




# STUDY OF MEDIA REPORTING ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING



## IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN 2020

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## Introduction

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Economy-related topics in journalism, especially any analyses of entire or just certain parts of public budgets, can be very complex and may pose a challenge to an average reader even in periods of relatively stable economy. Debates about the role of journalism in raising public awareness about economic topics have been going on for decades in the professional media community around the world. Arjen van Dalen, Helle Svensson and other authors believe that the trend of covering economic topics as mainstream topics, in the form of news or personal stories, actually constitutes a positive example of the educational role that journalism plays in explaining these complex topics to all citizens, even those that are not particularly interested in this field.<sup>1</sup>

Such an approach, however, has been criticised as highly risky in terms of accurate coverage of economic topics. It has been argued that the journalists who write about daily topics are not adequately prepared to cover the economy and the complexity of economic trends and that this approach eventually boils down to criticism, negative news about economic crises, etc.<sup>2</sup> Both these approaches acknowledge that the economy of the system in which we live changes rapidly, especially so in the times of crisis when “even economic experts have difficulties explaining some of the causes and effects”.<sup>3</sup> The media remain the main source of information about the latest developments, which is ultimately necessary in order to meet the basic postulates of democracy, adequately inform citizens and thus maintain trust in government institutions and/or impact political accountability.

Despite the global trends in journalism and the growing coverage of economic topics, including public finances, over the past 15 years, as well as the fact that this field of journalism generates a professional debate that is important for the development of the profession itself, the media community in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still not part of that debate and the literature on media approaches to economic topics in Bosnia and

Herzegovina is very limited. However, even in Bosnia and Herzegovina we can observe two distinct types of coverage: the first includes independent investigative journalism and specialised focus on public finance, while the second concerns the economy and business news in the mainstream media. Having in mind the importance, potential and role of the media in disseminating information and raising public awareness about economic topics, including coverage of public budgets and budgetary procedure, research in this field requires more attention in the coming period.

UN Women Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of Mediacentar Sarajevo, carried out a study of media reporting on gender-responsive budgeting and the journalists’ needs for this type of training. Given the fact that decision-makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina rarely base their budget allocation decisions on the principles of gender responsive budgeting and rarely discuss this matter in public, this approach rarely receives media coverage. Training journalists about these topics may increase their awareness and lead to better coverage of gender-responsive budgeting.

This study focuses on a specific part of economic journalism, namely that of covering public budgetary processes and the role of journalism in raising public awareness about budgeting, with special focus on gender responsive budgeting. Having in mind the very limited literature on the role of BiH media in reporting about the economy and the extremely scarce media coverage of gender responsive budgeting issues in the country, the research methodology was focused on the baseline analysis of the media’s capacity to cover this particular field, along with an analysis of media content, journalists’ experiences to date and their general needs in this respect.

The research was carried out in the period from November 2021 to January 2022 and was based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including content analysis, journalist survey and semi-structured interviews with experts in this field. The goal of the study was to provide answers to the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Dalen, A. et al. (2019). *Economic News: Informing The Inattentive Audience*. Routledge Research in Journalism. Taylor and Francis: London and New York. Page 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hetsroni, A., Sheaffer, Z., Ben Zion, U. and Rosenboim, M. (2014). *Economic Expectations, Optimistic Bias, and Television Viewing During Economic Recession: A Cultivation Study*. *Communication Research* 41(2). Pages 180-207. Starkman, D. (2014). *The watchdog that didn't bark: The financial crisis and the disappearance of investigative journalism*. New York: Columbia University Press u Dalen, A. et.al.

<sup>3</sup> Helleiner (2011) in Dalen, A. et al.

1. Do the media cover gender responsive budgeting and how?
2. Are journalists and editors informed about this approach?
3. What are the training needs of journalists and editors in Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning media coverage of gender responsive budgeting?

Given the research findings and having in mind that “a budget is the most important instrument that turns government policies into programmes and services for citizens”,<sup>4</sup> it can be said that, from a quantitative perspective, the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina very frequently cover budgets, budget adoption and revision procedures. The media do not cover budget execution or budget spending impacts and the gender aspect is only rarely mentioned under “women’s issues”, i.e. as budget items dedicated to maternity or assisted reproduction support for women. Journalists wishing to cover this field face numerous challenges ranging from the lack of advanced training, editorial policies that classify this topic as less important than daily politics, few interlocutors in the institutions who are competent to speak about this topic, through to the generally low number of experts in this field. Journalists with advanced analytical skills and experience in monitoring public finance are faced with the lack of transparent analytical data, which makes any reporting on budgets a lengthy and expensive process.

## Methodology

The study is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and includes:

- Analysis of media coverage by mainstream media and specialised media;
- Interviews with experts in the field of media, finances and gender equality;
- Survey questionnaire for journalists and editors;
- Desk research – review of available research on gender-responsive budgeting and media coverage of gender equality.

The analysis of media coverage of gender responsive budgeting covers the year 2020. The sample includes articles from four mainstream media outlets, the most widely read news portals<sup>5</sup> that ensure regional representation: Avaz.ba, Klix.ba, Hercegovina.info and Nezavisne.com,<sup>6</sup> as well as two specialised media outlets focusing on finances and business, Capital.ba and Akta.ba. The sample included articles on the adoption and revision of budgets in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2020. Articles from these media were selected by using the search option in online media and the following key terms: “budget allocation”, “budget adoption”, and “budget revision”. Any articles that cover adoptions and revisions of 2020 budget at different administrative levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina were selected. In addition to this, the search also included the terms “gender responsive budgeting”/“gender responsive budget planning” in order to see whether a media outlet used this term in its coverage and when.

In the period from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, a total of 431 articles that included these terms and covered budget adoptions and revisions for 2020 were selected and coded. Out of all these articles, only three articles included the term “gender-responsive budgeting”.

<sup>4</sup> Hadžiahmetović, A. et al. (2013). Rodno odgovorno budžetiranje: udžbenik za univerzitete. University Press – Magistrat izdanja, Sarajevo. Page 20. Available at: [https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB\\_UNW.pdf](https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB_UNW.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> According to Alexa.com – the Amazon platform on website traffic statistics. Available at: <https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/BA>

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/BA>

During the analysis of these articles, the following parameters were taken into account:

- a) *Format of the story*
- b) *Visualisation of the coverage/photographs*
- c) *Topic*
- d) *Sources*
- e) *Perspective/framing*
- f) *Focus on gender-responsive budgeting.*

The purpose of the analysis was to determine:

- Number of male and female journalists covering budget adoptions/revisions;
- Sections in which such articles were predominantly published;
- Length and genre of such articles: whether these were longer, analytical articles or mostly short news;
- Whether the article was taken over from another media outlet or an original piece;
- Main topic of the article: budget revision, budget adoption or something else;
- Administrative level to which the article refers: state level, entity level or local level;
- The perspective from which the topic was approached: coverage of political disputes, corruption, social issues or something else;
- Main sources for the article: institutions, members of parliament or relevant experts, and the percentage of female and male sources.

Articles that reported on gender responsive budgeting were identified and subjected to further analysis. In addition to the above parameters, it was also observed under which circumstances and how journalists covered gender responsive budgeting. Results obtained by coding of articles made it possible to, among other things, analyse how the media cover budgeting and budget revisions (through brief reports or analytical texts), how they choose their interlocutors (whether they include expert sources, as well as the share of female/male sources), to what extent they use public documents for their coverage (budgets, draft budgets), the differences in coverage between the mainstream media

and specialised media outlets focusing on business and economy. Also, the analysis shows to what extent budget revision/adoption articles focus on gender responsive budgeting and how this topic was covered.

In addition to this, five interviews were conducted with experts and journalists: Lejla Lazović Pita, professor specialising in public finance; Jasmina Čaušević, MA in gender studies; Maida Ćehajić Čampara, researcher and trainer specialising in gender equality issues; and two journalists: Selma Učanbarlić, experienced in investigative journalism and monitoring of public budget expenditure, and Svjetlana Šurlan, experienced in coverage of economic and business topics. The purpose of interviews was to obtain expert opinions on the manner of media coverage of gender equality and gender responsive budgeting, capacities and resources of the media for professional coverage of public budgeting and key issues they face when covering public budgets. Also, questions related to expert recommendations for the improvement of media coverage of public finances, but also gender equality and gender responsive budgeting.

