



Newsletter #5
**Success and
impact**

in the framework of the
Gender Budget Watchdog
Network in Western Balkans
and Republic of Moldova



GENDER BUDGET BRIEF

Impressum

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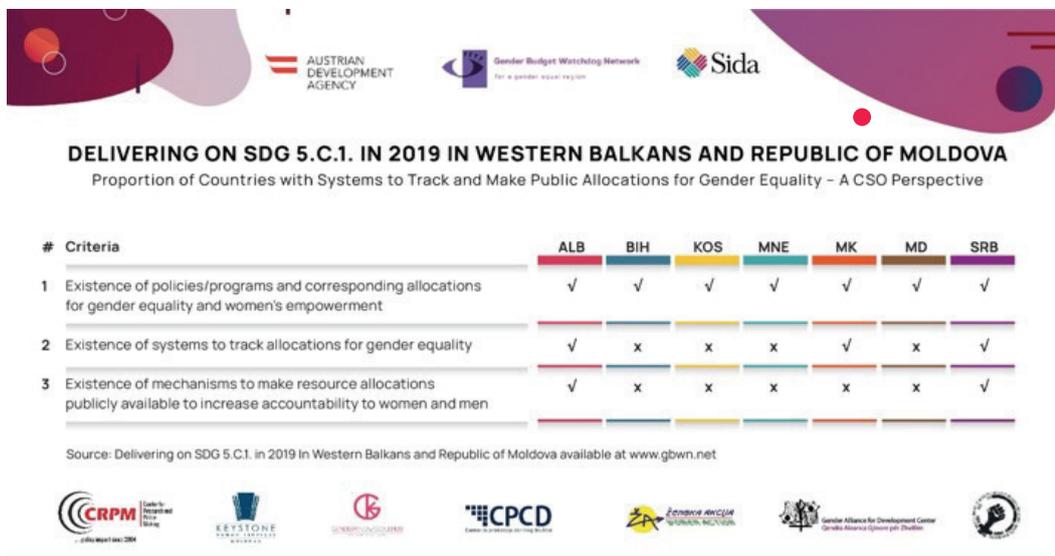
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Dear Gender Budget Watchdogs,

Last July 2020 the Gender Budget Watchdog Network (GBWN) published a report tracking the progress of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Kosovo, and Serbia on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.c.1. indicator “Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality”. The results were the following:



This activity did not intend to compare economies, but rather to capture the status and to serve as a baseline for the engagement of CSOs in gender budget advocacy. In the last year, the project partners have promoted the findings of the SDG 5. C. 1 reports nationally, and through a knowledge product regionally. The knowledge product received praise from the professional community of financial and women rights activists around the world. The national advocacy activities of the gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) hubs in all our countries included advocacy meetings with different relevant stakeholders resulting in numerous improvements in increased transparency and accountability.

The following newsletter details the achievements detected so far, related to SDG 5. c.1. and to advocating for introduction of gender in policy and budgets in the region.

We keep watching, researching, analyzing and advocating for Gender Budgets!

Yours sincerely,

Marija Risteska

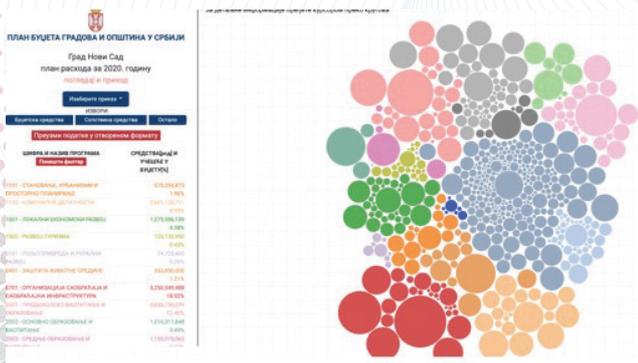
on behalf of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network

