

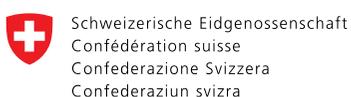
Compendium of Gender Responsive Budgeting

BEST PRACTICES FOR PRACTITIONERS
ON LOCAL LEVEL IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE



This publication is part of NALAS project “Promoting e-learning and regional knowledge base development on gender-responsive budgeting”, supported in the framework of UN Women project “Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia”, financed by Switzerland and Sweden.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.



**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**



Content

Introduction	3
Gender participation	
Senior Ladies Club of Sărata Veche	
Republic of Moldova.....	6
Gender transformative interventions	
Aleksandrovac, Serbia.....	7
‘Women’s Friday’	
Patos, Albania.....	8
Towards Participatory Development of a Local Action Plan on Gender Equality	
Municipality of Bečej	9
Women’s Economic Empowerment	
Support for Networking and Entrepreneurial Initiatives of Women	
Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina.....	12
Support to Women’s Entrepreneurship	
Bar, Montenegro.....	13
Grant Scheme for Women’s Economic Empowerment	
Palanca – Republic of Moldova.....	15
Gender Based Violence	
Shelter center for women victims of violence	
Municipality of Strumica, North Macedonia	17
16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence	
Tivat, Montenegro	19
Resolution of Violent Acts in the Local Community	
Municipality of Velenje, Slovenia	21
Tackling Gender-based Violence	
Elbasan, Albania	23
Sport	
Women’s Football Team	
Sanski Most, Una Sana Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina	26
Girls’ Football Course	
Municipality of Beylikdüzü, Istanbul, Turkey	28
Women’s Race	
City of Skopje, North Macedonia	30
Balancing work and life	
Our Kindergarten Istanbul: Child Activity Centers	
Istanbul, Turkey	34
Interactive theatre for changed perspectives on division of household responsibilities	
Municipality of Split, Croatia	36
Social infrastructure for childcare and child development	
Municipality of Centar, North Macedonia	38
Conclusions	40

Introduction

This Compendium of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Best Practices documents GRB best practices identified against the gender equality objectives set in the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life. The Best Practices are identified following a Methodology that strives to detect explicit and tangible GRB initiatives that demonstrate how the process of policymaking and budgeting on local level was reorganized to include gender perspective, how different GRB tools were applied and the impact on the status of women and men in the municipality. The Best Practices were gathered through a questionnaire, designed to collect information about the implementation of past GRB practices at local level.

The best practices were identified by using the following criteria¹: (i) is the practice working well; (ii) is the practice transferable and (iii) does the practice have learning potential? The objective is for this Compendium to serve as a learning tool for local level officials and GRB practitioners. For this purpose, the GRB best-practices gathered and documented in this publication will be stored in the NALAS knowledge tree, GRB best practice database. In addition, the collection of case studies is published on NALAS website and is offered as a resource through the E-Academy and its GRB e-learning course². The desired outcome is for local officials and GRB practitioners to learn and possibly replicate these proven approaches or get inspired for innovating new ones.

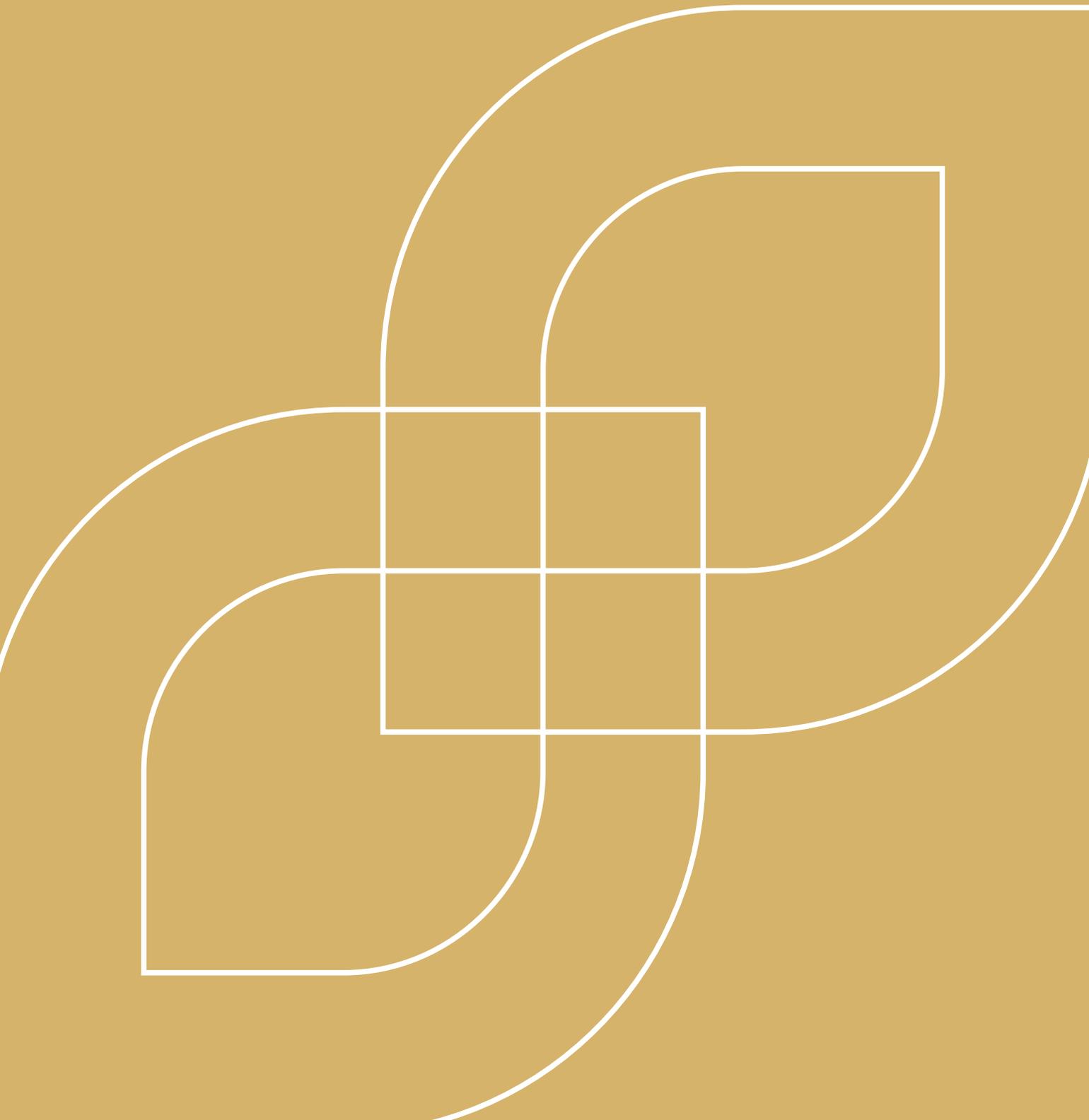
The Compendium encompasses 17 best practices from 9 economies of the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Slovenia and Serbia. The practices are related to the following areas: gender participation, women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence, sports, balancing work and life, and urban planning. The Best Practices are collected by NALAS gender associates and in cooperation with NALAS member associations of local authorities in the course of 2021.

The publication also presents GRB champions – local practitioners, individuals who either work in the municipality or in municipal body/enterprise, or are representative of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) that contributed to the implementation of the Best Practice. All data gathered and presented in this Compendium is received from the GRB champion local authorities. The methodology for collection of good practices and editing of information on good practices was provided by Ms. Marija Risteska, NALAS Regional Gender Expert.

¹ The criteria is based on the EIGE (2013), Mainstreaming gender into the policies and the programs of the institutions of the European Union and EU Member States: Good practices in gender mainstreaming

² Introduction to Gender Mainstreaming at Local Level

Gender participation



Senior Ladies Club

Sărata Veche, Republic of Moldova

Maria Galit, Mayor of Sărata Veche Commune | sarata-veche@mail.ru

Sărata Veche, Falesti District, Republic of Moldova

Why was the practice developed?

In Sărata Veche, there was a poor involvement of citizens in the community life and activities. This has resulted in local policies not addressing the needs of citizens, especially women. Only 10% of women participated in the decision-making process and community life. Due to the local culture, many women were cautious to participate in community activities, express their opinion, open up and seek solutions to their sometimes even personal problems.