The research also included a questionnaire for journalists and editors in relation to their knowledge, needs and capacities for coverage of gender responsive budgeting. The questionnaire was sent by email as a Google Forms document to 25 journalists and editors from across Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 20 of them responded. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information on the knowledge of journalists about gender responsive budgeting and their needs in order to be able to cover public finances and gender responsive budgeting in a more professional manner.

## Gender responsive budgeting: theoretical framework and context

According to the glossary of gender equality terms of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), gender responsive budgeting is the application of the gender aspect in the budgeting process. This implies: a gender responsive budget assessment, a gender perspective in case of all budgeting process levels, as well as the restructuring of income and expenses for the purpose of promoting gender equality.<sup>7</sup> Specialist literature and research in the field of gender responsive budgeting invariably shows that gender responsive budgeting is not only a budget item for women and not only limited to funds allocated to the promotion of women and their rights,<sup>8</sup> and that it is “always crucial to stress its interdisciplinary dimension”. Gender responsive budgeting includes two basic steps: gender analysis and its implementation through budgetary re-allocation.

A gender analysis re-examines government programmes of costs and earnings from the perspective of their impact on men and women. The purpose is to improve the overall efficiency of economic policy and gender equality. After a detailed analysis of interests, needs, rights and obligations of women and men, in both paid economy and care economy, a re-allocation takes place in such a manner that it directs budgetary policy towards the promotion of gender equality. A gender responsive budgeting strategy may include: increase in budgetary allocations, redistribution of budgetary allocations, change of type and quality of public services and change of outcomes of policies.<sup>9</sup> Gender responsive budgeting also relates to analysis of savings and/or subsidy policies and their impact on men and women is analysed equally; e.g. whether savings measures result in a transfer of public services from

the public to the private sector and how this relates to the position of men and women in the household and essentially to the economic efficiency of the analysed measure.

The procedure of gender responsive budgeting is thus much more than a separate budgetary line for women, although, as experts point out, sometimes there are exemptions, when a special budgetary line may make sense, such as allocations for the financing of the Gender Equality Commission or the priorities defined in gender action plans. However, the outcome of such an approach is mostly the allocation of smaller funds intended specifically for women, whereas the rest of the budget still remains gender-biased.<sup>10</sup>

Gender responsive budgeting represents “a method for the introduction of a gender perspective in neutral budgets. This ensures a fairer approach to the selection and implementation of public policies as well as a fairer distribution of public funds based on the needs and priorities for the solution of issues that slow down or hinder ensuring full gender equality in all social aspects”.<sup>11</sup> The purpose of such an approach to budget planning is identifying cases in which the collection and distribution of public budgets are unfair, and the result of such identification should not be that all income and expenses are equally distributed among men and women, since they can have general, common, but also different needs, but rather that female and male needs and priorities be equally important and that their contributions to the economic and social development be equally appreciated.<sup>12</sup> Specialist literature shows that gender responsive budgeting increases cost-effectiveness, efficiency, effectiveness and fairness of consumption of public funds for the wellbeing of the whole society.<sup>13</sup> In addition to this, it contributes to the achievement of two goals: gender equality and strengthening of the social position of women on the one hand, and elimination of discrimination as well as economic and social growth on the other.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Dictionary and thesaurus of gender equality terms of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Helsinški parlament građana Banja Luka. Available at: <http://hcabl.org/eige-ov-rjecnik-i-leksikon-rodne-ravnopravnosti-eiges-gender-equality-glossary-and-thesaurus/rjecnik-rodne-ravnopravnosti-lat/#1624169209872-ac704684-fef6>

<sup>8</sup> See Hadžiahmetović, A. et al. (2013). Gender responsive budgeting: textbook for universities. University Press – Magistrat izdanja, Sarajevo. Available at: [https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB\\_UNW.pdf](https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB_UNW.pdf). Page 88.

<sup>9</sup> Shart (2003) in Hadžiahmetović, A. et al. (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 89.

<sup>11</sup> Hrelja Hasečić, Dž. (2015). Handbook on gender responsive budgeting. Office of the Research Foundation of the State University of New York in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Available at: [http://www.mpr.gov.ba/web\\_dokumenti/default.aspx?id=8789&langTag=bs-BA](http://www.mpr.gov.ba/web_dokumenti/default.aspx?id=8789&langTag=bs-BA)

<sup>12</sup> Hadžiahmetović, A. et al. (2013). Gender responsive budgeting: textbook for universities. University Press – Magistrat izdanja, Sarajevo. Available at: [https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB\\_UNW.pdf](https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB_UNW.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Hrelja Hasečić, Dž. (2015). Handbook on gender responsive budgeting. Office of the Research Foundation of the State University of New York in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Available at: [http://www.mpr.gov.ba/web\\_dokumenti/default.aspx?id=8789&langTag=bs-BA](http://www.mpr.gov.ba/web_dokumenti/default.aspx?id=8789&langTag=bs-BA)

<sup>14</sup> Hadžiahmetović, A. et al. (2013). Gender responsive budgeting: textbook for universities. University Press – Magistrat izdanja, Sarajevo. Available at: [https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB\\_UNW.pdf](https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB_UNW.pdf)



A large number of countries in the world have introduced the gender responsive budgeting approach, whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina is still in the process of preparing for and ensuring compliance with the technical and political requirements of this process. Lejla Lazović Pita, professor at the Faculty of Economics in Sarajevo, points out that it is necessary to improve the overall system towards more transparent and understandable reporting about the budgeting process.<sup>15</sup> Still, there are several important initiatives at the local and entity level in which the cooperation of international and local non-governmental organisations and gender mechanisms with the institutions resulted in certain improvements. For example, significant resources have been developed for employees at different levels of government, including recommendations for the introduction of gender responsive budgeting<sup>16</sup> as well as numerous trainings for employees of the relevant institutions. According to the 2020 UN Women Programme Evaluation, “the greatest success of the gender responsive budgeting programme was achieved at the local level and resulted in a certain number of municipalities that institutionalised this process”.<sup>17</sup> Interviewees in this research study also recognise the progress achieved at the local level and mention the example of the Municipality of Tešanj and the City of Gradiška, as well as other local communities that UN Women has cooperated with over the past period.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this, other important examples include cooperation with the Ministry of Finance of FBiH regarding the drafting of a budget for citizens and preparations for the programme budgeting system and the cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy of Republika Srpska. However, apart from several positive examples, gender responsive budgeting in BiH remains rudimentary.

According to the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, national and entity authorities as well as cantonal and local authorities must undertake all relevant and necessary measures to implement the provisions of this law and the Gender Action Plan (GAP)

of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which includes implementation of GAP BiH activities and measures through regular work programmes and securing the associated budget funds (Article 24). According to GAP BiH 2018-2022, every institution financed from the public budget must analyse the impact of the existing budget on the various needs of women and men, which is supposed to serve as a planning basis for activities in each GAP BiH area. One of measures planned in that strategic document is also the design and implementation of the programme of measures and activities aimed at elimination of gender-based discrimination in labour, employment and access to economic resources, including the introduction of gender responsive budgeting.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the planned measures, some analyses and the interviewed experts point out that government institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not introduced the principles of gender responsive budgeting into their budget allocation and execution process and that the necessary technical requirements need to be put in place.<sup>20</sup> A 2021 analysis of gender responsive budgeting at the local level shows that gender responsive budgeting in cities and municipalities exists only as an exception and mostly as a result of certain pilot programmes, and that the current situation is not even close to satisfactory. When it comes to current gender responsive budgeting work processes at the local level, the research shows that only 2% of interviewed local communities have a specific process for development of gender responsive budgeting plans, but almost two thirds of interviewed communities (61.2%) lack all gender equality policies or programmes while slightly more than half of them (55%) have not introduced any consultation procedures related to gender responsive budgeting. With respect to gender analysis of budgets, only one local government unit stated that all the requirements are in place and 12% of them believe that they have sufficient experience for this process.<sup>21</sup>

A 2019 analysis of the budget of the Municipality of Novo Sarajevo has shown that budgetary allocations existed for only three activities directly relevant to

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Lejla Lazović Pita, January 7, 2022.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the resources of the Gender Centre of Republika Srpska (2011). Gender budgeting: practical application.