SUCCESS IN SERBIA

✓ **Accountability for gender equality allocations:** Following the SDG 5.c.1. report and specifically findings and recommendations on improving of the existing mechanisms for making resources for gender equality public, Gender Knowledge Hub, gender budget community in Serbia and the Serbian government published annual report on gender responsive budgeting on the web site of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality <https://www.rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs/sr-Latn/rodnaravnopravnost/rodno-odgovorno-budzetiranje>

The annual progress report for 2020 and plans for GRB introduction, for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 have been published. The progress report includes an overview of gender responsive objectives and indicators and examples of good practices. The progress is assessed by the traffic light tool. The reports are annually prepared by UN Women in cooperation with the Coordination Body on Gender Equality, as a part of support in introducing GRB in the Republic of Serbia.

✓ **Existence of systems for making gender equality allocations public:** The GKH as a GRB hub in Serbia appraised an initiative for integration of GRB on open data portal for local budgets <https://budzeti.data.gov.rs/> an interactive platform with the open data about local self - governments budgets. The proposal is to add data about the number of gender responsive programmes and to mark municipalities that introduced gender responsive budgeting.



✓ **Capacity building on GRB:** The capacity building for CSOs on gender responsive budgeting in Serbia was scarcely offered before the commencement of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network project. On the first call for applications published in 2020 the GBWN received a number of applications; but with the second call this number increased. This is result of the increased visibility of the GRB hub and the GBWN and increased interest of CSOs for capacity building in GRB.



✓ **Policy advocacy results on local level:** As the result of the subgrant project Introducing GRB in the City of Nis, implemented by Protecta, GRB has been added to the Local Strategic Plan for Development of the City of Nis 2021 - 2027 as a specific objective under the gender mainstreaming capacities improvement. Protecta held meetings with the local Gender Equality Council and started the analysis of GRB implementation in the City of Nis, which will provide concrete recommendations for the improvement to the City of Council. They also prepared info material and organized public event with the purpose to promote GRB.





SUCCESS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

- ✓ **Existence of systems to track allocations for gender equality:** In response to the advocacy efforts for SDG 5.c.1. and specifically on improving the existing systems to track allocations for gender equality Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina published the budget instructions for 2021 budget, which now include the following points: “In the context of each of the programs, where applicable, a gender equality dimension is to be included and explained in the narrative part. In the BPMIS – information system for budget planning and management, gender equality aspect is included by the budget users through entering the data about the resources through economic categories of the expenses, while the performance measures will be stated in the explanation of the program. Furthermore, the budget users are to record the gender aspects of all programs (in the explanation) which include sex-disaggregated data about the employees, their positions in the workplace, as well as their status (appointed and elected individuals, leading officials, state officials, and employees).”
- ✓ **Existence of systems for making gender equality allocations public:** The Centre for Civil Society Promotion advocated for the Government to publish Citizens budget that will present publicly and, in a citizens’ friendly way the gender equality allocations. The Citizen’s Budget for 2020 was also published and is available on the Ministry of Finance and Treasury’s website.
- ✓ The capacity building of Bosnian-Herzegovinian CSOs in GRB was continued, with an immense rise in interest in trainings organized by Gender Budget Watchdog Network. The sub-grantees have shown high levels of interest, efficiency, and ability to influence local politics towards a more gender equal outlook.

SUCCESS IN KOSOVO

✓ **Policy advocacy results on central level:**

The new Government of Kosovo Plan 2021-2025 has addressed some of the recommendations made by the GRB hub, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN). The program promises new initiatives to strengthen the position of women in society through subsidizing NGOs, individual initiatives, and assisting women's economic empowerment through financial aid and affirmative action measures. The Government has committed to prioritize support to women-owned businesses as part of its support to manufacturing businesses that have the potential for export and job creation. Most importantly, the Government commits that all new policies will be subject to a gender impact assessment, as required in the policy process, but also recommended by KWN.

