

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VLORA

POSITION PAPER

VLORA YOUTH CENTER



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COMMITMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION VLORA YOUTH CENTER FOR GENDER BUDGETING.

➤ INTRODUCTION - GENDER BUDGETING AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK. WHERE IS IT BASED ON?

The Government of Albania has established a series of national and international commitments for the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Regarding budget issues, there is an updated legal framework, at the core of which is Law no. 9936, dated 26.06.2008 "On the management of the budget system in the Republic of Albania", amended by law 114/2012 and law 57/2016.

Based on Law 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government" municipalities have the obligation to plan at the medium term (3 years) and have the obligation to ensure transparency and public consultation based on laws 119 and 146/2014 "On Notification and Public Consultation" .

Law no. 68/2017 "On Local Self-Government Finances" has created opportunities for the effective inclusion of GRB in all phases of the local financial management cycle.

There are a number of laws and bylaws that contribute to the implementation of GRB:

- Law no. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On gender equality in society"
- Public Financial Management Strategy 2014 - 2020
- National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020
- National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015 - 2020
- DCM no. 465, dated 18.07.2012 "On gender mainstreaming in the Medium Term Budget Program" and the joint instruction no. 21, dated 21.06.2013 "On determining the procedures for gender mainstreaming in the medium-term budget program"
- Instruction no.7 dated 28.02.2018 "On standard procedures for the preparation of the medium-term budget program".
- Instruction no. 7/1, dated 28.02.2018 "On the preparation of the medium-term budget program 2019 - 2021 and Supplementary Instruction no. 7/2, dated 28.02.2018 "On the preparation of the medium-term budget program 2019 - 2021".

The implementation of Gender Budgeting is possible at different levels - from the state budget to the budget of a small community. It can be applied to any type of budget system at all levels of government. At the same time, GRB can be focused on specific sectors and can be implemented at different stages of the budget cycle.

➤ **GENDER BUDGETING SITUATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF VLORA**

It turns out that the Municipality of Vlora carries out participatory budgeting processes, but public documents do not explain whether this process is performed through gender lenses. There is a lack of statistical data, especially disaggregated by gender, for the involvement of citizens in all stages of the process (drafting, implementation and monitoring of the budget). There is limited information about the commitment of the Municipality of Vlora for a gender responsive budget in its planning or implementation processes.

➤ **WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR WITH GENDER BUDGETING?**

From a gender sensitive analysis of the social service budget, as a structure responsible for social care services in the municipality of Vlora, 4 special institutions have been set up and are functioning for the care of marginalized groups: PWD Center, Center for Community Services, the Multifunctional Center and the Orphanage.

There is some data on these institutions and the number of beneficiaries of the services they provide, but they are incomplete and do not provide the full framework for the directorate of social care regarding services for the whole community and in the implementation of defined tasks in laws and bylaws.

In order to have a better understanding of the planning and delivery of funds through gender lenses within the legal obligation, it should be mentioned that the Municipality of Vlora also supports with funds, infrastructure or cooperation, civil society organizations operating in its territory. The organizations that provide services with the financial support of the institution are: With the Community for Change; Psycho-Social Center "Vatra" and Aulona Center. While other organizations do not benefit from funds, they receive contribution on resources such as rent, expenses for activities, or cooperation.

➤ **INVOLVEMENT OF VLORA YOUTH CENTER IN GENDER BUDGETING IN VLORA MUNICIPALITY**

In the framework of the gender policy analysis and local budget analysis with a focus on social services, Vlora Youth Center worked closely with the Strategic Management Group (GMS), the staff of the Economic Assistance and Social Care Directorate and the Directorate of Financial Planning and Budget of the Municipality of Vlora.

Meanwhile civil society organizations and citizens, mainly marginalized women and beneficiaries of social services from the Municipality of Vlora, were widely consulted on the findings of the study and received recommendations on how to overcome obstacles to include their needs in the local budget.

The current assessment report of the situation with relevant recommendations regarding gender responsive budgeting has been accepted and evaluated by the staff of the Municipality of Vlora as a document that will be supported in the future for the drafting of the annual budget 2022.

➤ PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

RECOMMEDATIONS:

- During the analysis of municipal budget programs, both in the annual budgets and in the MTBP, the unification of the budget program for social care, as well as the inclusion of all expenditures for social services (such as services for centers or civil society organizations), as well as services performed by the municipality itself, (but also the salaries of employees in this service) it is recommended.
- Budget documents (annual budget or MTBP) should reflect services, activities and priority measures, which are a reflection of sectoral documents. The Municipality of Vlora has an approved Social Plan and costs for specific services, but in the budget documents these are not referred, nor included.
- It is recommended to increase the capacity of human resources mainly GMS members and budget teams in each relevant structure / directorate for GRB and gender mainstreaming in the budget.
- The Directorate of Social Services should be the responsible structure (administrative and financial) for all responsibilities, functions and services in the social field.
- Involving women in stakeholder consultation is very important, but not always easy to implement. What usually happens in administrative units, most village meetings and public hearings are attended more by men. Specific facilitation measures for women's participation should be provided by the municipality.
- Ensure that women's priorities are included in the planning. For this it is important that women are represented in decision-making bodies (GMS or program management teams) and that men decision-makers are open to listening to the PoV of women and girls, so as not to lose their voice in final prioritizations.
- Include women's priorities and measures that promote gender equality in budgets and avoid activities that promote gender inequality. Budgeting is an important process and what is budgeted should be what can be implemented in the end.
- Citizens generally have little knowledge about budgets and especially about the participatory budgeting process that takes place in the Municipality of Vlora. Budgets need to be simplified and realistic.

- Ensure that the budget is designed and implemented for the benefit of both parties, men and women. During the implementation phase there are quality issues that need to be considered, for example in infrastructure some important issues that need to be considered are: the procurement process to be transparent, materials should reflect the standards, transparency in the execution of funds, etc.
- Budgets need to be assessed before preparing and implementing them, and this assessment should be done by the community itself (men, women, youth) on how it has actually been spent and who has benefited from it through various forms and means.

➤ **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:**

The results and benefits of this initiative are multiple and structural, as well as citizen-oriented - women and girls in the specific case. In the long run, the initiative had a direct impact through several changes in the Medium Term Budget 2022-2024 and contributed to increasing the responsibility of the Municipality of Vlora for the commitment of empowering women and girls in the community to achieve gender equality, by articulating their needs in the medium and annual budget.

Vlora Youth Center is committed to work to make some of the recommendations part of the political agenda and daily work of the staff of the Municipality of Vlora.