<sup>17</sup> UN Women BiH (2020). Country Portfolio Evaluation: Synthesis report. Available at: <https://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=9580>. Str 23.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Maida Čehajić Čampara, December 28, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022. Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Available at: [https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GAP-BiH-2018-2022\\_B.pdf](https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GAP-BiH-2018-2022_B.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Lejla Lazović Pita, February 07, 2022. See also: Hadžiahmetović, A. et al. (2013). Gender responsive budgeting: textbook for universities. University Press – Magistrat izdanja, Sarajevo. Available at: [https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB\\_UNW.pdf](https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GRB_UNW.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Musić, Z. (2021). Assessment of needs in building capacities and skills for gender responsive budgeting on the level of local governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo: UN Women. Draft document was made available by UN Women for review.

women, representing less than 1% of the total municipal budget: two activities focused on provision of assistance to specific categories of women (postpartum grants for unemployed women and mothers of twins, three or more children) and a specific form of medical assistance for women (grant for co-financing the cost of assisted reproduction). That analysis, as pointed out by the authors, signals the need for significant budget and budget policy changes in order to improve gender responsive budgeting.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to this, budget transparency and involvement of the public in the adoption of budgets in Bosnia and Herzegovina is low. According to the 2019 Budget Transparency Index, Bosnia and Herzegovina ranked 84th out of 117 countries of the world included in the analysis and needs to ensure regular and timely publication of budget reports, drafting and publication of budgets for citizens, strengthen citizens' involvement in the process of budget preparation and supervision of budget execution and actively involve marginalised groups.<sup>23</sup> In 2021, UN Women carried out an analysis of gender responsive government programmes in the 2020 budget of state-level institutions and the 2021 budgets in FBiH and RS. The analysis has shown that gender responsive programmes, i.e. programmes that include a gender component at state-level institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina account for 3.56% of the budget of the 12 analysed institutions and 1.48% of the budget of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In FBiH, the assessed gender responsive programmes constitute 11.44% of the budget of the analysed institutions and 5.4% of budget of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while in Republika Srpska they constitute 17.49% of budget of analysed institutions and 5.46% of the budget of Republika Srpska.<sup>24</sup>

## Role of the media in improving gender responsive budgeting

The media in Bosnia and Herzegovina could play an important role in the promotion of gender equality as well as in dissemination of information and raising public awareness about public policies, allocation of public budgets and responsibility and transparency in the allocation of public budgets. Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022 has recognised the media as actors that, given their great impact on social change, may speed up structural change towards gender equality through media promotion of gender equality as a human rights principle.

Media coverage of gender inequality and unfair budget allocations for the needs of women and men may be useful in raising the awareness of the public and exercising pressure on decision-makers.<sup>25</sup> However, analyses have shown that the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina are gender-biased, transmit female/male stereotypes and rarely question gender stereotypes in the BiH society.<sup>26</sup> Journalism as a profession in BiH is not immune to discriminatory practices that contribute to gender inequality, ranging from low percentage of women in editorial and executive positions to differences in salaries and the increasingly frequent practice of threatening and harassing female journalists.<sup>27</sup>

When it comes to media coverage and gender stereotypes, analyses of media coverage of violence against women confirm the patterns of sensationalist coverage without in-depth problem analysis.<sup>28</sup> Such patterns are useful for understanding the main forms of manifestation of stereotypical coverage and the reasons for the frequent reliance of BiH media on this approach. The last research UN Women conducted regarding media coverage of violence against women shows that media coverage is frequently superficial and non-professional,

<sup>22</sup> Belegić, A. et al. (2020). Gender responsive budgeting: analysis of the budget of Municipality of Novo Sarajevo in 2019. Available at: [https://afw.ba/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ROB\\_analiza\\_budzeta\\_ONS.pdf](https://afw.ba/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ROB_analiza_budzeta_ONS.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> 2019 Budget Transparency Index. (2020). Transparentno.ba. Available at: <https://transparentno.ba/2020/05/01/indeks-transparentnosti-budzeta-za-2019-bosna-i-hercegovina-medju-najnetransparentnijim-zemljama/>

<sup>24</sup> UN Women. Analiza rodno-osjetljivih vladinih programa u budžetu institucija BiH za 2020. godinu. A draft document, the data was made available by UN Women for review.

<sup>25</sup> Quin, S. (2009). Gender budgeting: practical implementation. Handbook. Council of Europe. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680599885>

<sup>26</sup> Udruženje Novi put. (2019). Gender presence and representation in the media in BiH. Available at: <http://newroadbih.org/index.php/gender-media/gmmp/item/489-rezultati-analize-najcitanijih-i-najuticajnijih-stampanih-i-elektronskih-medija-o-zastupljenosti-i-polozaju-zena-u-medijima-u-bosni-i-hercegovini.html>

<sup>27</sup> Stavrevska, E. B. et al. (2021). Gender and Media literature review. The British Council, BIRN, Thomson Foundation and INTRAC.

<sup>28</sup> Jukić-Mujkić, E. and Sokol, A. (2020). Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2020. UN Women. Available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/9/research-on-media-reporting-on-gender-based-violence-against-women-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina-in-2020>

and the media state that they lack capacities and resources for in-depth analysis, investigative journalism and specialised reporting on specific social issues.<sup>29</sup> Similar observations may be found also in the analysis of media coverage concerning gender responsive budgeting.

In both cases journalists recognise deficiencies that go back as far as formal education, which lacks specialised courses and/or thematic units focused on these areas. Also, deficiencies are often attributed to understaffed editorial boards, lack of funds and additional staff required for more frequent coverage of highly specialised topics, etc. The market race and competition for audiences results in sensationalist editorial policies in many media outlets and one of the key issues voiced is the decision of most media to focus on the current political and social affairs, which takes up most of their available capacities and time<sup>30</sup> and prevents them from covering highly specialised topics, so journalists mostly cover political affairs and disputes. Such findings also resulted from the content analysis of budget adoption and budget revision coverage.

On the other hand, research has shown that the media regularly cover budgetary processes, journalists follow assembly sessions and other meetings and the media do not need additional resources but rather more engaged fieldwork and analysis. Journalist Selma Učanbarlić believes that many editorial boards “have journalists that will report on this, they have the time to publish such news, they have the space, but this raises another issue: what was the journalist doing all day covering a session if he/she then only writes that a record budget was adopted. What does that record budget mean for the citizens? It may be record in terms of amount, but maybe a major part of it was allocated to debt repayment. Is it social, is it developmental, does it deal with issues faced by certain marginalised groups?”<sup>31</sup>

Journalists face numerous challenges in their daily work, especially if they decide to cover highly specialised topics such as gender responsive budgeting. The primary issue is the competitiveness of such topics in editorial decisions on allocation of human and other resources,

relative to topics, when weighed against topics related to politics, crime, health, and education<sup>32</sup> – as the main issues covered by the news media. An additional challenge is that relevant interlocutors on this matter are difficult to find because even those employed in public institutions are not sufficiently aware of gender responsive budgeting. In general, the media – as also shown by this research – cover budgets in a generalised way and mostly approach this issue in the same manner as politicians or decision-makers, governments, assemblies, committees or possibly some associations funded from public budgets. Another problem is the fact that most journalists cover budgets only in the final phase, but fail to ensure adequate media coverage of the preceding phases in which significant changes in the budget were still possible.<sup>33</sup>

Gender responsive budgeting is not part of editorial policies<sup>34</sup> and, as stated by the respondents in the research, journalists lack guidance on how to generally cover the whole budgetary process. In addition to this, in case of the local media there is a significant political dependence on local authorities and the public funds they control. Reporting on gender responsive budgeting requires knowledge about the economy and gender equality. Given the lack of awareness of the employees in public institutions, the lack of experts who know and work in this field and a limited number of interlocutors, meaningful progress in the media is a difficult task. At the same time, the absence of providing sex-disaggregated data as a matter of course and the lack of transparent and analytical data in the institutions make the journalists’ role even more difficult. Before gender responsive budgeting can become widespread in the public sector, it will be necessary to first introduce programme budgeting and then gender responsive budgeting, but for that to happen the technical requirements necessary for appropriate gender responsive budgeting must be put in place.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Sokol, A. and Jukić-Mujkić, E. (2021). VIBE study BiH. IREX. Available at: <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/vibe%202021%20bosnia%20herzegovina%20bosnian.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Selma Učanbarlić, December 28, 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Svjetlana Šurlan, December 28, 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Selma Učanbarlić, December 28, 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Lejla Lazović-Pita, January 7, 2022.

