The initiative contributes to a society without gender discrimination since bicycling should not be considered as a men's sport.

The main success of the project is that the recommendations were accepted by the Mayor, the Council and the gender unit of the municipality of Kocani. The future bike subsidies programs will cover costs for children seats and will be based on the different needs of women and men.

Main challenges:

The main obstacle to implementation of the practice in the area is that cycling is preserved as a men's sport and women usually are not informed nor interested in applying. Also the municipal representatives are not aware of different needs of men and women for this matter, so it took a while for them to understand the actual problem we were addressing with this initiative.



Gender Budget Watchdog Network
for a gender equal region