✓ Following KWN's advocacy based on recommendations drawn from the "Pandemic Knows No Gender?" report, among others, the Government has committed to supporting the economic empowerment of women and increasing employment, with a focus on doing business, implementing active measures for women's employment and support measures for women-run businesses, especially amid the pandemic. Indeed, new measures as part of the Government's response to the pandemic, publicized on 5 July, reflect a more gender-responsive approach than prior fiscal measures.

✓ **Policy advocacy results on local level:**

Supported by GBWN, Euloc and the Municipality of Viti in Kosovo have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate on monitoring and mentoring the fair implementation of gender responsive policies in the Municipality of Viti. Another memorandum of understanding was signed between YAHR and the Municipality of Lipjan to cooperate on integrating a gender perspective in drafting the municipal budget, by promoting women's participation in public discussions.



SUCCESS IN MONTENEGRO



√ **Existence of policies / programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment:**

At its Fifth Session held at 28th April 2021, the Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality assessed the Draft of Law on Budget of Montenegro for 2021. During the discussion it was noted that the Draft of Law on Budget does not make the gender equality budget lines visible which complicates the work of the Committee for Gender Equality which commits to appraising policies from gender perspective. Further in the discussion it was noted that the 2021 budget is a program budget for the first time in history. It requires an introductory part of Budget Law that contains guidelines for budget users on commitment to use gender-responsive budgeting tools in the programming. Also, Committee stated that it is necessary for Government of Montenegro to make an effort in monitoring the implementation of Law on Gender Equality through the Law on Final Account of the Budget for 2020, primarily Art. 3 and 14, but also that the budget for 2022 is planned in a way to identify expenditures for activities in field of gender equality.

√ In February 2021, the Gender Equality Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on introduction of Gender Budgeting in Montenegro with NGO Women

Action, making gender responsive budgeting priority in the work program of the Committee.

√ Based on the Memorandum of cooperation and the advocacy work of the GRB hub in Montenegro Women's action, on May 19, 2021, the Parliament of Montenegro discussed the Budget Plan for 2021. The President of Gender Equality Committee in Parliament of Montenegro, Ms Bozena Jelusic proposed to Minister of Finance that in section 3.1.4.4 Policy Strategy and Medium-Term Objectives for period 2021-2023 to add a final paragraph, committing the budget users in the budget programs, sub-programs and activities to identify possible measures for reducing gender inequality and to plan budget resources for their implementation. In response to this initiative, the Minister of Finance and Social Welfare, Mr Milojko Spajic expressed full readiness and willingness to adopt this suggestion and announced the introduction of full GRB in fiscal policy of Montenegro for Budget Plan for 2022.

√ **Existence of systems to track allocations for gender equality:**

In response to the advocacy efforts for SDG 5.c.1. and specifically on improving the existing systems to track allocations for gender equality Ministry of Justice and Human Rights prepared an annual report for the implementation of the Strategy for gender equality 2017-2021 which includes information of the resource allocations for implementation of all activities contributing to improvement of gender equality. The report was drafted in participatory process including central and local state institutions, NGOs and international community. The annual report will provide track of allocations for gender equality for the first time publicly.



SUCCESS IN MACEDONIA

Existence of policies / programs and corresponding allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment:

- √ In December 2020 Macedonian government held public consultation on the new Law on budgets in which the GRB hub in Macedonia – Center for research and policy making took active participation and submitted comments to the draft law requesting for more systematized way of introduction of GRB in the Budget Law and institutionalization of the current GRB practices.
- √ In the first half of January 2021 this year, the Government has reviewed and adopted the Draft Budget Law and sent the law for adoption to Sobranie. The law aims at fostering the reforms in the processes of budget planning and execution, strengthening fiscal discipline, stable fiscal projections for the medium term, integrated public finances and improved transparency. In terms of the GRB and gender equality, the new law proposes significant progress in four areas:
 - For the first time, among the budget principles, the 11th principle is devoted to GE stipulating “Principle of gender equality implies gender responsive budgeting, i.e. observance of gender equality in the planning and execution of budget inflows and outflows.”
 - Stipulating Gender budget initiatives as a law provision
 - Defining responsibility to include “gender responsive indicators where feasible” in Draft financial plans (Art. 31)

- Requirement that the special part of the Annual Report on Budget Execution to include the report on the achieved goals and results, as well as on the gender responsive indicators.