## Media content analysis

Gender responsive budgeting is exceptionally rarely recognised as a topic in the BiH media, primarily because this approach is not frequently used by those who prepare, analyse, discuss and adopt budgets at all government levels in BiH. Content analysis of sample media coverage has shown that only a handful of articles mention this budget planning principle but there were no thematic or in-depth articles about this issue in the observed period. This indicates a lack of awareness about the importance of public budgets as instruments for promotion of gender equality in BiH, but also the media's lack of initiative and interest in asking questions about this method of promotion of gender equality in BiH when analysing budgets.

Topics related to economy and operation of public institutions and those related to public finance and management are present in the BiH media on a daily basis, particularly when they are subject to political discussions and disputes, which they most often are because finances are generally one of the priorities for BiH officials. Budget allocations, planning and revisions were covered on a daily basis in 2020, pointing to the fact that the media are interested in this very important topic. However, the manner of reporting on budgets and finances may be generally understood as extremely superficial – mostly as coverage in the form of news, without in-depth analysis, investigative stories and longer formats that might explain such topics to the public in an accessible manner and point out the details that have a direct impact on their lives. Coverage of public budgets with a strong focus on politics and politicians' statements leaves little room for an analytical approach to budget planning, and even less for specific approaches such as gender responsive budgeting.

Due to the higher share of men in politics, in positions of power and in the institutions,<sup>36</sup> media coverage is more focused on men as sources of information and interlocutors. However, irrespective of the sex of interlocutors, the topic of gender sensitive budgeting is very rarely found in content published by the observed media. Survey findings indicate that the reason may also be found in the fact that many journalists have not even heard of gender responsive budgeting and that only

a few have actually covered this topic.<sup>37</sup> Forty percent of journalists who participated in the survey answered that they are not familiar with gender responsive budgeting and only 10% of them answered that they have already covered gender responsive budgeting, but only on rare occasions. Knowledge about gender responsive budgeting in Bosnia and Herzegovina is generally minimal and superficial, and the topic itself does not receive sufficient attention in the academic and economic circles or in the media.<sup>38</sup> However, according to Jasmina Čaušević who works as a researcher and holds an MA in gender studies, the media have a duty to explain the budgets and local community budget items to all citizens who do not have the time or the knowledge to deal with this topic.

Journalist Sijetlana Šurlan finds that the media do not devote sufficient attention to gender responsive budgeting other than as part of daily events and press conferences they can cover quickly, since their focus is on other topics. "Due to the situation in the country, everything revolves around politics and the media mostly do not have journalists specialised in specific fields. In most cases, journalists 'cover' a wide array of topics. Even if there are journalists familiar with this field and able to report on gender equality topics, such topics are rarely covered", believes Šurlan.

The content analysis below has provided useful insights into who creates content, based on which information and what topics are chosen, which may be an extremely good basis for finding a way to improve such practices and introduce steps, tools and resources that will ensure that gender responsive budgeting is included to a greater extent in media coverage. The interpretation of findings presents coverage across six media outlets that were chosen based on the size of their readership, regional presence and specialised approach to topics, and represent a relevant sample that shows how the BiH media cover gender responsive budgeting. The analysis included the following online media outlets: Klix.ba, Avaz.ba, Hercegovina.info and Nezavisne.com as some of the most widely read mainstream media, as well as Akta.ba and Capital.ba as media outlets focused on economy, finance and public institutions. Content selected from online editions of these media outlets was related to four key phrases: "budget allocation", "budget adoption", "budget revision" and "gender responsive

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Selma Učanbarlić, December 28, 2022.

<sup>37</sup> The survey (n=20) has shown that 60% of respondents answered "I have heard about gender responsive budgeting", and 40% of respondents answered "I am not familiar with the gender responsive budgeting approach". The same survey has shown that 10% of respondents possess experience in covering gender responsive budgeting.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Jasmina Čaušević, December 24, 2021.

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020					
	Budget allocation	Budget adoption	Budget revision	Gender responsive budgeting	Total
<b>Selected</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>768</b>
<b>Rejected</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Coded</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>431</b>

Table 1. Number of selected, rejected and coded articles.

budgeting". In case of the portal Hercegovina.info, content was selected using two additional versions of the phrases "budget adoption" and "gender responsive budget planning" that are more frequent in the Croatian speaking area. A total of 768 articles were selected from collected content, of which 431 were coded.

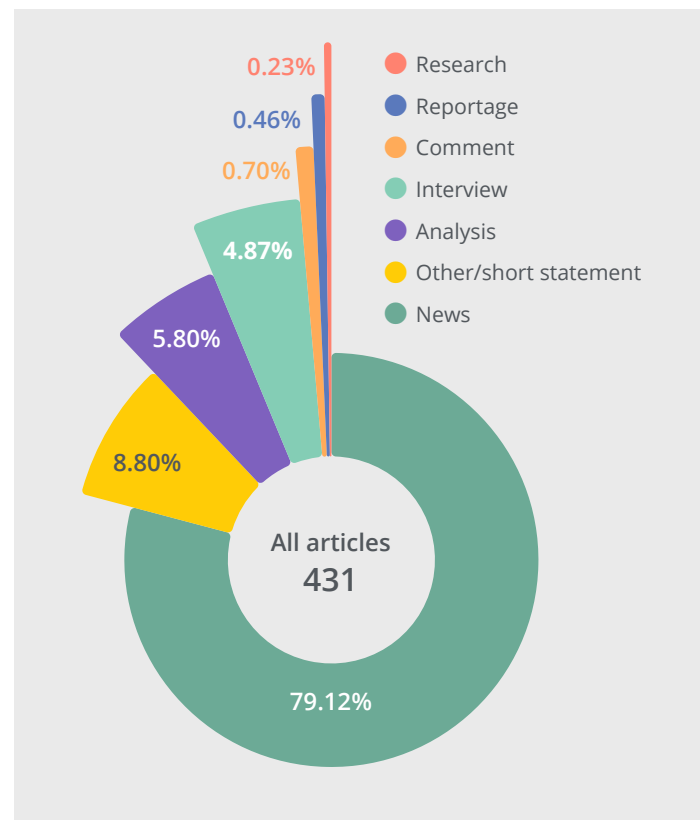
A significant number of analysed articles, more than a third of them, are articles that focus or deal with political disputes related to budget adoption. It should be noted that 2020 was the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and was characterised, from March onwards, by discussions and reviews related to emergency budget revisions at all government levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the new global health and economic crisis.

To gain insight into the detailed characteristics of media coverage of this topic, the following findings are presented below: who creates the content and how, what professional formats were used, who provides information and in what context is the information presented, and whether the analysed media content focuses on gender responsive budgeting.

### Who creates content and in what format?

More than 90% of analysed articles were not signed and the rare ones that were, were signed by 25 female journalists and 10 male journalists. Of the total 431 articles, only eight mention or include individual aspects of gender responsive budgeting and only two are signed, by female journalists. The general editorial practice is that compiled articles are not signed because they do not reflect planned, thoroughly considered in-depth work of an author on a certain topic but rather involve daily topics or short informative texts taken over from other media. Half of the articles were labelled as long articles with eight or more paragraphs and are mostly signed with initials, which indicates original content rather than

solely curated content. However, this does not reflect their originality and quality in terms of detail and depth of coverage of the topic of budget planning and adoption or gender responsive budgeting.



Graph 1. Article format

Eighty percent of analysed content was written in the form of news. Analyses were rarely included and 25 of them were identified (around 6%), most on the business portal Capital.ba, an online media outlet specialising in economic topics. Long form interviews are even rarer – only every twentieth article in the media is a longer format that provides space for the interlocutor to explain certain issues in detail. However, even such opportunities were used predominantly for political or party issues.

Nevertheless, the rare articles that focus on gender responsive budgeting include two interviews that only briefly mention some aspect of gender responsive budgeting, such as allocation for maternity allowances or a casual mention of financial support for female entrepreneurs. Out of all articles, only two articles were in the form of a feature story. One of them mentions budget revision in the context of inadequate sewage in one street in Mostar and the other one is the only example of coverage of gender responsive budgeting through a longer format and personal story. Investigative stories are even rarer and only one such story was found on the topics of budget allocation or revision from 2020. It points to irregular budget spending at a local community and potentially illegal or corruptive acts of local political actors.