The GRB practice

In order to change this trend, in 2016, the municipality conducted a survey asking its citizens why they were not involved in community life, and thus detected the untapped potential, interest and desire among women to get involved in different activities. In partnership with two NGOs: AO Viitorul and AO Casmed, a Senior Ladies Club was proposed and endorsed to be included in the 2017 Strategy for Socio-economic Development of Sărata Veche. The objective was to establish a Sărata Veche Senior Ladies Club and encourage the women from Sărata Veche Commune to be actively involved in its community life and decision-making; to support them in starting their own business, provide counseling to women with personal problems, enable effective leisure, training and information dissemination about availability and accessibility of communal services. In essence, the Club organizes discussions, engages citizens in detecting community problems and identifying their solutions, offers various trainings, and through projects, it implements small activities with women in the community.

Using a **gender-responsive budget beneficiary analysis as a GRB tool in planning and implementing** this measure, since 2017, the municipality has been providing non-financial support, i.e., premises, coordination, fundraising, etc., whereas the Club's annual budget amounts to MDL 60 000.00 (approximately 3000 Euro), which is fundraised from donors (individuals, companies, international donors). The practice is sustainable because financial sources for the realization of Senior Ladies Club's Activity Plan are identified annually. This practice contributes to the implementation of the following gender equality objectives of the municipality: (i) elimination of all forms of discrimination in community life; (ii) promotion of women's economic empowerment in the commune; and (iii) increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions.

This measure particularly targets groups of women aged 30, and 40-60. For 2021, activities were also planned for women aged 20-30 and 60-80. The initiative brings a new community life dynamic regarding numerous dimensions, from including women in decision-making, through designing socio-economic measures and services, providing necessary information, to development of volunteering and social inclusive culture in the municipality.

The GRB results

Results have been observed in several aspects:

- a. **Gender balance in local decision-making** – In 2015, the number of women councilors was 4 and in 2019, the number increased to 6 out of 13 councilors in total;
- b. **Women's engagement in community life was enhanced** – In 2016, when the first survey was made, only 10% of women were active in the community life; the 2020 survey showed 60% of active women;
- c. **Women's economic empowerment improved** – The practice increased the confidence of, and provided advise and support to 3 women to open their own businesses.

Gender transformative interventions

Aleksandrovac, Serbia

Nena Zarić | dolinaradost@gmail.com

Municipality of Aleksandrovac, Republic of Serbia

Why was the practice developed?

By the Decision on the Adoption of the European Charter on Gender Equality at the Local Level by the Municipal Assembly of Aleksandrovac No. 020-387/2018-01 of October 26, 2018, the Council for Gender Equality of the Municipal Assembly of Aleksandrovac and the Office for Local Economic Development of the Municipality of Aleksandrovac are obliged to develop a Local Action Plan (LAP) for Gender Equality, in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter on Gender Equality at the Local Level.

The GRB practice

Activities undertaken in the Municipality of Aleksandrovac during the development of its Local Action Plan for the improvement of women's position and gender equality include:

- (i) Capacity building: two two-day training events on program budgeting and gender-responsive budgeting and one two-day training event on the legal and strategic framework of gender equality in the context of LAP development were held in Aleksandrovac
- (ii) A survey to detect the needs of women and men was conducted on a smaller scale due to Covid 19
- (iii) LAP development meetings of the working group were held to incorporate different stakeholders' perceptions into the Gender Equality Local Action Plan

Following the development of its LAP, the Municipality of Aleksandrovac introduced gender in the planning of its activities within the budget, and in that sense, it went the furthest and set an example of gender budgeting that includes 11 engendered programs of total 17 budget programs³, having the tendency to continue in the same direction.

The GRB results

The biggest advancement was observed in education and culture programs, where the consumers of the current offer were analyzed and gap analysis was conducted. Based on it, a comprehensive plan of activities was devised on how to improve the access to beneficiaries that did not have equal access to and use of public resources and services funded through the municipal budget. As a short example: "It was determined that mainly girls and women come to the library. After the survey, it was concluded that boys did not see that place as "theirs". During the summer, a library was opened at the swimming pools, and computers were installed in the library, so an increase in the number of boys attending was immediately noticed. But more serious changes need to be monitored over time, for which Aleksandrovac set an M&E framework.

³ Program 3: Local economic development; Program 4: Tourism development; Program 5: Agriculture and rural development; Program 6: Environmental protection; Program 7: Traffic organization and traffic infrastructure; Program 8: Preschool education; Program 9: Primary education; Program 10: Secondary education; Program 11: Social and child protection; Program 13: Cultural development; Program 14: Development of sports and youth.

Women's Friday

Patos, Albania

Elda GOXHAI | goxhajelda2@gmail.com

Municipality of Patos, Republic of Albania

Why was the practice developed?

In Patos, a municipality where women make up 50% of the population of 42,889 inhabitants, social problems, such as domestic violence and isolation (in rural areas) are present and the level of unemployment is high. Spaces that provide engagement, socialization and entertainment for women are scarce. CSOs providing integration and feminist public spaces that are also frequented by women are few.

The GRB practice

The municipality applied a Gender Beneficiary Analysis to identify, design and implement targeted interventions for women and girls, especially in the culture sector. As a result, the monthly activity "Women's Friday" was launched encompassing meetings/round tables and opening topics and discussions about women's successful engagement in public life and sharing women's experiences. The total budget dedicated to the implementation of these activities was not more than 2000 Euros, out of which **850 Euros were funded by the municipality**. The rest was funded by different local businesses that hosted the activities.

The GRB results

The activities resulted in an increased capacity of 70-80 women of all ages and groups for each event (650 women in total) from the entire territory of the municipality. The approach helped raise donations in the form of aid packages with clothing and food for different families from vulnerable groups, thus reaching out to more than those mobilized through the events. It also provided a good opportunity to form a network of cooperation between women in terms of employment, as job seekers met with women in business that helped them find a job. Very soon, "Women's Friday" became *the only window for dignified integration of women in the Municipality of Patos*.

The initiative secured integrated social development, equal opportunities and it provided support to the effective work of the Gender Coordinator and Social Services Department, as well as improved cooperation with the Budget Department.

However, the different external factors such as the earthquake and the pandemic prevented the normal implementation pace of the initiative in the 2019-2020 period, in spite of the excellent results achieved in 2018.

Towards Participatory Development of a Local Action Plan on Gender Equality

Bečej, Serbia

Jelena Brankov Cerevicki | jelena.brankov.cerevicki@becej.rs

Municipality of Bečej, Republic of Serbia

Why was the practice developed?

Bečej is a municipality in the north of Serbia, in Vojvodina. After signing the European Charter on Gender Equality at the Local Level (17 January 2017), the Municipality of Bečej studiously started the development of its LAP. They developed a model and methodology that would be useful for other municipalities and towns following the example of work in Bečej.

The GRB practice

The first step was the creation of a working group for the development of a LAP, in which representatives of local self-government, institutions, and civil society organizations were invited. The response was excellent, and very quickly, a very wide circle of participants from a variety of social milieus, interests, and actions was created. The established cooperation was enhanced by the following activities:

- High school teachers (of philosophy, sociology, history, Serbian and English language) for three weeks discussed with their students the subject of feminism and they presented what they had learned at the manifestation “Days of Science”, including all other scientific knowledge acquired in their regular educational programme.
- The Town Theatre, in cooperation with the Municipal Youth Office, hosted several theatre performances having the theme of feminism or workshops in which young people dealt with issues of gender stereotypes, gender roles, and gender-based violence.

The municipality developed a Strategic Local Action Plan on Gender Equality based on the data gathered at the meetings of the working group, focus groups with women in all rural areas, and citizens’ surveys. Priority goals selected by the citizens, and confirmed by the institutions, included:

- Improving the safety of citizens of the Municipality of Bečej from a gender perspective;
- Improving the position of rural women;
- Improving public services in the territory of the Municipality of Bečej in order to better meet citizens’ needs;
- Increased opportunities of girls and women to engage in sports;
- Improved capacity of local self-government to introduce a gender perspective into its policies and programs.

The municipality designed indicators regarding the goals expected, i.e., how to plan concrete activities and evaluate them in relation to either the desired or unwanted effects, and also, it established a gender budget for activity implementation.

The GRB results

What sets Bečej apart from other municipalities in Serbia is that during the preparation and planning of activities, a series of meetings of local government representatives were held, including: the person

responsible for gender equality, the head of the administration, the Municipal Council Members in charge of economy, social welfare and healthcare, culture, public relations and youth, with partner organizations and representatives of the Council of Local Communities to make a detailed activity plan. Particular effort was made to make women of all nationalities and different ages the direct beneficiaries of activities, and the Coordinator for Roma Issues actively participated in these agreements.

