

International Conference

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING: PARTICIPATION, ADVOCACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HYBRID EVENT

Date: June 26-29, 2022

Location: Metropol Lake Resort Ohrid, North Macedonia (Bellevue hotel)

Online: Zoom

Civil society engagement in policy and budget processes and holding governments accountable for advancing gender equality is of paramount importance. Civil society organizations (CSOs) voice the different needs of women and men, boys and girls and act as watchdogs of the management and the distribution of public finances for the different needs of women and men. Their work in times of pandemic is even more relevant, particularly in development of emergency and resilience response. CSOs must be trusted partners of governments (local and central) in averting negative effects.

The international conference **Role of civil society in (gender responsive) budgeting: participation, advocacy and accountability** is a joint event organized by the Gender Budget Watchdog Network of civil society organizations, UN Women and the International Budget Partnership. The event is organized in the framework of the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) project "Gender Budget Watchdog Network of CSOs in Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova", financed by Austrian Development Agency and Sweden; and the UN Women projects "Transformative Financing for Gender Equality Towards More Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans" financed by Sweden, and "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets: Towards Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Republic of North Macedonia", financed by Switzerland and Sweden.

Conference Objectives:

- ◆ To promote the different roles of civil society in advancing gender equality by using gender responsive budgeting tools
- ◆ To exchange experiences between civil society, governments and international organizations on the effective strategies and approaches in using GRB tools to impact policy and budgets, including in the COVID-19 period
- ◆ To provide platform for networking and building strategic partnerships between civil society, government and international organizations

	Arrival of participants and registration
18:00-19:00	Opening of conference and award ceremony The session aims to introduce the audience to the conference objectives and program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ermira Lubani</i>, UN Women GRB Program Specialist • <i>Sally Torbert</i>, Senior Program Officer, International Budget Partnership • <i>Marija Risteska</i>, CRPM Executive Director Award ceremony – life achievement for advancing women’s rights in North Macedonia
19:00-20:30	Dinner

09:00-10:30	PANEL ONE Mainstreaming gender in policies and budgets - the role of CSOs The panel aims to open discussion on the role CSOs in mainstreaming gender in policies and budgets, especially in times when resilience response is failing to address the different needs of women and men created by health, economic and other crises.
	Moderator: <i>Ermira Lubani</i> , UN Women Regional GRB Advisor Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Olga Martin Gonzalez</i>, EU Gender focal point, DG NEAR (online) • <i>Kadrije Mustafa</i>, Deputy head of department for equal opportunities, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy • <i>Božena Jelušić</i>, Parliament and civil society role, Parliament of Montenegro (online) • <i>Marija Risteska</i>, GBWN Regional Director
10:30-11:30	Body and mind break <i>Beti Peeva</i>
11:30 - 12:00	Video screening CSOs’ work on engendering participatory processes and voicing the needs of women
12:00-13:30	PANEL TWO CSOs voicing different needs of women and men The panel aims to discuss the different approaches for enhancing CSOs’ participation in local and central policy making and budgeting processes and the benefits it brings to engendering policy solutions and services. The panelists will present approaches, challenges, successes and lessons learned in launching different participatory models for voicing women’s needs.
	Moderator: <i>Ivona Paunovich Bishevac</i> , UN Women Program analyst Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fabiola Laco</i>, Today for the Future - Engendering participatory processes - Albania • <i>Marija Savovska</i>, Akcija Zdruzenska - Women’s voice in decision making at local level – North Macedonia • <i>Jelena Ružić</i>, Women’s association of Kolubara district - Hobotnica:Partnership in services design and provision - Serbia • <i>Alketa Dhimitri</i>, Vlora Youth centre – Engaging Citizens to the participatory Budgeting Processes in local level • <i>Sara Osmani</i>, CRPM - Engendering the budget forum discussions – citizens participation in local policy and budget making through gender lenses in North Macedonia
13:30-15:00	Lunch
15:00 – 16:30	PANEL THREE Gender budget initiatives The panel aims to present the role of CSOs as advocates for gender responsive budgets, the challenges and proven approaches for successful advocacy
	Moderator: <i>Mersiha Jaskić</i> , CPCD Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dragana Veljović</i>, FENOMENA –Public finances for SOS help line for women advocacy • <i>Mirela Arqimandriti</i>, GADC - Budget initiative for women economic literacy/ entrepreneurship • <i>Hana Abid</i>, WBG Programme Manager, Global Partnerships & Learning Programme • <i>Adelina Berisha</i>, KWN “Securing state financing for shelters in Kosovo” (online)
16:30- 18:00	Parallel Workshops on Gender Budget Initiatives
	WORKSHOP 1 Gender budget initiative on menstrual and public hygiene • JHR Macedonia • Radar • ECOKOSWomen Kosovo
	WORKSHOP 2 GRB initiatives Women’s Economic Empowerment • Women Alliance for Development • CHR Impact

