

## Gender Responsive Budgeting: Highlights from South East Europe and the Republic of Moldova

Countries in the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> have made efforts to advance gender equality and women's rights, although at different paces and reaching different levels of development. Important progress has been made in setting up legislative and institutional frameworks for designing and implementing gender equality policies, establishing gender equality mechanisms, introducing gender responsive budgeting. Still, achieving de facto gender equality remains a persistent challenge due to the weak implementation of laws and policies, limited progress in eradication of discrimination and gender stereotypes and a lack of financing for gender equality initiatives.

To address the gap between policy commitments at the international and national level with action on the ground, UN Women has supported gender budgeting initiatives since 1997 in more than 70 countries around the world and has spearheaded the introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in South East Europe. The technical expertise mastered during implementation of GRB globally distinguishes UN Women as a unique agency working on this topic.

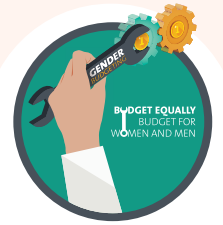
Since 2010, UN Women has provided support to central government institutions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo<sup>2</sup> and the Republic of Moldova to strengthen democratic governance and advance women's rights through initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender in policy planning and budgeting, with donor support from the Swiss and Austrian Development Agencies (SDC and ADA) and UN Women's core funds. Specifically, in the period from 2014-2019 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova have been part of an ongoing multi-year regional programme for Promoting Gender Responsive Policies and Budgets, while Serbia and Kosovo have been implementing GRB as part of their country programmes.

In these countries, GRB was introduced as a transformative mechanism, linking gender equality policy objectives with the necessary resource allocation for their implementation. While working on the institutionalization of GRB through improved normative work, especially with the introduction of gender equality in the budget laws and policies, gender analysis was introduced as an instrument for identifying the needs of women and men and linking policies with budgets. Additional efforts and support have been provided to civil society organisations, parliaments and gender advocates to meaningfully contribute to policy making and budgeting from perspectives of development related needs and priorities of excluded/vulnerable groups.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, Western Balkan countries include: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, as well as the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>2</sup> All references to Kosovo in this paper shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).



The GRB interventions have been structured to support GRB implementation of key actors including Ministries of Finance and line-ministries, gender machineries at the horizontal and vertical level,<sup>3</sup> local governments including city councilors and finance and budget departments, Members of Parliament including parliamentary institutes and parliament administration, Academia (University, Public administration academy) revisions of training curriculum and training of students and public servant on gender equability and gender sensitive policies and budgets, civil society organizations, specifically those who work with most vulnerable women and are specialized in budgets and gender issues, women from the communities through the application of the 'participatory and inclusive'

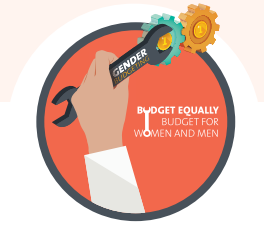
approach to ensure that the needs and concerns of most vulnerable women's groups are fully taken into account at all stages of budget planning and implementation with the aim of leaving no one behind.

## The FOCUS of the GRB work to date:

At the regional level, the GRB programme is designed to: a) encourage sub-regional cooperation and national coordination for the advancement of gender equality; b) promote the exchange of innovative ideas, practices and knowledge in relation to GRB and learn from best practices, challenges and obstacles of GRB implementation in different countries.

- Support Governments to use gender responsive budgeting as a tool to achieve transformative financing that put adequate resources to achieve gender equality and women's rights;
- Support Governments to fulfil gender equality commitments and increase transparency and accountability;
- Advance the institutionalization of GRB through an increase of capacities/expertise among state and non-state actors;
- Integrate gender into Public Finance Management Reforms through direct support to the Ministries of Finance;
- Facilitate communication and coordination between Ministries of Finance, gender machineries and line ministries;
- Support NGOs and members of parliament to be able to review budget allocations and policies with gender lenses and support activism and participatory processes at the national and local level;
- Facilitate national and regional exchange of learning and good practices;
- Support government to develop human centered policies with focus on leaving no one behind and decrease gender inequalities;

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper, horizontal level includes gender machinery at national level while vertical includes local government gender focal points and their connection with central level departments for equal opportunities.