Cooperation with partner organizations and local communities was at a very high level. During the preparatory phase, a precise agreement was reached with all participants on the purpose and goal to be achieved, as well as on the division of responsibilities for the implementation of specific activities. The biggest challenge was the formation of groups of participants, considering that nothing similar has been done previously in their villages, and due to their other obligations, it was not easy to agree on the dates of activities. All actors in the implementation of project activities were engaged to explain in direct contact with potential participants the reasons and importance of the activities planned. The practice showed that personal contact and conversation with many different people is a long and arduous process, but also the most effective one.



Women's Economic Empowerment



Support for Networking and Entrepreneurial Initiatives of Women

Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Maja Kunić, Department of Finance | maja.kunic@prijedorgrad.org

Municipality of Prijedor, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Why was the practice developed?

The Municipality of Prijedor, like many other municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, faces intense migrations of its population to Western Europe, where the main reason for it is the lack of employment opportunities created in the municipality. Therefore, Prijedor has decided to implement continuous economic development measures, thus decreasing its unemployment. These include: incentives for self-employment; incentives for employment of new individuals; incentives for employment of highly educated citizens; and support for the introduction of quality standards (certification).

The GRB practice

Using **gender-responsive budget analysis as a GRB tool**, the Finance Department identified that the small and medium businesses in Prijedor Municipality were mainly owned and led by men, while women were mostly working in manufacturing, rarely establishing their own businesses and becoming entrepreneurs. The municipality also developed one measure that was gender-specific: support for networking and entrepreneurial initiatives of women, aiming to tackle the limited opportunities for women to start a business, and become financially and economically independent of their male family members.

This measure was designed in 2009, but was implemented in 2011, and since then, it has been budgeted every year in the municipality budget. The support of BAM 6000 in 2009 increased ten times to BAM 63000 in 2020. Based on **gender beneficiary assessment** conducted each year regarding the measures supporting gender equality, such as the financing of women's sports clubs – Women's Handball Club *Mira*, Women's Basketball Club *Mladost*, Women's Football Club *Prijedor*; and the Centre for Social Work, the municipality established that one of the best performing gender equality objectives was the development of women's entrepreneurship.

The GRB results

The target group for this measure included women older than 18 years of age. Since 2011, the measure has been used by 60 female beneficiaries who have established **60 companies**. The overall budget allocation until the year 2021 was KM 205,000 (ca. 102,500 Euro).

This practice aims to reduce the marginalization of women-led businesses and prevent women's financial dependence on their partners, family members, etc. Through this, gender relations are challenged and transformed in the community.

Support to Women's Entrepreneurship

Bar, Montenegro

Tanja Spičanović, Office of the Mayor | tanja.spicanovic@bar.me

Municipality of Bar, Montenegro

Why was the practice developed?

The practice is based on a gender-responsive budget initiative by the Women's Political Network, an association created under the program "Support for anti-discrimination and gender equality policies," funded by the European Union Delegation in Montenegro and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

<i>Women's entrepreneurship support measure 2019-2022</i>				<i>Entrepreneurship Development Support Program in the Municipality of Bar for the Period from 2019 to 2022</i>				
Public call	Amount of funds allocated	No. of applications received	No. of applications supported	Public call	Amount of funds allocated	No. of applications received	No. of applications supported	Supported applications made by women
Call in 2019	€ 35,000	18	4	Call in 2019	€ 89,500	39	9	7
Call I in 2020	€ 23,000	17	8	Call in 2020	€ 121,651	57	31	15
Call II in 2020	€ 12,000	ongoing		Total:	€ 211,151	96	40	22
Total:	€ 70,000		12	Total:	€ 70,000		80	44

The GRB practice

With an aim to support the economic empowerment of women and encourage them to start their own business and become self-employed, the practice of the Municipality of Bar is relevant to the realization of Objective 3.2 Encourage women's entrepreneurship and self-employment as in the 2017-2021 Gender Equality Action Plan of Montenegro; and more specifically, to Target 3.2.3 Create and implement a favorable credit line, and allocate non-repayable development funds for women's businesses.

The measure is **gender specific and includes support to women's entrepreneurship** in the amount of 35,000 Euro, in addition to the gender nonspecific support to entrepreneurship in the amount of 100,000 Euro. The Secretariat of Economy proposed to the Municipal Assembly to adopt two documents that have enabled these measures: *The Entrepreneurship Development Support Program in the Municipality of Bar for the Period from 2019 to 2022* and *the Decision on Criteria, Manner and Procedure of Allocating Funds*

to Support Women's Entrepreneurship. The measures supported innovative activities and were assessed from the perspective of their competitiveness and viability of the business idea, the quality of business plan content and the corresponding financial frame. Priority was given to business ideas opening new jobs and encouraging the municipality's economic development, especially in the field of creative industries and innovative activities.

The results of implementation are commendable. Besides helping 34 businesses led by women to start-up, the measures and their gender specific implementation contributed to new jobs opening. In particular, *7 new jobs were opened in 2019 and 13 in 2020.* Within this "common support program" 22 supported applications out of 40 were submitted by women. The final beneficiaries were independent women, who developed their business in the field of production, social entrepreneurship, tourist services, health, economy and crafts. This allowed for more equal distribution of public funds between men and women; diversification of the economy and strengthened economic independence of women in Bar.

The GRB results

The draft budget for 2021 also envisages an amount of € 35,000.00 to support women's entrepreneurship, adding to the sustainability of the measure. After summarizing the results and assessing the effects by using gender-responsive budget beneficiary assessment of the currently supported business plans, the Municipality of Bar is planning to create future support models directed toward the support of women in the business for developing of: (1) information technology and innovative digital services (video games, applications aimed at solving social problems), (2) cultural and creative industries (design, visual arts, marketing tools) and (3) crafts and domestic work abroad (affirmation of old crafts, promotion of artisan crafts serving the purpose of making useful objects and souvenirs, preparation and production of food).



Grant Scheme for Women's Economic Empowerment

Palanca, Moldova

Larisa Voloh, Mayor of Palanca village | palancasv@yahoo.com

Municipality of Palanca, Stefan Voda district, Republic of Moldova

Why was the practice developed?

With majority of Palanca's citizens migrating (about 30%), women that were more sensitive to social changes did not have any other activities besides their household activities. In 2018, the Municipality of Palanca started an empowerment and engagement program that mobilized both male and female citizens, but especially supported women's economic activity by providing **grant schemes for women entrepreneurs to start their own businesses**.

The GRB practice

The Mayoralty first started with training of women, and then continued with creating different opportunities to participate in decision making, as well as in community engagement. Women themselves identified the knowledge and skills they needed to acquire in order to become more sustainable in what they were doing or wanted to do. Once women acquired the skills and motivation required, the municipality provided small grants for women to develop their own small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They would receive 2,000 Euro to start up or develop their business. In addition to the financial support, soft skills and business advise was provided to further develop their businesses.

The practice was continuously implemented from 2018 to 2020 and funded through the municipal budget and donor funding. In the development of this practice, the first to be involved and most active were the women from Palanca community, followed by other groups of women. As there are no NGOs in Palanca that work with women as a target group, community groups reached out to women and mobilized them for different activities.