*All references to Kosovo on this document shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

	WORKSHOP 3 GRB initiatives for improved social and disability service provision • Partneri Serbia • Initiative of Youth with Disabilities of Boka
	WORKSHOP 4 GRB initiatives for increased women's participation insport • ADO LEX • Organization of women of Strumica
19:00 -20:30	Dinner

28th June – Tuesday

09:00-10:30	<p>PANEL FOUR</p> <p>CSOs as gender budget watchdogs The panel presents the role of CSOs as watchdogs, holding governments accountable for just distribution of public finances to address the different needs of women and men. The panelists will present key results of watchdog initiatives implemented in Western Balkans and Moldova.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Beti Peeva, Echo Štip</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prof. Rajmonda Duka, UN Women GRB expert, Budget Watchdog reports in Albania: key results and way forward</i> • <i>Biljana Matevska, CRPM - North Macedonia: transforming local communities present some examples of past reports and advocacy initiatives</i> • <i>Ludmila Ciocan, Keystone Moldova - Gender responsive budgeting of personal assistance for persons with disability, GBWN Regional Disability paper</i> • <i>Zlatko Simonovski, CRPM - Developing Gender Budget Watchdog Reports: Guidebook for CSOs</i>
10:30-11:30	<p>Body and mind break <i>Mersiha Jaskić and Slavica Striković</i></p>
11:30-13:00	<p>PANEL FIVE</p> <p>Partnership on public finance reforms to achieve gender equality The panel aims to discuss the role of Ministries of Finance and Gender Machineries in mainstreaming gender in policies and budgets using GRB approaches. Panelists will present country examples on GRB implementation and how GRB creates bridges of cooperation between government institutions, CSOs and other GRB actors. Additionally, the panelists will present how CSOs can be active in monitoring government commitments on building systems in place to track resource allocation for gender equality.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Ermira Lubani, GRB Programme Specialist, UN Women</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marija Šuković, Head of the Secretariat of the Competitiveness Council- Partnership for systemic introduction of GRB in public finance reforms</i> • <i>Ella Ki Simić, Ministry of Finance, Serbia (online) Gender Responsive Budgeting as an approach to de-facto mainstream gender in policies and budgets, the role of Ministries of Finances in this process- Serbia case</i> • <i>Gentian Opre, Ministry of Finance, Albania (online) Public Finance Management Reform in Albania and integration of Gender Responsive Budgeting</i> • <i>Kika Babic-Svetlin, Agency for Gender Equality, Bosnia and Herzegovina (online) Gender machineries and their role on Gender Responsive Budgeting implementation- BiH case</i> • <i>Slavica Striković, Executive Director, Women's Action/Ženska Akcija, Montenegro</i>
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 16:00	<p>PANEL SIX</p> <p>Budget credibility: how keeping budget promises can help advance gender equality The session will explore ways that strengthening public financial management (PFM) reforms can contribute to improving gender equality, focusing on reforms that can enhance budget credibility – or the ability of governments to meet expenditure and revenue targets during the year. Speakers will share learning about how to identify and address challenges in public spending patterns that can emerge during budget implementation that impact gender equality.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Claire O'Donnell, Policy Team Research Assistant at International budget partnership</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sally Torbert, Senior Program Officer, International Budget Partnership – Overview of Budget Credibility</i> • <i>Julieta Izcurdia, Coordinator of the Fiscal Justice Program, Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ) – Budget credibility challenges in Argentina and connections to the SDGs</i> • <i>Olaniyi Olaleye, Program Officer, International Budget Partnership – Why Budget Credibility Matters for Gender Equality in Nigeria</i> • <i>Godson Aloryito, Program Officer, International Budget Partnership – Gender equality issues in agriculture spending and the Fertilizer Subsidy Program in Ghana</i> • <i>Tia Elise Raappana Senior Public Sector Specialist, PEFA Gender (online)</i>
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break