## Key achievements:

- Gender equality is now a core principle in the Organic Budget Law and the Law on Local Finances.
- GRB is included as an Annex to the Standard Budget Preparation Instruction issued by Ministry of Finance and Economy and as a mandatory requirement in the Budget Programming and Implementation phases for both central and local level.
- Consolidated application of GRB into the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP) by the Ministry of Finance at the central level and local level which enables to link planned expenditures with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This enables better analysis on the impact of engendered budgets in the life of women and men in Albania.
- There is significant increase in public expenditure allocation to Gender Equality. In the Medium-Term Budget Programme 2019-2021, 33 budget programmes, or 50% of all the budget programmes of the Line Ministries, are compliant with a Gender Results Budgeting review process, compared to 28 (or 35%) of the MTBP 2018-2020.
- 32.7 billion ALL or 6.3% of the total budget, are the planned GRB budget funds for 2019, compared to 15 billion ALL (2.4% of the total budget) in 2018, to specifically close gender gaps or advance gender equality.
- 150 officials from the Finance and Budget Departments at central level, 200 at local level, as well as 12 Gender Equality Employees of all the Line Ministries are trained on the new methodology of budgeting and the best ways to successfully integrate GRB in the Medium-Term Budget Program through Gender specific goals, objectives, targets, outputs.

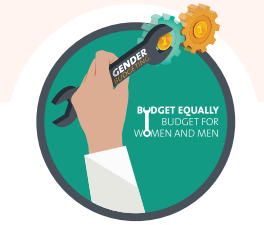


### **“Tree of Life” (Pema e jetes) farm, managed by Gentiana Sinjari**

Ms. Sinjari is among 471 women farmers in Albania who have benefited from the agricultural subsidy scheme that was put in place as a result of gender-responsive budgeting

*Working with governments to implement gender equality commitments and increase women’s participation in decision-making, in the framework of the UN Women Regional Project on Gender-responsive Budgeting, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Austrian Development Agency.*

*Shkallnur, Durres, Albania, September 2017  
Photo credits: UN Women/Yllka Parllaku*



- 75 representatives of different Budget Institutions beyond Line Ministries are informed for the first time, on how to include key performance indicators, with a special focus on gender related KPIs, in their MTBP.
- 20 Albanian CSOs have capacities and are able to serve as gender budget watchdogs. The first 5 gender watchdog reports are produced in the country by CSOs.
- 13 Members of Parliament, and its sub commission on gender equality are informed on GRB in the MTBP 2019–2021 and have used this analysis process in hearings in the Parliamentary Commissions during annual budget discussions.
- GRB was dedicated a specific speech during the parliamentary discussions for the 2019 budget. A road map of the whole process was presented by the Head of the Parliament Sub-committee on gender Equality with statistics and figures from the 2019 budget. It is the first time that GRB is discussed in Parliament.
- For the first time, Gender Responsive Budgeting is included as a tool to explaining the different social impacts in the life of men and women in the budget planning for 2019, in the “Citizen’s Budget”.
- In collaboration with Institute of Statistics the publication Women and Men is issued annually. The document ensures Albania’s key gender policy areas and international progress monitoring obligations on gender equality and women’s empowerment are consistently reflected across sectors. The document includes a large list of gender indicators which are harmonized with related gender indicators of the SDGs.

## Women starting their own businesses

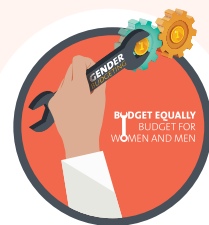
Liljana Jaku, a beekeeper for 20 years, has registered and expanded her business thanks to the agricultural subsidy scheme put in place due to gender-responsive budgeting

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*Shkallnur, Durres, Albania, September 2017  
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# Bosnia and Herzegovina



## Key achievements:

- Continuous cooperation with 3 finance ministries, 3 parliaments and 3 gender equality agencies (BiH, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska)
- Budget Management Information System (BMIS) on all three levels contains a mandatory inclusion of specific gender indicators into the programmes of all line ministries before their submission to the MoF.
- Gender-responsive budgeting analysis of key policy documents at all levels of governance;
- Development and implementation of gender equality indicators during the budget planning processes related to Budget Instructions;
- GRB trainings with 88 members of Parliament at state and entity level, and 91 municipal councillors;
- Improved the GRB capacities of 76 NGO representatives in a set of Advanced Budget Literacy and Budget Monitoring.
- Interventions offered specific GRB and gender mainstreaming courses at different university centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and materials and textbooks on GRB were developed for professors and students;
- Women from rural areas benefit from budget allocated funds for their economic empowerment;
- Women conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) survivors from municipality of Bratunac now participate in the municipal budget, with two dedicated allocations and guaranteed for the coming years.
- 17 000 civil servants across the administrations in Bosnia and Herzegovina have access to the E-Learning Course on Gender Responsive Budgeting, which is accredited by the Agencies for Civil Services and designated with a professional learning credit.