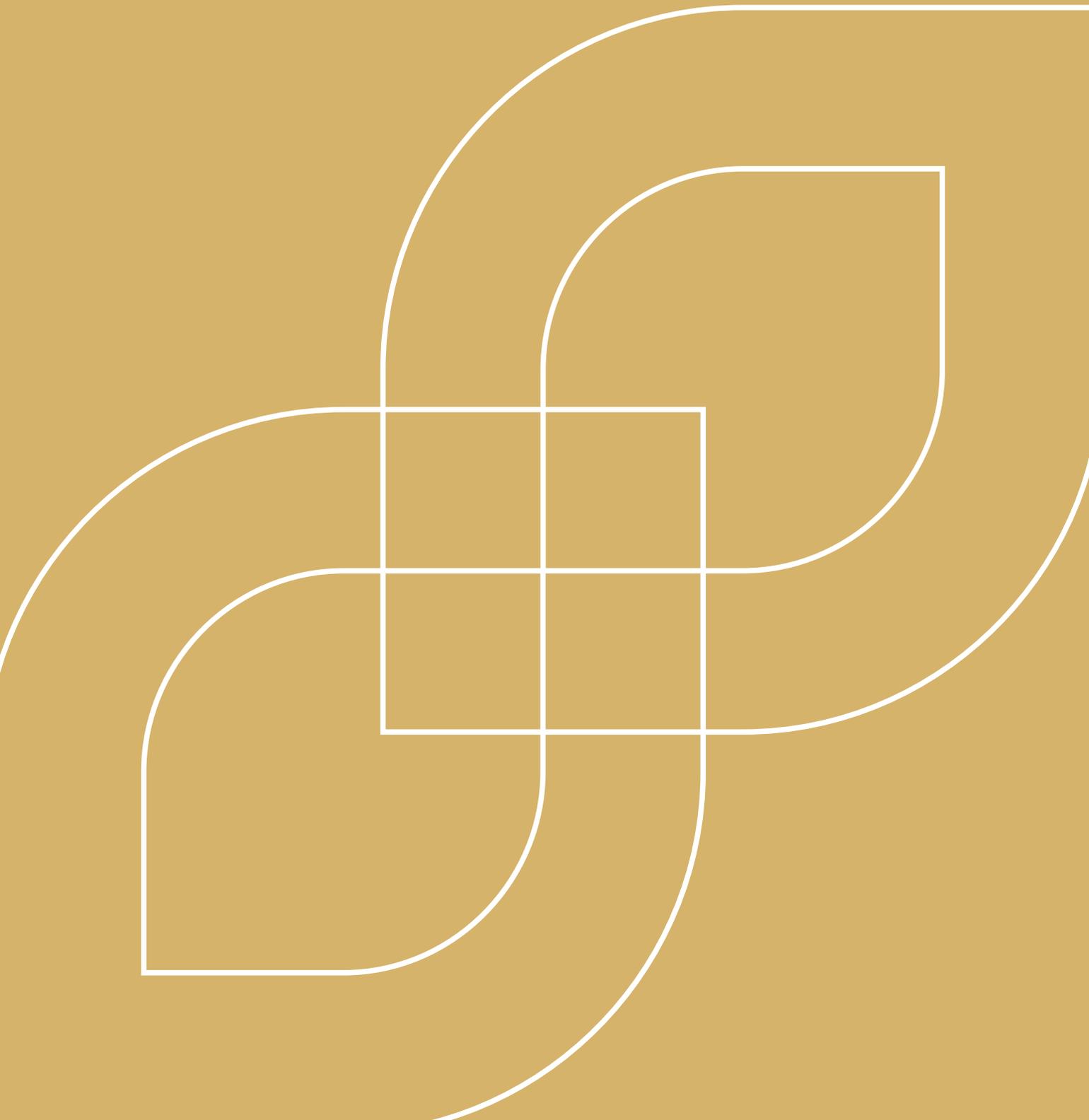
The GRB results

The results of the program are commendable:

- ✓ The number of women entrepreneurs doubled in the 4-year period of program implementation (from 6 in 2018 to 12 in 2020).
- ✓ The number of grants, the support to women and the budget allocated to meet women's needs also increased, thus contributing to a more balanced distribution of public funds regarding the needs of both women and men.
- ✓ The number of women involved in community activities also increased, which contributed to the democracy development in the municipality, as well as to enhancing the feeling of belonging.

Now, women are using the mayor's office/and local authorities as an information point, and seeking support for their business needs and initiatives that they want to implement.

Gender Based Violence



Shelter Center for Women Victims of Violence

Strumica, North Macedonia

Nela Masalkovska, Coordinator for equal opportunities of women and men

nela.masalkovska@strumica.gov.mk

Stojne Miteva, Executive Director of NGO Sky Plus Strumica

stojnemitva@gmail.com

Why was the practice developed?

Since 2012 the Municipality of Strumica started recognizing the need to respond to gender-based violence given the increased reporting of cases. The first initiatives were undertaken by CSOs active at local level (NGO HERA and the Organization of women from Strumica) and the Macedonian Orthodox Church when the first shelter center was opened, financed by the municipal budget.

In 2019, the CSO sector in Strumica analyzed the data derived from the Center for Social Work on the situation of gender-based violence in the municipality. The analysis resulted in a gender budget initiative for opening a new shelter center. It was estimated that an amount of 968.400 MKD (ca.15.000 euro) is needed for housing services for up to 10 victims of violence. The assessment showed that an additional 1.174,236 MKD (ca 16.000 euro) are needed to be allocated for psychologist, social worker and manager of the Shelter center so that it can offer a whole range of services needed for the victims of violence.

The GRB practice

In 2019 the Municipality of Strumica decided to allocate 1.200.000 MKD (ca.16.000 euro) for opening a Shelter Center. A call for applications was published requiring that the service provider that will win the bid provides for another 1.200.000 MKD. On the public call for applications, the NGO Sky Plus was selected and contracted for 14 months to implement the project (2 months in 2019 were used for preparation and 12 months in 2020 as implementation period). The municipality provided space for the Shelter Center but the NGO took over the responsibility to adapt and equip the space to meet the standards set for Shelter centers by the Ministry of Social Policy and Labour. As per the call for applications, the selected NGO secured support from the business community and individuals used for equipping, adaptation of the space, heating and food for the Shelter Center totaling to **1.603.140,00** MKD. The budget from the municipality was used for human resources, travel, administrative costs, visibility and project direct costs. The Shelter Center ensures daily and temporary housing and care for women and children's victims of violence for up to one year. The full capacity is 8 people of which 2 are for emergency intervention and housing in the first 24 hours of the incident. The center has a manager, assistant, psychologist, social worker and 2 caregivers. The shelter provides the following services: housing, psychosocial counselling and treatments, and support for continuing of education for the victim's children, or the victims that are school students.

The GRB results

In the course of 2020, the Shelter center surpassed the expectation of 10 victims of violence to be housed and supported. Due to Covid-19 lockdowns which in general increased gender-based violence in the country by 20% increased the need for sheltering in Strumica. The table below shows that 32 victims of violence received support and 28 children in 2020.

Year	Women victims of violence	Children
2020	32	28

The practice shows that for sustainability of social services community (private sector, religious groups and individuals) engagement is paramount. In the same time continuous commitment of the municipality by providing financial support through the municipal budget to the Shelter Center's operations is important for achieving the gender equality goals of the municipality and meeting the objectives for implementation of the Istanbul Convention of the country. Since its establishment the Shelter Center receives 1.000.000,00 MKD for human resources, running costs, travel and food for the victims by the municipality.



16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence

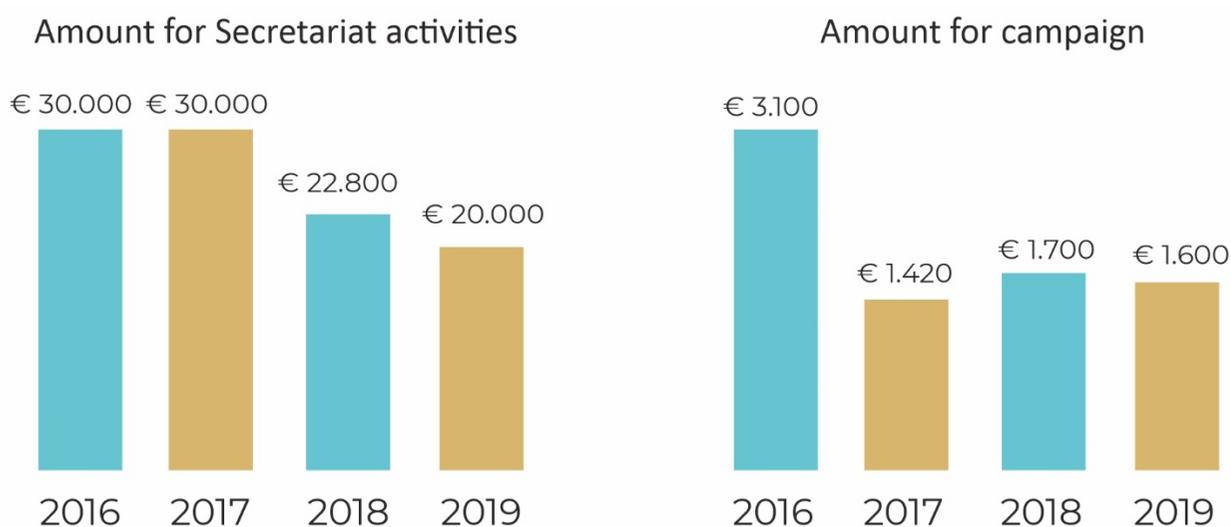
Tivat, Montenegro

Ivona Vukajlović, Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Social Issues

ivona.vukajlovic@opstinativat.me

Why was the practice developed?

In the Municipality of Tivat, the awareness of women on gender-based violence was insufficiently developed and there was limited knowledge on how to protect oneself and where to seek protection in case of violence. In 2012, based on the Memorandum of Understanding with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Montenegro, the Municipal Assembly of Tivat passed the Decision on Gender Equality in the Municipality of Tivat⁴ that includes the **gender-responsive budget initiative to organize 16 days of activism against gender-based violence**.