### Content of the story

Based on the analysed articles it is visible that changes in budgets at higher government levels are covered more frequently, such as in case of entity budgets or the state-level budget as opposed to lower government levels, such as cantonal and municipal budgets. Around 60% of articles concern the state and entity level and 40% concern the cantonal, municipal and city level, so, given the fact that these six media outlets are not local media outlets, this shows that considerable attention is devoted to local issues. Still, coverage of local issues did little to change the approach and social issues are very rarely covered in detail or in the form of in-depth reports on specific budgetary processes.

The content of most analysed articles was written in a way that provides the audience with basic information about the budget adoption process at a certain level without a detailed analysis of the budgetary process or individual parts of the budget and without presenting the political power relations in the parliaments where the relevant budget was discussed. Generous transmission of politicians' statements coupled with rare interpretation of the relevant budgets points to an insufficiently analytical and proactive approach from the media, which should actually focus on issues of public interest and perceived problems rather than the politicians' statements. Journalist Selma Učanbarlić believes that the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina generally need a more in-depth approach to financial topics, not only with respect to gender responsive budgeting but in general. "I would say that gender responsive budgeting gets coverage but mostly in the form of statements or reports from thematic events. There is much less

content written by authors, in-depth stories, reports", she says.

The practice in the online media articles is to support the headline by at least one adequate photograph, most frequently generic visuals such as photographs of parliamentary sessions, institutional buildings or various financial charts and illustrations.

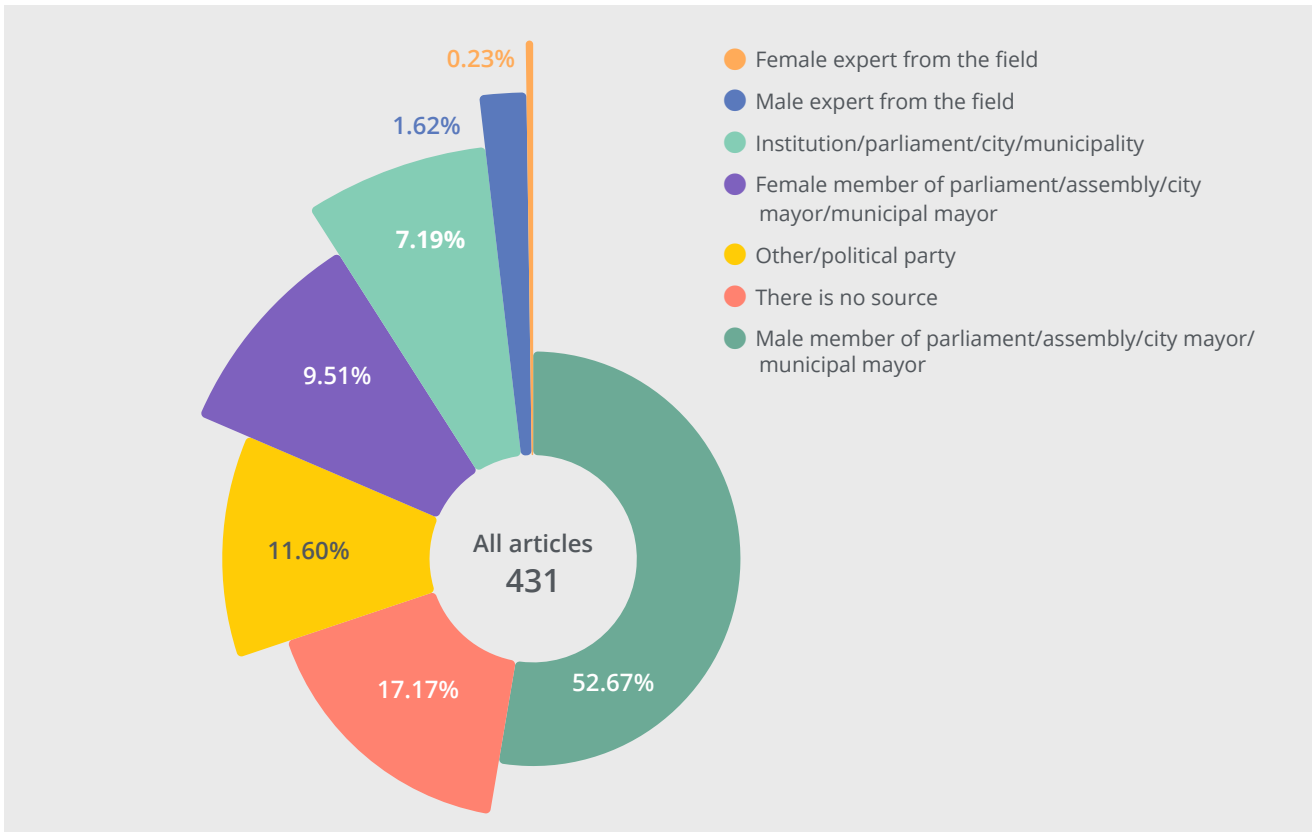
Of the 431 articles in total, in 153 the headline photo was that of a male municipal mayor, city mayor, minister or politician and in only 30 of a female minister, politician or other official. Although this was not a specific subject of this analysis, it was observed that there are frequent references to women in certain positions in the male gender form, such as "president of government" (*predsjednik vlade*) or "minister of finance" (*ministar finansija*).

Three quarters of journalists and editors that participated in the research stated that they covered budget adoption and budget revision, but 90% of them stated that they never covered gender responsive budgeting. Forty percent stated they were not even familiar with this budget planning principle.

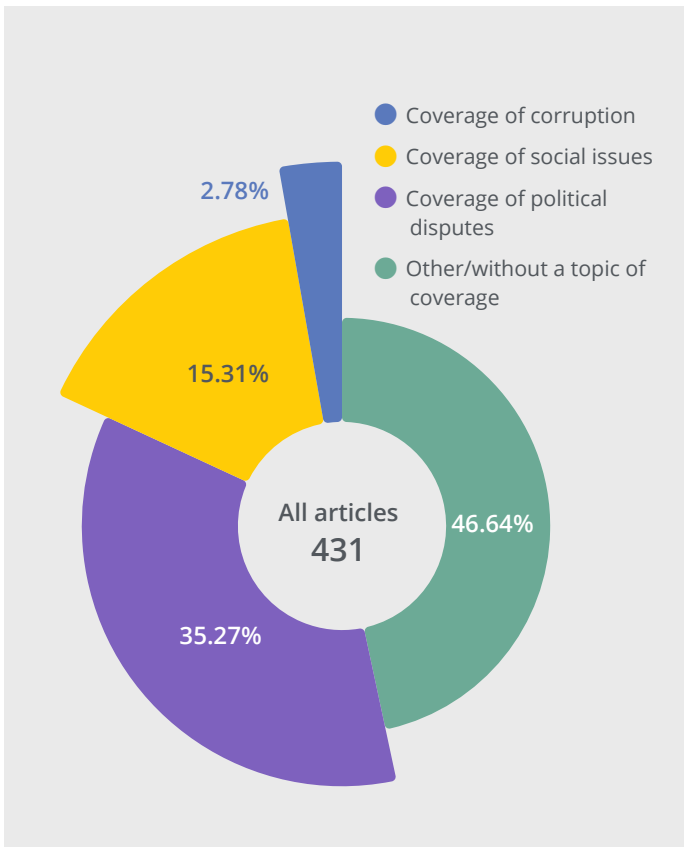
### Sources of information and topics

Information sources for topics related to budget adoption and budget revision are mostly men in government positions. Male mayors, ministers or politicians are the first information source in 53% of cases, as opposed to 10% of cases in which female ministers, politicians and other officials are the primary source. Around 17% of articles are marked as "no source", meaning that it was either written based on information from other media outlets or as a report written by an author about an event without specific interlocutors or clear origin of presented information. In 7% of articles the source is an institution, usually a press statement or unnamed persons from different departments. Male experts are extremely rare interlocutors and female experts even more so. Much more frequently the source are political parties. Women even less frequently appear as information sources or interlocutors. Around 12% of articles have three sources, mostly men, while around 7% of articles are based on more than three sources of information.