## Changing rural women's lives

Municipality of Samac introduced special measures to support women farmers like Marina Delic, who is a farmer growing strawberries

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Samac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, December 2016

Photo credits: UN Women/Rena Effendi



## Changing rural women's lives

Municipality of Samac introduced special measures to support women farmers like Zilha Kuresevic, who is a farmer growing strawberries

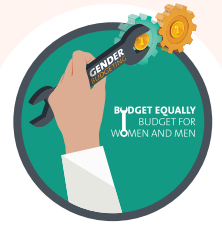
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Samac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, December 2016

Photo credits: UN Women/Rena Effendi



# The Republic of North Macedonia



## Key achievements:

- 17 line Ministries/state institutions piloted a methodology for introducing GRB and developed gender indicators and gender budget statements for selected sectoral programmes;
- The Ministry of Finance, continued to mainstream gender in the annual Budget circular, and as of 2018 the circular for preparation of the 2019 budgets was improved by annexing a specific form for gender budget statements;
- The General Secretariat of the Government improved the strategic planning process by mainstreaming gender within the Strategic Planning Methodology, requiring line ministries to develop at least one gender indicator in their strategic plans, including analysis of the situation and the impact on the lives of women and men.
- 88 municipal programmes introduced gender specific measures and specific budget allocations for their implementation;
- 6 municipalities developed and allocated funding for local strategies on gender equality, tackling a wide range of priorities and concerns of women and men in their communities;
- 27 Gender Budget Watchdog Reports were developed by CSOs, focusing on local sectoral programmes;
- UN Women Implementing Partner NALAS launched its first E-module on GE and GRB and the first cycle of training was completed by 56 representatives of the municipalities in SEE;
- The Macedonian Ministry for Information Society and Administration was the first in the region to integrate a tailored e-course on gender mainstreaming and GRB into its Learning Management System. Since January 2018, 1583 civil servants completed the basic course, while 1584 users have completed the advanced course, while over 5000 registered users are still following the course.

## Rural women discussing so called “Men’s Issues”

Female solidarity to voice their requests for resolving infrastructure and transport issues in Shipkovica Municipality

*Local outreach action for improved local policies and increased budget allocations to advance gender equality in the framework of the UN Women Regional Project on Gender-responsive Budgeting, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Austrian Development Agency.*

Shipkovica Municipality, April, 2017

Photo credit: UN Women/Mirjana Nedeva



## “My mother’s jam”

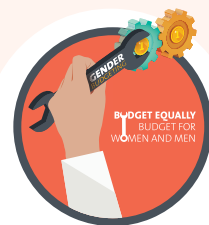
Rural women trying to monetise unpaid labour

*Local outreach action for improved local policies and increased budget allocations to advance gender equality in the framework of the UN Women Regional Project on Gender-responsive Budgeting, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Austrian Development Agency.*

Debarski Banji, April, 2017

Photo credit: UN Women/Mirjana Nedeva

# Republic of Moldova



## Key achievements:

- Members of Parliament, representatives of central authorities, university professors and CSOs learned from other countries' experience in advancing the gender equality and women's rights agenda with a special session on GRB;
- The capacity of more than 100 public officials and 146 local authorities throughout the districts of Moldova has been strengthened skills and capacities to apply GRB in the context of performance-based budgeting reform;
- A GRB module was included into the curriculum of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (ASEM) in 2016 and the Academy for Public Administration has a Gender Equality Course for Civil Servants developed in 2018;
- Fifty-four ASEM Master's Program students have successfully finished a GRB course during the academic year 2016-2017;
- 7 GRB watchdog reports have been issued. 20 CSOs representatives from Moldova have better skills to assess local budgets from gender-responsive perspectives. The reports cover following subjects: fair allocation of resources for i) schools and kindergartens, ii) disabled people, iii) sports activities, iv) energy efficiency, v) job creation for the elderly, vi) online safety of young people and children, and vii) women's promotion in police;
- Ministry of Finance initiated the revision of "Methodological set on elaboration, approval and modification of the budget" (Ministry of Finance Order No. 209) aiming to reflect gender equality principles.



## A gender-sensitive approach in Academia

Angela Casian, a professor at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova and one of the authors of the gender-responsive budgeting manual, discussing the importance of gender-responsive budgeting with students

*Working with Academia to strengthen the implementation of gender equality commitments and increase women's participation in decision-making in the framework of the UN Women Regional Project on Gender-responsive Budgeting, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Austrian Development Agency.*

Chisinau, Moldova, 2016 Photo credits: UN Women/Ramin Mazur

## Moldova - the first country in the region to include gender-responsive budgeting in the academic curriculum

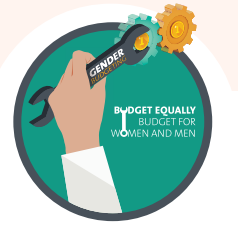
54 Masters students from the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova have completed the gender-responsive budgeting course so far.