The GRB practice

The gender-responsive budget initiative has been implemented since 2012 with numerous activities involving sports teams, educators, experts and relevant institutions at the local and state level to point out the importance of preventing all forms of violence in society. The campaign contributes 8-10% to the budget of the Secretariat for Youth, Sport and Social Issues that implements it. It targets women from all age groups, but not exclusively women, as the reach-out over the years has been directed to men, as well. The following table shows the number of participants in the various activities realized within this initiative.

⁴ "Official Gazette of Montenegro – Municipal Regulations", No. 24/12 of 30 July 2012 and No. 034/12 of 26 November 2012

Year	Table 1: Activities under 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence Campaign	female participants	male participants
2017	Peer violence; Self-defense course; Play without violence; Women's health workshop	93	13
2018	Self-defense course; Debate; Native sports; Promotional activities on human rights	82	25
2019	A round table; Women's health workshop; Debate; Self-defense course; Promotional activities on human rights	60	10
Total:		292	51

The GRB results

This practice is sustainable and is in synch with the local plan for achieving gender equality in the Municipality of Tivat. It contributed to increased awareness and knowledge of the protection mechanisms against gender-based violence while encouraging and empowering women to report the violence in recent years. This is confirmed by the number of reported cases of violence, which from 5 in 2012 increased to 49 in 2018.



Gender Mainstreaming

Velenje, Slovenia

The Municipality of Velenje, Republic of Slovenia

Why was the practice developed?

The Municipality of Velenje has made a strategic decision to gender mainstream of its operations. The mechanism used was to adopt amendments to the Municipality's Rules of Procedure in 2008, in order to achieve the greatest possible representation of women in working bodies and commissions appointed by the Municipal Council. The change required that the number of women in working bodies and commissions of the Velenje Municipality Council should be balanced, which was gradually achieved, as shown by the table below.

year	men	women
2002	60	19
2010	58	23
2018	47	40

In 2018, a balanced representation of both genders was achieved in the working bodies and commissions of the Council.

The GRB practice

The increased gender participation in the municipal decision making led to a decision for the Municipality of Velenje to become active in the area of gender-based violence in 2008 by signing of the Letter of Intent to participate in the pilot project entitled Comprehensive Resolution of Violent Acts in the Field of Local Communities and the State. The interest of the municipality was to determine the actual level of gender-based violence, and also to assess violence victims' needs, based on which measures to reduce violent acts and preventive awareness could be developed and implemented in partnership with other relevant institutions.

In March and April 2009, workshops were held for employees in education, social affairs, healthcare, prosecution, police, court, and their purpose was to get acquainted with the role of the professional service within the institution in detecting and preventing violence, understanding legal frameworks, work practice responding to perceived violence, and identifying inhibitory aspects in solving the problem.

In November 2009, the company Sirius.si, coordinated by Velenje Municipality, conducted a survey, which was distributed to all governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with gender-based violence on a daily basis.

The GRB results

The municipal activities resulted in increased awareness and reporting on gender-based violence, as shown in the table below.

<i>Article/Year</i>	2008	2009	2010
Article 190⁵	10	11	5
Article 191⁶	3	117	113
Article 192⁷	4	7	8
TOTAL	17	135	126

The data obtained show that the number of reported cases related to the criminal offense of domestic violence (Article 191) has increased dramatically, especially in the year of activity implementation in the Municipality of Velenje. This number decreased by a small percentage in 2010 (after the completion of the Comprehensive Resolution of Violent Acts Project), which proves the sustainability and results expected of this action.

⁵ Article 190 Deprivation of a minor

⁶ Article 191 Domestic violence

⁷ Article 192 Neglect and cruel treatment of a minor

Tackling Gender-based Violence

Elbasan, Albania

Marsida SEJDINI, Gender equality expert | marsidasejdini@yahoo.com

Why was the practice developed?

Municipality of Elbasan established a Gender Based Violence Referral Mechanism in 2018 with an aim to help women victims of domestic violence escape the violent situation and also enable their integration in the economic and social life at least for the first months after the occurrence of the violence. The work was in partnership with NGOs which raised awareness by providing analysis of the data and gender analysis of the situation in the Municipality of Elbasan.

The GRB practice

The gender analysis of domestic violence cases and calculating the costs for the services targeting victims proved to be instrumental to the design of a road map for tackling domestic violence cases. In particular, the analysis identified: all the actions required to provide immediate assistance and further help to victims and their accompanying children (parents, other), meaning identifying the needs of each of the people involved in the domestic violence case; actors involved (Who does what? When? How?); the average cost of each service; institutions responsible for these expenditures etc.

Type of expenditure	Amount (in ALL)
Economic assistance because of a restraining order	2,052,000
Economic assistance to women heads of households/single mothers (young girls)	388,800
Rent bonus	2,400
Free nursery for children	210,000
Awareness raising campaigns	250,000
Coordinator for GE salary	623,000
Total	3,526,200

At the beginning, it was very difficult to identify and determine the budget items to be costed for the implementation of the intervention. Starting from the gender equality objective included in the general Action Plan of the Municipality, a roadmap of all the interventions necessary to address the gender-based violence cases was designed, identifying the respective actors involved in the process and the timeline. The next step was the identification of budget programs/budget items and the costing of activities,

followed by breaking down the costs into different outputs and budget planning. The data from the monitoring and evaluation of the budget concerning this intervention were used year by year to design the intervention for the following year.

Using Gender Responsive Budgeting as a tool to target the specific needs of women victims of violence, the Municipality of Elbasan tracked down all the services required to help these women, as well as the related costs and expenditures for their delivery.

Unemployment, economic and social issues were among the risk factors that contribute to the occurrence of domestic violence.

The GRB results

The Social Department of the municipality (Gender Officer and other actors) would conduct an emergency assessment of the case, then, victims would be sent to the emergency service centers, where they would stay until the full assessment of the situation. After the needs assessment, the victims of violence were provided with the following services (see Table).

Services	No. of beneficiaries
Psycho-social assistance	108
Legal aid and consultation	25
Emergency shelter	15
Transportation to a safe environment	5
Economic assistance	18
Economic assistance because of a restraining order	76
Food package	23
Social housing	3
Rent bonus	4
Health care for mother and child	42
Vocational training	48
Employment	7
Registering of children in daycare and/or school	8
Free daycare for children	12
Free nursery for children	3

The women beneficiaries of these interventions were helped to reintegrate in the regular economic and social life. Considering that the Gender Based Violence Referral Mechanism provides assistance to victims in the first months after the domestic violence has occurred, information on the whole lifecycle of the case is not available. However, due to the inclusion of the interventions in the Medium-Term Budget Program, the provision of these services was sustainable for 3 years.

Sport



Women's Football Team

Sanski Most, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mensur Seferović, ŽF/NK SANA 2014 | men85s@hotmail.com

Why was the practice developed?

Girls were much less included in the sport life of the Municipality of Sanski Most, while boys had a variety to choose from. Girls were limited to karate and boxing teams, with plans also to expand to volleyball and athletic teams. This, along with the fact that Sanski Most is a rather small community, still patriarchal, decreased the interest of girls in sport. However, a small group of girls and their coach decided to organize trainings and establish a football (soccer) club.

The GRB practice

The practice was developed and implemented solely as a result of the initiative of certain members of the Municipal Council, but led to an indirect application of GRB. When in 2012 the Gender Center of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina developed the local Gender Action Plan (GAP), the municipality included this initiative. The 2012 GAP recognized the introduced gender equality objectives in the sports sector of the municipality. The GAP of Sanski Most emphasizes the importance of increasing the number of girls participating in the municipal sport life. The data has shown that out of 1100 athletes of different ages, only 259 were girls/women or 23.5% (GAP Sanski Most, GCFBiH, 2012). An increase was intended through the establishment of new women's clubs.

The practice targets girls/young women aged 14-26. The Municipality of Sanski Most has used budget funds to fund sport clubs since 2000. However, those teams mostly included men's teams (NK "Podgrmeč", RK "SANA7", OKK "SANA", NK "RUDAR"), except for the karate and box teams (KK "Hurije", TK "Galaja") that included a mix of participants. Despite the fact that a women's football club has existed since 2014, the practice of allocating budget funds for the club started in 2018.

Noticing the interest of young women and girls in football and taking up a career in football, as well as the success of the previously self-funded Women's Football Club Sana, it was initiated the club to be supported through the municipal budget. The decision was made in 2017, while in 2018 the municipality decided to allocate BAM 6000 from the budget for the Women's FC Sana (Official Gazette 07/18). As the club had successful results and transferred to a higher-ranking football league, the municipality decided to increase the budget allocated for the club to BAM 10000 starting from 2019.