Coverage of political disputes was quite frequently the context of media coverage of budget adoption and budget revision (35%). Only 12 articles (3%) dealt with corruption, while 15% of articles covered topics that in any way touch on social issues. Almost half of all articles covered other matters or were purely informative and



Graph 2. Sources of information (first source in articles)



Graph 3. Perspective/thematic framework of coverage

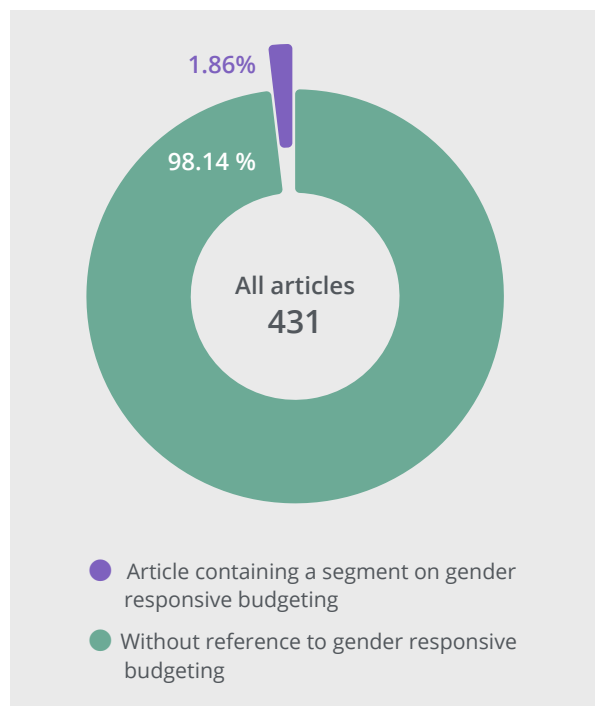
without a specific angle. In terms of content creation, it can be concluded that the observed media are primarily guided by what persons from government or political structures say or promise, rather than the media trying to ask questions, identify problems and try to analyse them or proactively tackle and raise topics related to social justice.

This analysis of media coverage has shown that public documents are very rarely used in articles on budget adoption, analysis, revision and/or allocation. Only eight of 431 articles include a public document, usually a screenshot or an excerpt from a document. Among all analysed articles, not a single article contains complete documents or links to searchable documents that might be used by the public. Such rare use of public documents in the coverage of public budgets indicates superficiality in the approach to these topics.

In their responses to our research survey, journalists and editors shared their experiences and said that when covering budget planning and adoption they obtain information from official statements, ask questions about certain parts of the budget that they consider of interest, attend meetings in which decisions are made or ask for information on specific budget items. Some of the answers were that, from time to time, they consult

experts who can “read” the budget, analyse documents and reports, speak to budget users, analyse budget spending documents, ask for additional explanations and get in touch with NGOs.

There is a lack of publicly available analytical data at all government levels in BiH and this makes the journalists’ work and coverage of these topics even more difficult, Lazović-Pita believes. She adds that it is very important to focus on additional training of journalists, especially in finding expert sources and asking them specific, focused questions.



Graph 4. Is there a focus on gender responsive budgeting?

## Gender responsive budgeting in media content

Across six observed media outlets and 431 articles in 2020, there were eight articles that in some way referred to gender responsive budgeting. Five articles mention “maternity allowances” or “financial support for female entrepreneurs”, whereas three articles use the phrase “gender responsive budgeting”.

One 2020 article on budget planning in Republika Srpska states that the greatest focus is on investments in the health and energy sector, and only towards the end there is a mention that efforts will be made to ensure better working conditions and that amendments to laws will be enacted in order to refund employers for paid leave benefits for “persons using maternity leave, up to 100% of their gross salary”.<sup>39</sup> An interview about the achievements of a municipal mayor, in which he speaks about measures implemented during his term of office, mentions measures related to gender responsive budgeting the fact that the municipality provides “financial support to female entrepreneurs and traditional and old handicrafts”.<sup>40</sup> The third article provides a list of measures one municipality is planning to introduce in order to cushion the economic consequences of the pandemic, mentioning that attempts will be made to “equalise the income of unemployed and employed new mothers in consideration of their needs”.<sup>41</sup> The next two articles, covering discussions about city budgets,<sup>42</sup> deal with political disputes regarding the allocation of funds and amendments and mention, towards the end of the article, that “women on maternity leave ... are still waiting for their allowances, public institutions and soup kitchens for the transfers for meals to those in need and users of their services, and that the city is still gridlocked due to political stubbornness”.

<sup>39</sup> Capital.ba. Najveća ulaganja planirana u zdravstvu i energetici (The largest investments planned in the health and energy sector). January 1, 2020. Available at: <https://www.capital.ba/najveca-ulaganja-planirana-u-zdravstvu-i-energetici/>

<sup>40</sup> Hercegovina.info. HDZ-ov načelnik koji se najviše popeo (HDZ mayor who climbed the highest). March 02, 2020. Available at: <https://www.hercegovina.info/vijesti/bih/hdz-ov-nacelnik-koji-se-najvise-popeo/182668/>

<sup>41</sup> Klix.ba. Općina Novo Sarajevo: 14 mjera za ublažavanja ekonomskih posljedica izazvanih epidemijom (Municipality Novo Sarajevo: 14 measures for mitigating economic impacts of the pandemic). May 27, 2020. Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/opcina-novo-sarajevo-14-mjera-za-ublazavanja-ekonomskih-posljedica-izazvanih-epidemijom/200527013>

<sup>42</sup> Klix.ba. Gradsko vijeće Zenice u vrtlogu bez izlaza: Privremeno finansiranje, budžet ili blokada? (City Council of Zenica in a maelstrom without an end in sight: temporary financing, budget or blockade?) February 13, 2020. Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/gradsko-vijece-zenice-u-vrtlogu-bez-izlaza-privremeno-finansiranje-budzet-ili-blokada/200213162> and Klix.ba. Zbog rasprave o amandmanu za Zenicatrans, još nema budžeta Grada Zenice (Still no budget for the City of Zenica due to discussion on Zenicatrans amendments). February 20, 2020. Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/zbog-rasprave-o-amandmanu-za-zenicatrans-jos-nema-budzeta-grada-zenice/200220031>



## Na selu je težak rad, ali i ljubav



Dajana Vujatović  
15.10.2020 19:15

Foto: Srna | Na selu je težak rad, ali i ljubav

BANJALUKA, MRKONJIĆ GRAD - Žene na selu lijepo mogu da žive samo ako se dobro organizuju. Nije lako, posla ima mnogo, ali čovjek što ima više posla - ispunjeniji je, i duša i tijelo, i sve ljepše funkcioniše, kaže u razgovoru za "Nezavisne" Jelena Bundalo iz sela Drugovići, kod Laktaša, povodom Međunarodnog dana žena na selu.

Ova četrdesetosmogodišnjakinja ističe da je, iako je živjela u gradu, odlučila prije nekoliko godina da se sa svojim porodicom preseli na selo i, kako kaže, jako su zadovoljni sadašnjim načinom života. Ekonomista po struci, dala je otkaz na poslu u Banjaluci i sada uzgaja prepelice, kokoške, pčele, sije baštu, ali najviše voli pčelarstvo.

U svakodnevnim poslovima pomaže joj suprug i većina njenih proizvoda namijenjena je porodici, ali mnogi stignu i do kupaca. Imaju dvoje djece koja vole selo, ali zbog obaveza na fakultetima moraju boraviti u gradu. Najviše vremena tokom dana oduzimaju joj pčele, ali njih i najviše voli i to joj je, kako kaže, primarna grana poslovanja.

"U pčelarstvu se veoma dobro snalazim, imam već osam svojih mednih proizvoda", ističe Jelena i dodaje da se trudi da sva hrana koju proizvede bude organska, bez koncentrata i hemikalija.

Da je život žena na selu zahtjevniji, ali i ljepši od onog u gradu smatra i Tanja Babić iz Slatine, koja ističe da pored stalnog zaposlenja stigne i da se brine o svom domaćinstvu.

"Imamo dva hektara vinograda koje obrađujemo, kao i stoku, imamo ovce, kokoške, svinje, paunove, patke, a sve poslove obavljamo suprug i ja", pojašnjava Babićeva.

Dodaje da se sve može stići kad postoji volja i kad voliš to što radiš, pa tako i otići na godišnji odmor da se malo predahne od svakodnevnih obaveza.

Povodom Međunarodnog dana žena na selu Divna Aničić, načelnica opštine Mrkonjić Grad, posjetila je Udruženje žena "Naša žena" u Podrašnici, te im uručila poklon-bon u vrijednosti od 500 KM kao znak podrške.

Mnogim ženama na selu poručila je da se organizuju, naprave prioritete i ne forsiraju previše.