16:30- 18:00	<p>Workshop on methodologies – parallel sessions</p> <p>WORKSHOP 1 Budget credibility is a challenge that impacts many low- and middle-income countries, where deviations from the planned budget mean that governments also deviate from their stated priorities for public spending. This session will explore how civil society can examine budget credibility issues for government spending on sectors that are central to achieving the SDGs and contextualize these issues alongside country-level progress in achieving SDG targets.</p> <p>WORKSHOP 2 Empowering marginalized communities in the budget process can be critical for uncovering and addressing service delivery gaps and enabling transformational change. This session will explore how to build the budget knowledge and skills of marginalized groups and movements by linking them with budget organizations in order to expose fiscal causes and build effective budget advocacy, with a focus on efforts to promote greater awareness, analysis, and advocacy around gender issues that result from governments underdelivering on critical services.</p> <p>WORKSHOP 3 Covid-19 demonstrated that resilience response must be gendered to prevent for greater or new gender inequalities to emerge. The role of CSOs in watching how the resilience response is planned and executed and what impact it has on gender equality is paramount. This session will introduce the CSOs to the methods and tools for assessing timeliness of the measures and the budget adopted for resilience response; to assess the gender-responsiveness and transparency of the measures, as well as the level of participation of civil society organizations.</p>
	<p>WORKSHOP 1 Methodology for Analyzing Budget Credibility and the SDGs (SDG 16.6.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Julieta Izcurdia</i>, Coordinator of the Fiscal Policy Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ), Argentina • <i>Andrea Larios</i>, Researcher, Fundar, Mexico
	<p>WORKSHOP 2 Engaging on gender issues in under delivering programs through advocacy with marginalized groups and movements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Salbiyah and Dede Krishnadianty</i>, Program Officers, IBP Indonesia • <i>Assiatou Diop</i>, Program Officer, IBP Senegal
	<p>WORKSHOP 3 Resilience Budget Response Monitoring from Gender Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Višnja Baćanović</i>, Gender Knowledge Hub/Gender Budget Watchdog Network
19:00-20:30	Dinner

29th June Wednesday

09:00-10:30	<p>PANEL SEVEN</p> <p>Networking of CSOs The panel features a discussion on CSO networking and advocacy for gender equality and gender responsive policies and budgets. The aim is to internalize the challenges faced by CSOs in networking, strategies to avert the negative factors to networking and the shrinking civil society space.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Ljupka Trajanovska</i>, Project Manager, Centre for Research and Policy Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Manjola Stefani</i>, Today for the Future:PRIZMA network in Albania and their work on participatory budgeting • <i>Tea Zografska</i>, National Council for Gender Equality: Networking of women's grassroots organizations in North Macedonia • <i>Mersiha Jaskić</i>, CPCD Western Balkans and Moldova: Gender Budget Watchdog Network • <i>Voskre Naumoska Ilieva</i>, Kvinna til Kvinna: Regional networking and advocacy for women's participation in EU accession and engendering accession processes
10:30-13:30	<p>Networking activity</p> <p>WORKSHOP 1 Host Coalition for ICC For Gender Justice</p> <p>WORKSHOP 2 Host Women's Budget Group</p> <p>WORKSHOP 3 Host International Budget Partnership</p> <p>PLENARY DISCUSSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What we can do together</i> • <i>Opportunities</i> • <i>Challenges</i>
13:30-14:00	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ivona Paunovich Bishevac</i>, Programme Analyst, UN Women • <i>Zlatko Simonovski</i>, Coordinator for Gender Budget Watchdog Network, Centre for Research and Policy Making • <i>Sally Torbert</i>, Senior Program Officer, International Budget Partnership
14:00- 15:00	Lunch
	Departure