Through gender beneficiary assessment, as a GRB tool that was used by the Municipal Budget Department, the municipality of Sanski Most led to: (i) increased number of women participating in football; (ii) women's football club with the support achieved better results and (iii) the municipality improved gender balance in the municipal financing for sport. Last but not least important, while developing the practice, the employees in the municipality became more aware of the gender impact of the increased budget support to the women's football club had on gender relations and in general on sports development in the municipality of Sanski Most.

The GRB results

The analysis of the gender disaggregated data has shown inadequate participation of girls and women in the sport life of the municipality. Therefore, by financing of the club from the municipal budget, the number of women and girls included in the sport life was increased for 20-30 each year.

The success of this practice brings multiple results:

1. There are more options for women and girls interested in sports.
2. There is a balanced number (on the municipal level) of men and women/boys and girls who are playing football in a professional setting (2 teams, 20-30 members each).
3. Women's participation in sports financed from the local budget increased by 60.



Girls' Football Course

Beylikdüzü, Turkey

Muazzez Akbaba, Head of Woman and Family Department | muazzezakbaba@beylikduzu.bel.tr

Gizem Aykanat, Equality Unit Personnel | gizemaykanat@beylikduzu.istanbul

Harun Ceviz, Equality Unit Personnel | harunceviz@beylikduzu.istanbul

Why was the practice developed?

In Turkey, football (soccer) is the most popular sport and it is supported by the entire society.

The Municipality of Beylikdüzü signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life in 2016, following which a new Equality Unit under the Woman and Family Department was established and 3 new staff were assigned to this Unit. The Unit organized trainings on GRB and gender equality in local service delivery to raise the awareness of municipal staff. From among the trained employees, an "Equality Coordination Group" was established with the participation of one technical personnel member from each municipal department for the purpose of coordinating gender mainstreaming in the municipality.

The "Equality Coordination Group" examined whether the municipality provided equal service delivery, and by applying gender beneficiary assessment as a GRB tool, Beylikdüzü Municipality produced a Budget Equality Report for 2016 and 2017. Based on this report, the Municipality Equality Unit staff decided to improve service delivery in order to create more equal life opportunities for women and girls by including in its 2017-2019 Strategic Plan an objective on gender equality; **Goal 3, Objective 5:** *"To develop policies and practices that will ensure the gender equality perspective in planning and service delivery stages in all departmental units of the municipality."*

The GRB practice

The Beylikdüzü Municipality's reports determined the number of girl- and boy-beneficiaries of the sports courses supported by the municipality. According to the assessment of 2016 and 2017 Budget Equality Reports, segregation of girls and boys was observed, where girls mainly took part in gymnastics, volleyball, tennis and table tennis courses, whereas boys were the primary attendants of football, basketball, karate, taekwondo, sailing, archery, windsurf, chess courses. Cycling and swimming were the only courses that had almost equal participation. And there were no girls in football (soccer) courses. Based on these results, the "Equality Coordination Group", together with the Sports Department, designed a specific measure in order to encourage girls' participation in football courses. It was announced and implemented with local NGOs and amateur football clubs such as Beylikdüzü Football Club. The gender equality objective of the practice was to encourage girls to play football and to change gender stereotypes by doing so. The second objective was that money allocated to sports should benefit both girls and boys.

The GRB results

The results are obvious: (i) increased number of girls playing football, and (ii) more balanced distribution of public funds to the benefit of both girls and boys, as shown in the table below.

Budget year	Total money allocated to the sports courses	Beneficiaries	
		Boys	Girls
2017	TL 1,592,366.80 (\$ 207,684.44)	532	0
2018	TL 3,905,476.23 (\$ 509,371.74)	623	19
2019	TL 3,299,562.41 (\$ 430,345.43)	719	51

Women's Race

Skopje, North Macedonia

Kristina Mitic, City Sports Association | kristinam@skopje.gov.mk

Gordana Kuzmanovska Nikolovska, City Sports Association | nikolovska@sportskopje.mk

Why was the practice developed?

Skopje Marathon has been organized for over 30 years and since 2007, it has been financially supported by the City of Skopje. However, women and men did not have balanced participation in the Skopje marathon. This did not correspond with the gender equality goals of the city, set with the Gender Equality Strategy⁸ adopted in 2012. Hence, the financing of the Skopje marathon led to unequal distribution of public funds to women and men. The Women's Race was a measure that aimed to change these difficulties.

The GRB practice

The City of Skopje conducted a beneficiary assessment of the support to the Skopje Marathon, which showed that more men benefit from it, as women did not apply to participate in the 5km, half-marathon and marathon races. The City of Skopje's Sports Association concluded that awareness raising on gender equality and promoting women's participation in sports initiatives were particularly needed. Therefore, a specific measure, a race that targets women only, was introduced in 2013 as a promotional race to the Skopje Marathon. The rationale was to encourage women to join the short marathon as an inspiration to take part in the actual 5km marathon.

The practice was implemented through a public-private partnership between sports associations, the municipality, the business sector and finally, the participating citizens. The whole-of-society approach contributed to the overall success of the practice.

The following gender responsive budgeting tools were used: **gender beneficiary assessment**. First of all, gender disaggregated data was gathered on marathon's participants. This is the main precondition for gender beneficiary assessment. Then, a comparative analysis was done to determine the gender gap between women and men. Later, the City Sports Association of Skopje conducted interviews with randomly chosen marathon participants, both women and men, to identify the predominant perceptions of why women were not participating. This provided qualitative data showing self-criticism, very low self-esteem and needs for empowerment. In competitive sports, this is improved when the group is specifically targeted with awareness, award and encouragement activities. That is how the idea of Women's Race emerged, following the examples of many other countries in the world. Keeping a database and improving the measure design was another method applied. Namely, after the first year of implementing the measure, the race length was increased to 3000 meters (3 km) instead of being 1 km long.

⁸ Strategy for Gender Equality "City of Skopje, a gender equal city", 2012

The practice is contributing to the Gender Equality Strategy of the City of Skopje, which sets out an overall objective for Skopje to become a gender-equal city. Gender mainstreaming is supported through actions for gender responsive policy-making, awareness raising, gender responsive service delivery and projects for women’s empowerment. The gender specific measure of Women’s Race is therefore in line with the overall objective and presents an action directed towards women’s empowerment. The practice effectively achieves the objectives and goes beyond the Gender equality strategy of City of Skopje, which does not specifically provision interventions in sport. However, the overall capacity building and awareness raising on gender equality that was provided through the implementation of the Strategy, in parallel created an environment supportive for the measure to be developed and realized, thus achieving the goal of the Gender Equality Strategy of the City of Skopje. It also allows for a gender balanced distribution of public funds provided through the budget of the City of Skopje to both women and men, boys and girls, and for the purpose of sport development.

The practice is demonstrating a simple intervention that has a transformative power for gender relations and the overall status of women in society, but it also shows that minor municipal budget interventions can contribute to gender responsive distribution of public funds.

Budget allocated to Skopje Marathon – Women's Race		
Year	Skopje Marathon	Women's Race
2013	MKD 1,500,000	/
2014	MKD 1,500,000	/
2015	MKD 1,300,000	MKD 10,000
2016	MKD 1,200,000	MKD 10,000
2017	MKD 1,200,000	MKD 15,000
2018	MKD 1,500,000	MKD 50,000
2019	MKD 1,500,000	MKD 50,000
2020	MKD 1,500,000	MKD 50,000

The GRB results

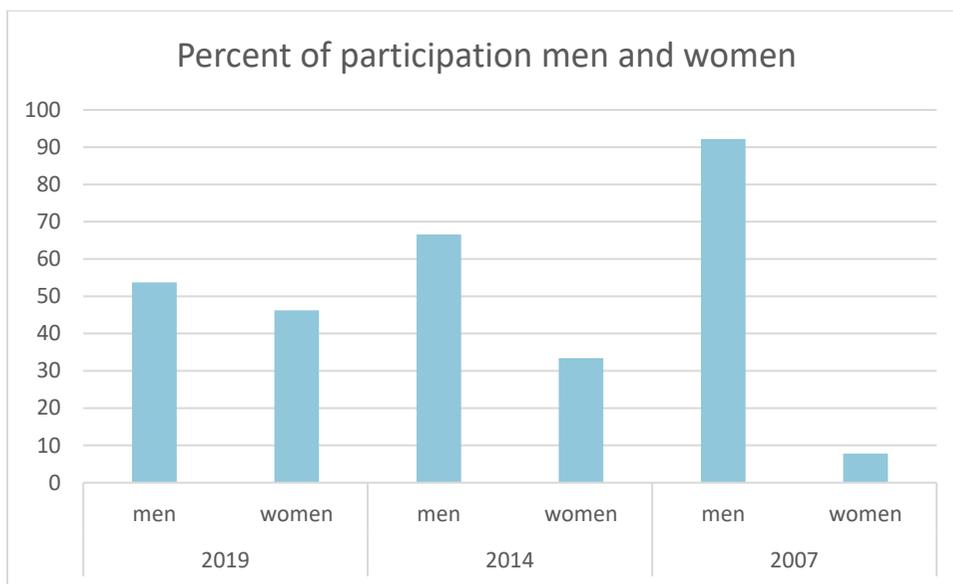
The Women’s Race is an innovative measure that also tackles gender inequality in other measures. Therefore, when assessing the effectiveness of gender equality policy measures and budgets, one should not think only of directly improving the measure, but also of designing other measures that will create an enabling environment for gender equality results to be achieved by other measures as well.