Aničićeva kaže da je ovo udruženje jedno od rijetkih koje opstaje na selu i koje organizuje brojne aktivnosti tokom cijele godine.

"Jedna od aktivnosti je i to što zajedno treba da pokrenemo pogon za proizvodnju sira, koji je prvi na području naše opštine", istakla je Aničićeva.

Borjana Janković, predsjednica Udruženja žena "Naša žena", istakla je da 15. oktobar tradicionalno obilježavaju druženjem jer je to važan dan za žene koje žive na selu.

"Zahvaljujem predstavnicima naše opštine za saradnju i podršku koje su nam pružali proteklih godina, a bez kojih bi bilo veoma teško da sprovodimo svoje aktivnosti", naglasila je Jankovićeva.

Marina Tanasić, mještanka sela Podrašnica, kaže da mladi treba da žive na selu jer je to mjesto koje pruža zdraviji život.

## U planu katalog proizvoda žena sa sela



Ministar poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede RS Boris Pašalić i direktorica Gender centra Vlade RS Mirjana Lukač potpisali su juče u Banjaluci Ugovor o saradnji na realizaciji novog projekta institucionalnog razvoja u oblasti rodno odgovornog budžetiranja koji se finansira iz FIGAP 2 programa.

U okviru ovog projekta realizovaće se i projekat "Identifikovanje i promocija proizvoda žena sa sela kao primjer programskog budžetiranja". Ukupna vrijednost projekta je 30.000 KM, a jedan od rezultata projekta biće i kreiranje kataloga proizvoda žena sa sela.

Pašalić i Lukačeva su izrazili zadovoljstvo što na Svjetski dan žena na selu mogu da konstatuju porast broja žena nosilaca poljoprivrednih gazdinstava, koji je dosegao učešće od 17% u ukupnom broju registrovanih gazdinstava.

Three articles<sup>43</sup> that include the key phrase “gender responsive budgeting” mention projects implemented by institutions or local NGOs and international organisations. Two out of three articles mention specific benefits of this budget planning approach, while one of them shows female farmers who raise quails, chickens, bees, sheep and other animals and mentions government measures undertaken as part of projects focused on the identification and promotion of rural women's products as examples of programme budgeting. Articles focusing on gender responsive budgeting also mention signed strategic documents as the basis for promotion of this principle, and one report focuses on chickens donated to rural women with large families as part of activities aimed at innovative activities in the field of gender responsive budgeting.

While responding to the questionnaire, two participating journalists shared their experiences with writing about gender responsive budgeting and mentioned some rare occasions when they covered topics relevant for this approach to gender equality in the society. “I remember that I wrote about it as one of the tools for achieving true gender equality, but I cannot remember exactly when and which examples I gave”, one of the journalists said. “I touched on the issue of gender (non) responsive budgeting ... in the context of gender-based violence and feminisation of poverty”, the other journalist wrote and added that she covered this topic one more time, in an article on layoffs during the pandemic, in which she showed that more women than men were laid off and that this was a consequence of inadequate budget revisions.

Maida Ćehajić Čampara, gender equality consultant, believes that there was some progress in the media's coverage and contribution to gender equality in BiH, but that the gap still exists. While some people are highly aware of gender issues, others still make unacceptable professional errors, such as stereotyping women in their coverage of certain issues, including economic, budgetary and financial issues. Jasmina Čaušević is of the opinion that general knowledge about gender responsive budgeting in Bosnia and Herzegovina is limited and superficial and that this process is sometimes equated with special budget items for women, which

puts the media in a difficult position: “Certainly then, the media, as the last link in the chain of promotion of gender responsive budgeting, lack all accountability at the moment because that accountability is also lacking in the academia and the economic sector”.<sup>44</sup>

Expert interviews and desk research pointed out some examples of good and poor coverage of gender responsive budgeting. In general, it may be concluded that the media coverage of gender responsive budgeting mostly comes down to understanding the process exclusively as allocation of funds for special budget items for women, leading to examples which mention only items dedicated to new mothers, families or subsidies for women entrepreneurs. It is important to mention that the articles do not contain additional sources that would point out that the process of gender responsive budgeting is not exclusively a “budget for women”.

Additional aspects that should be considered include, for example, discrimination of women in the service sector and in sports – how funds are allocated in sports and how this reflects the needs of men and women, boys and girls. Gender equality aspects can also be found in issues related to street lighting and public transport, and these should be sought at the local level, as close as possible to the citizens. The media mostly provide statistical data on the representation of women in certain sectors, the pay gap between men and women and other general issues.<sup>45</sup> The media mostly cover the budgetary procedure – whether a budget has been adopted or not, whether there is a temporary financing period, as well as the total budget value, without any deeper analyses and without asking decision makers any questions about gender responsive budgeting.

“Everyone will report on whether the budget was adopted or not, who voted in favour or against it. However, what is missing is the analysis of the budget and its items and the identification of this specific topic or any other topic based on that”, Selma Učanbarlić concludes.

43 Nezavisne.com. Povećan broj žena nosilaca poljoprivrednih gazdinstava (Increased number of women heads of agricultural farms). October 15, 2020. Available at: <https://www.nezavisne.com/ekonomija/agrar/Povecan-broj-zena-nosilaca-poljoprivrednih-gazdinstava/626732> and Nezavisne.com. Na selu je težak rad, ali i ljubav (Rural work is hard, but so is love). October 15, 2020. Available at: <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/drustvo/Na-selu-je-tezak-rad-ali-i-ljubav/626794> and Nezavisne.com. Ženama Sarajevsko-romanijske regije podijeljeni paketi pomoći (Women of Sarajevo-Romanija region receive assistance packages). July 3, 2020. Available at: <https://www.nezavisne.com/ekonomija/agrar/Zenama-Sarajevsko-romanijske-regije-podijeljeni-paketi-pomoci/608321>

44 Interview with Jasmina Čaušević, December 24, 2021.

45 Interview with Svjetlana Šurlan, December 28, 2021.

## Conclusions

Media coverage that relates to and deals with gender responsive budgeting in Bosnia and Herzegovina is extremely rare. Reasons for this lie in the fact that government institutions do not pay enough attention to this budget planning principle and that the media lack knowledge, awareness, interest and practice that would allow journalists to ask decision makers questions about gender responsive budgeting. Gender responsive budgeting is not a part of editorial policies and is not frequently covered as part of media reporting on budget adoptions and/or revisions.

Budgets are a key document at all government levels and a topic that the media cover on a regular basis, but their coverage usually boils down to political disputes, curt indicative figures, press statements and politicians' general statements about the budget. There is a lack of articles written by journalists, in-depth budget analyses, inquiry into specific budget items, budget spending and allocations. There is a lack of budget scrutiny in terms of its adequacy for the needs of persons or groups with certain characteristics, including gender, and whether it ensures equal distribution of resources and creates equal opportunities for all.

Gender responsive budgeting is crucial for gender and fiscal justice and includes public budget analysis focused on its impact on women and men and the norms and roles attributed to them, as well as the mutual relations of power. It also involves transformation of that budget to ensure commitment to gender equality.<sup>46</sup>

Given the fact that decision makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina rarely base their budget allocation decisions on the principles of gender

responsive budgeting and that they rarely speak about it in public, the media coverage of this approach is scarce. However, it is possible to contact independent consultants, specialised institutions such as institutionalised gender equality mechanisms, NGOs, international organisations and local governments experienced with gender responsive budgeting projects to obtain more information.

Training can raise the journalists' awareness of this topic and increase the volume of reports on gender responsive budgeting. The existing practice, where the media cover budgets mostly in terms of budget adoption, does not inform the public about all phases of budget planning, drafting, discussion and control of budget spending. Gender responsive budgeting implies compliance with the principle of gender equality in budget drafting and in the distribution and allocation of financial resources,<sup>47</sup> and this approach to budget drafting is considered one of the standards of democracy.

In most cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina, budgets are not drafted according to principles that take into account the needs of both women and men. Given the fact that the BiH public is not familiar with the concept of gender responsive budgeting, the media could play an important role in informing and raising awareness about this approach to budgeting not just in the public but also among the decision makers. They could also play a crucial role in promoting accountability and transparency in the allocation of public budgets.<sup>48</sup> Gender responsive budgeting should be viewed as an advocacy tool that can contribute to the achievement of a certain idea and policy in all areas, including the media.

