

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DURRËS

POSITION PAPER

CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT CENTER



Position paper

1. Defining the problem

Municipalities have taken the lead in improving services for citizens at the local level. Article 24 of Law no. 139/2015 “On local self-government”¹ defines the responsibilities of LGUs in the field of social services. They are mainly related to the distribution of economic aid, the provision of some financial facilities for vulnerable groups (eg: lowering the price of some services such as public transport), but also the administration of social centers or the opening of new centers and providing services for people with disabilities, children, women heads of households, victims of trafficking, etc.

In recent years there has also been a growing interest from municipalities to become part of initiatives to implement gender responsive budgeting, with the aim of making budget programs take into account the needs of men and women; and ensure that the local budget contributes to reducing inequalities; and provide public services that enable their empowerment. Despite the pressure of groups of interest, this perspective is not taken into account effectively.

Durrës Civil Society Development Center has since 2015 been part of public hearings and participatory budgeting in the Municipality of Durrës. CSDC Durrës has facilitated the participatory budgeting process in each year when the municipality of Durrës has conducted its public hearings with residents of the administrative units of the municipality itself. One of the achievements that is worth mentioning in this process is the interaction between the civil society and the municipality of Durrës is the changes that have occurred in the public infrastructure of the Municipality of Durrës in some units of the municipality.

2. Actions to solve the problem

The Municipality of Durrës has adopted important documents which identify needs and address priorities in the field of social care, such as the Medium-Term Budget Performance Plan.

The protection and empowerment of groups in need is also included in some national strategies and plans, such as the Social Protection Strategy 2019-2022, the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030, the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025,² the *National Plan Action for Persons with Ability to Disabled 2021-2025*³, etc. Some measures foreseen in these plans should be reflected in the medium-term budget of the LGUs in charge of their implementation. This is achieved through various instruments and reflects the needs of certain groups in the field of social protection. Budget expenditures can take the form of direct benefit expenditures for households, such as: cash disability benefits and economic assistance.

The Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020 is an important tool for the practical implementation of public commitments undertaken by the Municipality of Durrës in relation to the principles of equality, planning and implementation of the needs and rights of women and men of all ages and from all groups of society. It was prepared as the first step in the practical implementation of the European Charter for the Equality of Men and Women in Local Life.

The Municipality of Durrës signed the European Charter for equality on 2017, making it part of the documents and instruments that guide the actions and steps taken in all aspects of life: political, economic, social and cultural.

¹ [LIGJI 139_2015_PER_VETEOEVERISJEN_VENDORE1.pdf \(shtetiweb.org\)](#)

² [ALB-Report- 2020_NAP-RE.docx \(live.com\)](#)

³ [National Action Plan: Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 | UNDP in Albania](#)

The Action Plan for Gender Equality (APGE) 2018-2020⁴, covers a set of areas and provides for actions aimed at: respect for the fundamental right to equality between women and men; addressing issues of inequality and discrimination; actions to eliminate gender stereotypes; balanced participation of women and men as well as young men and women in political and public decision-making; access to various services conceived according to the special needs of women and men; gender mainstreaming in all plans and areas for sustainable development; planning based on appropriate resources, etc. Even the action plan is clear in its objectives; there is little reflection in annual budget or Medium-Term Budget Performance Plan.

Durrës was the first Municipality in Albania to establish the Office for Gender Equality, as part of its structure (since 2008), a structure that was later strengthened by taking actions related to the prevention and treatment of violence against women and domestic violence (starting in 2009). Also, the Municipality of Durrës had cooperation with civil society organizations, especially those that provide certain services to groups in need and has been applying the practice of supporting some of these services financially for about 7 (seven) years, despite the difficulties encountered in practice in general for applying for tendering / purchasing of services by specialized Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs) that provide them.

The Municipality of Durrës, in cooperation with local and regional actors, operates in political areas of social inclusion through social services provided by it. The Directorate of Social Service of the Municipality is the primary local structure for social service, which, by establishing cooperative relations with other actors, fulfills the legal functions in this regard. In this way, the field of social inclusion is currently addressed within the legal framework and local social service structures.

3. Possible solution/suggestions.

Despite the strategic documents Durrës municipality is oriented from, there is still work to be done and space for improvement. The next annual budget should:

- Reflect Gender Responsive Budget in more budget lines;
- Make data of fund allocation understandable and transparent.
- Provide funds for trainings in order to raise the capacities of the Gender Equality officers and gender responsible staff in administrative units.
- Support CSOs that already implement or plan to implement GRB related projects.
- Raise the fund for service provision in Community center in Nishtulla (Roma community beneficiaries) and Multifunctional center for support of Family and Children (recently opened).
- Support for programmes that encourage women entrepreneurship.
- Consider regional factors, such as: tourism, archeology, agriculture when allocating funds for employment, education and vocational training.

⁴ [gender_equality_index_albania.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)