Key results:

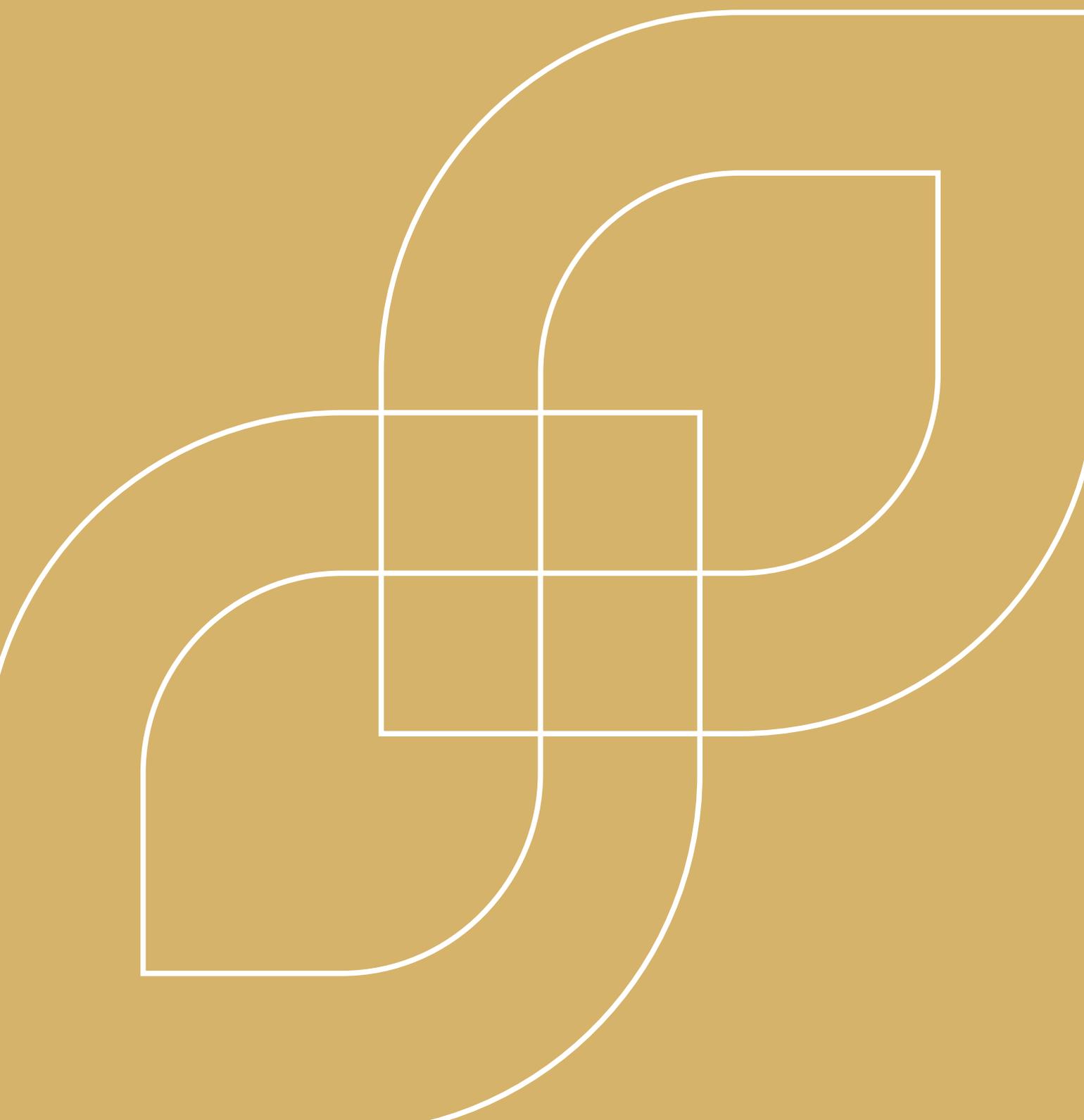
1. Increased (double) number of participants since the support for the Women’s Race started;
2. More than double increase in the number of women participants in the marathon; and
3. Almost gender-balanced participation of women and men in 2019 Skopje Marathon.

Since the Women’s Race was introduced, women’s participation in Skopje Marathon increased as well. The city administration included Women’s Race in their sport program as a promotional race of Skopje Marathon in 2015. Since then, the race has been traditionally supported, leading to a continuous increase of women participants in Skopje Marathon, from 8% when the City of Skopje started supporting it and 8

years before the gender-specific measure was introduced, to 46% of female participants in 2019 Skopje Marathon.



Balancing work and life



Our Kindergarten Istanbul: Child Activity Centers

Istanbul, Turkey

Şengül Altan Arslan, General Secretariat | sengul.altanarslan@ibb.gov.tr

Yavuz Saltık, Head of Social Works Directorate | yavuz.saltik@ibb.gov.tr

Şenay Gül, Head of Woman and Family Services Department under the Social Works Directorate | senay.gul@ibb.gov.tr

AÇEV-Mother, Child Education Foundation⁹; Bernard van Leer Foundation¹⁰; Boğaziçi University, Turkish Pediatrics Foundation¹¹; Turkish Foundation of Dyslexia¹²; Wise Academy¹³

Why was the practice developed?

In Turkey, according to the TurkStat's survey, women between 15 and 64 years of age spend 5 hours and 8 minutes on unpaid domestic work, while men spend only 1 hour and 25 minutes. What is more, for 75% of fathers, the main childcare responsibility belongs to mothers. This makes the participation in pre-school education in Turkey to be below the OECD average and the target set by the Turkish Ministry of Education. Districts with high-density population, low income and high ratio of single parents lack access to preschool education in Istanbul.

The GRB practice

The problem was recognized by Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, who within his electoral campaign, promised 150 kindergartens/child development centers for Istanbul. The Program "Our Kindergarten Istanbul: Child Activity Centers" was developed within the Local Equality Action Plan using **participatory budgeting tools** (73 focus group meetings were held in 73 separate Zoom sessions with the participation of women's organisations, non-governmental organisations and experts and academia whose focus is gender equality) and a **social assessment study** was carried out to identify the scope of disadvantaged families with the need for equal early childhood education opportunity. The budget allocated was USD 300,000.00 for each of the early childhood development centers.

The GRB results

The practice had the following gender equality objectives: to increase women's employment; to provide psycho-social support to every family member who is taking part in the upbringing of the child; to cooperate with different institutions and NGOs in order to provide the service in a comprehensive and holistic manner; and to ensure equal educational opportunities for children from disadvantaged families. In 2020, this resulted in 535 children/parents benefiting from the implementation; 113 children (49 girls, 64 boys) receiving services free of charge; 154 (73 girls, 81 boys) paying half the total price; and 268

⁹ <https://www.acev.org/en/history/>

¹⁰ <https://bernardvanleer.org/>

¹¹ <http://turkpediatri.org.tr/>

¹² <https://www.tudiv.org.tr/>

¹³ <http://wiseakademi.com/>

children (119 girls, 149 boys) paying the full price for the service. The practice enhanced the economic activity of 251 mothers who, due to the care provided for their children, are already in paid jobs, 25 of them started work in a paid job right after their children started going to nursery, while 71 mothers stated that they would start work if their child was accepted to the nursery. The practice also creates new job opportunities for women, as shown in the table below.