<sup>46</sup> OXFAM (2018). A Guide to Gender Responsive Budgeting. Available at: <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620429/gt-guide-gender-responsive-budgeting-280218-en.pdf;jsessionid=29FC694E694CAFE0670BF33152D0D685?sequence=13>.

<sup>47</sup> See: Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gender senzitivno ili odgovorno budžetiranje. <https://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/oblasti/rodno-odgovorno-budzetiranje/>

<sup>48</sup> Birchall, J. i Fontana, M. (2015). The gender dimensions of expenditure and revenue policy and systems. Bridge Development Gender. Page 27. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08970ed915d3cfd000248/61047\\_GOKH\\_Gender-dimensions-of-expenditure-and-revenue-policy-and-systems.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08970ed915d3cfd000248/61047_GOKH_Gender-dimensions-of-expenditure-and-revenue-policy-and-systems.pdf)

## Recommendations for the media

Additional attention should be paid to equal representation of women and men in media reports and ensuring that they are equally represented as sources of information, as this reflects a professional approach by journalists and contributes to gender equality.

A carefully planned approach is needed for selection of relevant interlocutors from the academic community, NGOs, governmental organisations and institutions as well as international organisations engaged in this field.

Continuous and in-depth coverage of the overall process related to budget drafting, adoption and execution is needed. This will make citizens aware of the importance of this document and clarify their role and their power to influence the budget creation process, which may improve the exercise of their human rights and equality of all persons.

It is necessary to create harmonised training models and to maintain the continuity of training for journalists interested in reporting on economic and/or gender equality issues in order to strengthen their professionalism and ensure quality in the work of editorial boards. Training should include modules on public finance and public budget management, introduction to gender equality, role of the media in promoting gender equality, gender responsive budgeting and practical analytical skills, as well as information sourcing and budget analysis.

Editorial boards should provide journalists with resources on gender responsive budgeting, including its economic and social aspects, as well as familiarity with key terminology needed for appropriate understanding of this approach. If this cannot be provided by the media outlet,

solutions from the local and international NGO sector may be applied.

Budget reporting should be more focused on what the people need and on the problems they face on a daily basis as solutions can sometimes be found in institutional budgets and their adaptation to meet the needs of all citizens. Covering just the operation of the institutions drafting such budgets is not enough.

High-quality media coverage of budgets should be based on the relevant documents, public data and other official information that journalists should request, analyse and make public in order to inform and raise awareness.

Media coverage can and should encourage citizens to follow processes related to public finances and budgets and show them how they can become involved and advocate for issues that matter to them and can generally contribute to the transparency of public spending.

Practical examples should be used to explain gender responsive budgeting to the general public and to point out the fact that this approach is insufficiently taken into account in budget planning. Examples can be found in daily life and one of the roles of the media is to cover such topics in order to educate the public about the official course taken by the institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The coverage of gender responsive budgeting should be improved and expanded to include more than just stereotypical roles of women and topics such as maternity allowances and to instead tackle a broad array of issues including politics, economy, health, security, sports, education, etc.

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## Annexes

### CODE LIST

<b>1. STORY</b>	<b>2. PHOTOGRAPH:</b>	<b>4.4. Third source</b>
1.1. Name of media outlet	2.1. General	4.4.1. Institution/parliament/ city/municipality
<b>1.2. Date</b>	2.2. Photograph of a male MP/ municipal mayor/city mayor	4.4.2. Male MP/city mayor/ municipal mayor
1.3. Article headline	2.3. Photograph of a female MP/ municipal mayor/city mayor	4.4.3. Female MP/city mayor/ municipal mayor
<b>1.4. Sex of the journalist</b>		4.4.4. Male experts from the field
1.4.1. Female	<b>3. TOPIC</b>	4.4.5. Female experts from the field
1.4.2. Male	3.1. Budget adoption	4.4.6. Other
1.4.3. Not specified	3.2. Budget revision	<b>4.5. More than three sources</b>
<b>1.5. Article section</b>	3.3. Other	
1.5.1. News	<b>4. SOURCES</b>	<b>5. PERSPECTIVE/Framework</b>
1.5.2. Magazine	4.1. No source	5.1. Coverage of political disputes
<b>1.6. Article length</b>	4.2. First source	5.2. Coverage of corruption
1.6.1. Long (more than eight paragraphs)	4.2.1. Institution/parliament/ city/municipality	5.3. Coverage of social justice
1.6.2. Medium (four to eight paragraphs)	4.2.2. Male MP/city mayor/ municipal mayor	<b>5.4. Other</b>
1.6.3. Short (up to four paragraphs)	4.2.3. Female MP/ city mayor/ municipal mayor	<b>6. FOCUS ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING</b>
<b>1.7. Source/origin</b>	4.2.4. Male experts from the field	6.1. Yes
1.7.1. Original content (signed articles)	4.2.5. Female experts from the field	6.2. No
1.7.2. News agency	4.2.6. Other	<b>7. Are public documents used in the coverage:</b>
1.7.3. Not specified	<b>4.3. Second source</b>	7.1. Yes
<b>1.8. Genre</b>	4.3.1. Institution/parliament/ city/municipality	7.2. No
1.8.1. News	4.3.2. Male MP/city mayor/ municipal mayor	
1.8.2. Report	4.3.3. Female MP/city mayor/ municipal mayor	
1.8.3. Feature story	4.3.4. Male experts from the field	
1.8.4. Investigative story	4.3.5. Female experts from the field	
1.8.5. Commentary (Opinion)	4.3.6. Other	
1.8.6. Interview		
1.8.7. Other		
<b>1.9. Administrative level</b>		
1.9.1. State and entity level		
1.9.2. Local level		

### Questions for experts and CVs:

1. How do the media cover gender equality, and especially gender responsive budgeting?
2. Do media in Bosnia and Herzegovina have the capacities and resources for professional coverage of public budgeting?
3. What are the key issues in media coverage of public budgeting and finances?
4. What is necessary in order for coverage of public budgeting, and especially gender responsive budgeting, to improve?
5. What should trainings for journalists and editors about the coverage of gender responsive budgeting include?
6. Which resources and training materials do the media need for better coverage of gender responsive budgeting and public budgeting in general?

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### Short biographies of interviewed experts:

**Lejla Lazović Pita**, Faculty of Economics of Sarajevo, professor of public finance management, expert, advisor and evaluator of programmes related to taxation, fiscal sustainability, public budgets, market and development.

**Svjetlana Šurlan**, journalist at Capital.ba, a media outlet specialised in economy, covering budgets and other related topics.

**Selma Učanbarlić**, journalist with experience in research on budgets and monitoring public money flow in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Jasmina Čaušević**, editor of the analysis "Gender responsive Budgeting: A Critical Review of the Budget of Novo Sarajevo Municipality", Akademija za žene, 2019.

**Maida Čehajić Čampara**, consultant and gender equality expert.

## Questionnaire for journalists:

UN Women, with the support of Mediacentar Sarajevo, is conducting a research on coverage of gender responsive budgeting. The purpose of the research is to analyse the manner in which the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina cover budget adoption and budget revision, whether media representatives are familiar with the concept of gender responsive budgeting and what are the needs of media representatives for training on gender responsive budgeting. The overall goal is to make recommendations on training for the media about gender responsive budgeting. The survey will be available until December 15, 2021. Gathered data will be anonymous. Filling out the survey requires 3-5 minutes.

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1. Are you familiar with the gender responsive approach?

- Yes   
No

2. Have you covered gender responsive budgeting so far?

- Yes   
No

3. If yes, when and how? Please give an example.

4. Do you cover budget adoption and revision?

- Yes   
No

5. If yes, how do you gather information, materials and topics? (e.g. official statements, detailed document analysis, asking questions about specific parts of the budget, etc.)

6. What does your media outlet need in order to be able to cover public budgeting and gender responsive budgeting in a more professional manner?

- Financial resources  
 Training  
 Additional personnel  
 Access to information  
 All of the above

7. Would you be interested in training on gender responsive budgeting?

- Yes   
No

8. What should such training include?

- Training on laws and rules in the field of finance and public budgeting  
 Methods for obtaining information and budget analysis  
 Methods of sending inquiries and requests for interviews  
 Preparation of questions for interviews in the field of finance and public budgeting  
 Training on gender equality  
 Training on gender responsive budgeting and its importance  
 All of the above  
 Something else. Please state it here:



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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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