*Working with Academia to strengthen implementation of gender equality commitments and increase women's participation in decision-making in the framework of the UN Women Regional Project on Gender-responsive Budgeting, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Austrian Development Agency.*

Moldova, 2017 Photo credits: UN Women/Ramin Mazur



# Republic of Serbia



## Key achievements:

- Achievement of gender equality has been set as a goal of the Budget System Law since 2015, making Serbia a first non-EU country to introduce gender equality in the key budget law, while GRB became mandatory for all budget users at national, provincial and local level, to be implemented fully by 2020;
- The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016–2020 and National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2018 recognize GRB as one of the specific measures for achieving system-wide gender mainstreaming in the policy adoption, implementation and monitoring processes, while GRB was assessed as one of the key results of NAP implementation in the period 2016–2018;
- The Ministry of Finance, the Coordination Body for Gender Equality and UN Women established a highly operational GRB support hub in 2015, responsible for GRB planning, implementation and monitoring;
- Budgets of 51 line Ministries/state institutions introduced gender in 76 budget programmes and 149 budget goals, in line with the Annual Plan for GRB Introduction issued by the Minister of Finance and the Provincial Secretary of Finance;
- Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure and the Provincial Secretariat for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry conducted sectoral gender analyses, which allowed them to make informed decisions regarding gender priorities in their sectors, while 5 additional line ministries budgeted performance of gender analysis in 2018 and 2019;
- More than 930 civil servants know how to introduce GRB in budgets at national, provincial and local level, while mentoring was provided to civil servants during 305 individual info sessions;
- The State Audit Institution and the Fiscal Council of the Republic of Serbia will start monitoring the effects and impact of the GRB implementation in line Ministries/state institutions' budgets in 2019;
- The Office for Human and Minority Rights contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment through implementation of gender-responsive recommendations received from UN mechanisms and adopted by the Government of Serbia;
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management started tracking availability of incentives in agriculture to women and men. This helps identify funding and access gaps for women and allow the reformulation of policies and measures.



Unlike many of her friends who moved to the nearby towns, Milica Stojanovic decided to stay in the village of Vlasko Polje (Knjazevac municipality, Serbia) where she enjoys vegetable growing. She will be one of the women in this region to benefit from local budget which is to start investing equally in services required by women and men.

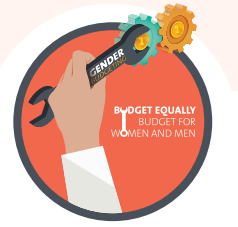
Vlasko Polje, Serbia 2017 Photo credit: UN Women Serbia

Budget analyst of the Serbian Ministry of Finance presents gender responsive goal and indicators contributing to higher employment of rural women, during GRB training organized by UN Women for the Ministry of Finance employees in 2015.

Arandjelovac, Serbia, March 2015 Photo credit: UN Women Serbia







## Future steps:



Despite numerous achievements at central and local levels, a systemic and unified approach for the integration of a gender perspective in the process of strategic planning and budgeting is still lacking, and in some countries more efforts are needed to fully embedded within the Public Finance Management reforms. The independent evaluation of the UN Women GRB Regional Project (2014-2016) acknowledged that UN Women's support responded directly to national systems and policies pertinent to gender equality and led to greater awareness of GRB, improved regulatory frameworks, and increased institutional capacity. However, it was observed that institutions continue to require further guidance, capacity building and coaching to systematically and practically apply GRB into the entire planning and budgeting processes.

The achievements made by UN Women to date in creating an enabling legal and institutional framework and in building national expertise provide a sound argument for continuing similar interventions due to: a) the increased awareness and demand on behalf of stakeholders; and, b) the opportunity that Public Finance Management reform offers for systemic and sustainable solutions to be sought/identified.

Ongoing public finance reform, particularly in relation to program/performance based budgeting represents an important entry point for GRB. The introduction of GRB within this reform is a tool to hold governments accountable to their gender equality commitments, to improve the effectiveness of public finances, and to increase the participation of women, including the most vulnerable, as well as women's CSOs in setting public policy goals.

Future GRB interventions will substantively contribute to promoting good governance and EU integration for Western Balkans countries. It will facilitate cross-regional learning and exchange among the targeted countries and build a community of practice on GRB. Ultimately, this will lead to the establishment of a regional knowledge hub/centre for excellence on GRB.

Furthermore, GRB will be used as a strategy for implementation of the Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), explicitly Goal 5 – "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", under the principle of 'Leaving No One Behind' and Goal 5.c.1. In this respect, GRB will ensure coherence between national planning, costing and budgeting processes and gender equality commitments. This approach would enable target countries and key stakeholders to track the progress of gender equality in a more systematic way, while at the same time enabling continued support for gender advocates to demand accountability as implementation advances.