Positions	Women	Men	Total
Child Development and Education Expert	36	0	36
Food Engineer	1	0	1
Preschool Education Teacher	76	1	77
Phycologist	10	0	10
Phycological Advisor	4	0	4
Social Worker	4	0	4
Total	131	1	132

Interactive theatre for changed perspectives on division of household responsibilities

Split, Croatia

Ombudswoman for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia

Croatian National Theater in Split

Association “Riječi/Prave/Predstave” (Zagreb) and Mamforce (Zagreb)

Why was the practice developed?

The Office of the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia conducted a survey entitled “The impact of gender division of family responsibilities and household chores on the professional life of employed women” on a nationally representative sample of 600 employed women who have lived with their partners for at least a year. The survey results have shown that routine jobs, daily chores and childcare are duties predominantly performed by women. This unpaid care-work is labor-intensive and isolates women in their homes, while men are predominantly performing leisure activities. This type of distribution of responsibilities has shown to have a number of negative consequences on women when it comes to their career, professional lives and health. Women perceive that family responsibilities slow them down in their career, forcing them to give up promotion, or even avoid professional training or travelling for work.

The GRB practice

The Ombudswoman for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia together with the Croatian National Theater in Split, the civil society Association “Riječi/Prave/Predstave” (Zagreb) and Mamforce (Zagreb) developed a project implemented in Split with the following goals:

- Removal of gender stereotypes, gender-imposed roles and male and female professions
- Reconciliation of professional and family life for women and men
- Elimination of inequalities within the family
- Education for employers about the importance of a sensitized approach to mothers
- Promotion of an active role of fathers in formative years of child’s development.

The project value was € 437,172.29 of which € 350,000.00 was funded through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program (REC) implemented by the European Commission, while the remaining funds were municipal budget funds.

The main part of the practice was the development and implementation of an interactive theatre performance designed to motivate students to reconsider their own perception of the division of housework between men and women, and to adopt the norm that both men and women are equally responsible for the household. The other part of the practice was the development of a methodology that measures business conditions and gender equality in public institutions, state bodies, public companies

and SMEs. Finally, the third part of the project was capacity building and awareness raising using the MAMFORCE and DADFORCE certificates for participating SMEs, public institutions, state bodies and public companies.

The target groups included 400 men and women as local/regional government officials, 9 public sector institutions and 3,230 high-school seniors.

The GRB results

The results were:

1. A creative and interactive practice developed in the form of a theatre play for the promotion of gender equality that can be replicated for various audiences
2. Specific guides developed for public bodies, large enterprises and SMEs regarding family responsibility and gender equality

Sustainability of the practice was ensured through the guides that were also developed as part of project activities:

- A Guide for Family Responsibility and Gender Equality: Government Institutions and Agencies;
- A Guide for Family Responsibility and Gender Equality: Large Enterprises;
- A Guide for Family Responsibility and Gender Equality: SMEs.



Social infrastructure for childcare and child development

Municipality of Centar, Skopje, North Macedonia

Jana Belčeva Andreevska | jana.belcevaandreevska@gmail.com

Why was the practice developed?

Urban planning in the Municipality of Centar faced with continuous challenges that clearly showed that no indicators of development were measured, i.e., indicators that would lead to decisions on prioritization, urgency, needs of vulnerable or marginalized groups, as well as gender representation and position of women in the municipality. The results of such planning over the years included: pronounced inequality in the development of urban areas within the municipality, uneven distribution of communal, educational and social infrastructure, poor security, increased pollution and social stratification, inequality between men and women.

The GRB practice

The municipality of Centar, together with a team from the Faculty of Architecture started a process of qualitative evaluation of Urban Plans. The main principles of evaluation were defined on the basis of SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Settlements, a goal measured by a set of indicators. They were used to identify the indicators adequate to measure the status of: safe and affordable housing; utilities for all; traffic safety, especially in terms of non-motorized traffic participants (mainly children, the elderly and a certain percentage of women) and transport conditions available for free and safe movement, lighted and safe pedestrian paths, especially for women, people with disabilities, and any other vulnerable groups. The impact on the environment, as well as the reduction of any possible climate change effects, was raised to a higher level when deciding on projects and on the protection of public natural and cultural goods.

The main goal was an integrated approach to decision-making while respecting the equality of all residents, equality between men and women, and particularly the equality of vulnerable groups, including advanced processes of inclusive and sustainable urban planning and strengthened capacities for participation and integrated urban areas' planning. In order to achieve this goal, it was not only required to strengthen the administrative capacities or modernize the processes of municipal departments, but also to understand the principle of equality and equity. A gender responsive budget planning commenced, notably with gender-disaggregated data gathering and analysis and digitalization of the process of citizens budgetary forums which allow citizens participation in local policy and budget making.

The GRB results

The evaluation resulted in a revision of the proposed Urban Plan for a neighborhood named Prolet, where new criteria were set, including: retention of state-owned land and its utilization for public purposes; identification of a location for construction of a kindergarten and playgrounds; suspension of the procedures for legalization of buildings built on public areas; planning of communal infrastructure

according to actual needs; provision of safe pedestrian paths, as well as access to educational facilities and the primary school in this area.

The citizen's participatory budget forums that were organized have identified that women's access to the labour market is a high priority. Considering that only through social infrastructure for childcare and child development women will gain access to the labor market and financial independence, the non-provision of this type of social infrastructure and the prevailing gender roles puts women in an unequal position and particularly vulnerable to unemployment. Therefore, the revised urban plan foresees construction of minimum 3 new kindergartens on analyzed location, one specifically in Prolet neighborhood with capacity for 150 children in object of 3300m².

During the organized in-person citizens budget forums, equal representation of different focus groups was respected. This allowed for priorities and views from inclusive group of participants to be embedded in the design of services delivered on municipal level. Another step forward in citizens participation and transparency was online budgeting platform (mobile and web application developed during Covid-19 period instigated distance working), which also has functionality for disseminating details on the planned budget funds. As a second level of approval, every citizens individually, or as a specific group representing focused interests, was able to examine expenditures planned by thematic areas and allocation share of individual program areas, such as education, social services, utilities, environment or sports. The platform in addition provided option for validation that the selected priorities identified during the budget forums resulted with funding allocated for those needs. Considering that online participation in budget planning addressed the needs of women that are usually time-poor, it directly resulted with more women involved in decision making, and in strengthening their role in the local community and society in general.

Conclusions

In the area of gender participation one can notice that local governments have used multiple tools. From gender-responsive budget beneficiary analysis as a GRB tool in planning and implementing; to surveys to detect the needs of women and men; meetings/round tables and opening topics and discussions about women's successful engagement in public life, about feminism and even interactive theater plays were used to stir dialogue, share women's experiences and create an environment of inclusion. The results were remarkable as well. From gender balance in local decision-making; to enhancing women's engagement in community life.

In the area of women's economic empowerment, the following GRB tools were used: gender-responsive budget analysis and gender beneficiary assessment. Both allowed for gender specific measures to be developed aiming at supporting women's entrepreneurship such as grant schemes for women entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. The results were commendable as it allowed for hundreds of women owned and women led MSMEs to be established, it reduced the marginalization of women-led businesses and prevented from women's financial dependence on their partners, family members, etc. The municipal measures not just provided better access to finance of women enterprises but also allowed for more equal distribution of public funds between men and women.

In the area of gender-based violence the municipalities worked in cooperation with CSOs and by using costing as a GRB tool jointly appraised a gender budget initiative such as opening a new shelter center. In other practices for this area seems crucial the cooperation with other international organizations and CSOs as well as with the institutional mechanism that works on prevention and protection from violence such as the Ombudsman, the prosecution, the police and etc. Working together resulted with increased awareness and reporting on gender-based violence. Furthermore, gender analysis of domestic violence cases and calculating the costs for the services targeting victims contributed to diversification of services offered on local level to victims of violence and effectively addressing the different needs of women and kids as victims of violence.

In the area of sport, gender budget beneficiary assessments were used to increase the number of girls participating in the municipal sport life, improving gender balance especially in women's football and in marathon participation. The practices show that joint work between equality and sports departments is needed to encourage women's/girl's participation. Considering that women are more self-critical, with lower self-esteem, the practices show that specific targeting is needed for women to raise their awareness, as well as to award and encourage their sport activities. The municipal measures increased number of girls in municipal support and provided for more balanced distribution of public funds to the benefit of both girls and boys.

In the area of balancing work and life the municipalities from where best practices come in this publication have used participatory budgeting tools, social assessment studies, including surveys to identify the scope of disadvantaged families with the need for equal early childhood education opportunities and scope of unpaid care work and its impact on career development of women and men. The municipal GRB work resulted with kindergartens being opened, urban plans with social infrastructure being developed and awareness raising activities conducted on family responsibilities and gender equality.