The GRB hub in Macedonia – Center for research and policy making submitted amendments to the Budget Law in April 2021, specifically advocating for regulation of Gender Citizen Budget, regulation of gender budget statement, and Gender fiscal report.

In June 2021 in cooperation with UN Women, NDI and OSCE, GBWN contributed to a workshop with representatives from the Committee for Equal Opportunities and Women's Parliamentary Club on which the amendments proposed by CRPM were internalized and consensus was reached.

Existence of systems for making gender equality allocations public:

In response to the advocacy efforts for SDG 5.c.1. and specifically on improving the existing systems to make gender equality allocations public the Ministry of finance published a Gender Budget Execution report for 2020 and Citizens Budget (but without visible allocations for gender equality, although it was announced that such document is under preparation).

Accountability for gender equality allocations:

- √ The Centre for Research and Policy Making in December 2020 has submitted an initiative to the State Audit Office to include performance audit of the budget allocations for gender equality. The initiative was accepted and the SAO in its Annual working program for 2021, included the following “Efficacy of the measures of the Government of North Macedonia on gender equality and respective budget initiatives” performance audit control.
- √ Additionally, the State Audit Office in the respective program envisions a performance audit of the economic measures for tackling the COVID-19 related crisis. Having in mind that the capacity of the auditors for gender mainstreaming in their work is ongoing it is expected this audit in particular to show tangible data on the effectiveness of measures in improving and enhancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment.



SUCCESS IN MOLDOVA

In Moldova the Platform for Gender Equality decided GRB to be number one priority for advocacy in 2021. For this reason, within GBWN project, Keystone Moldova as GRB hub conducted a budget fiscal-analysis from a gender perspective and provided support to five local CSOs in conducting research by applying GRB tools to tackle different social issues such as accessibility for persons with disabilities, allocations for public funds for vulnerable groups, development of digital competencies in boys and girls, social assistance and sports expenditures. The evidence from the research will be used by the Platform for Gender Equality for advocating GRB at central and local level. A meeting was organized with the Division Policy for ensuring equality between women and men of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection to discuss the necessary measures to advance GRB in Moldova. Keystone Moldova together with the Platform for Gender Equality is preparing proposals to be submitted to the new Government that will be formed following the parliamentary elections in order to prioritize GRB relying on the good practices from the GBWN partners.



SUCCESS IN ALBANIA

Albania had very good performance in the SDG 5c1 assessment and no particular advocacy was directed towards authorities. Instead, the GRB hub in Albania the Gender Alliance for Development and Cooperation continued monitoring of budgeting process in Covid 19 circumstances. These are the findings:

- √ Due to the new nature of the virus, the disease it causes, the Government of Albania needed to frequently review the state budget in order to reflect its updated readiness regarding the situation. The GoA used the budget reserves, budget reallocation, rapid facilities and increased debt in the domestic market; Public consultations were few, especially related to the business support, but none of them was gender sensitive;
- √ Regular financial reporting continued, but not all reports are publicly available. These reports did not contain any gender analysis. The information system of public health and economic institutions lack of detailed gender statistical data on health and economic effects, in general, and in the case of Covid-19 pandemic in particular.

Statistical identification of expenses and their effects by gender is a necessity since through quantitative analyses it is possible to identify the effects of different policies or measures on equality and thus create the opportunity to build fairer policies and with concrete impact on gender equality as one of the factors of sustainable economic growth.

