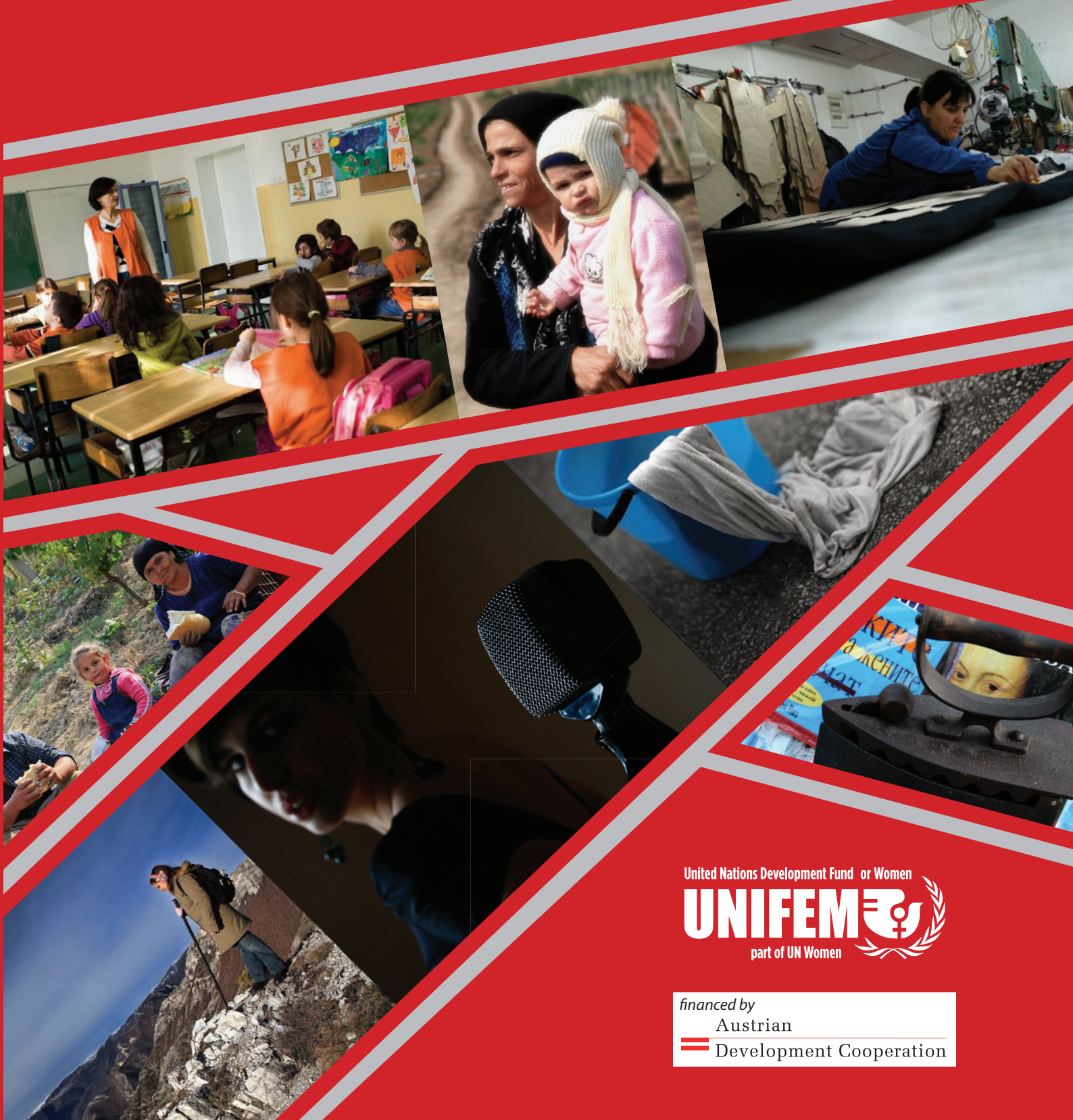


GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE: UNIFEM EXPERIENCES



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The United Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programs and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses on reducing feminised poverty; ending violence against women; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDs among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.

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Special thanks are due to the Austrian Development Agency for its continuous financial support and encouragement for the implementation of the gender-responsive budgeting project, and for the production of this publication. We are also grateful to the other donors who have generously supported the project: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in FYR Macedonia.

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FOREWORD

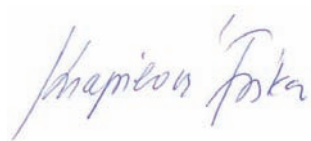
In the region of South Eastern Europe, a number of laws and plans aimed at the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment have been adopted over the past several years. Despite progress made with establishing institutional, policy and legal frameworks, gender gaps continue to exist. Those are particularly notable in the areas of employment and social protection, and in terms of qualitative and quantitative participation of women in decision-making processes. In addition, many policies do not adequately take into account multiple factors leading to discrimination, and the intersection of gender with other identities, such as ethnicity or place of living, which often lead to particular vulnerability and social exclusion.

That commitments to women's rights and gender equality on paper do not always get translated into real actions and results was the starting point for UNIFEM in initiating a project on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in four countries in the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia and Serbia. GRB means moving gender equality issues from the periphery to the center of decision-making processes, and ensuring that the general gender equality goals set get translated into meaningful actions with adequate resources. Therefore, UNIFEM and its partners saw GRB as a potentially useful tool in addressing the existing "implementation gap".

This publication summarizes the learning that has emerged from the implementation of the project in the four countries in the period 2007-2010. It attempts to capture both the diversity of different interventions that took place in each of the countries and some of the common elements, challenges and opportunities. It illustrates that even though no common "recipes" exist, working on GRB in environments where it is a relatively new notion often entails a range of similar steps. These include efforts to identify the key entry points, form strategic partnerships, establish important prerequisites, and develop and apply new analytical tools.

The project showed that these cannot take place without the commitment and drive of gender advocates from different domains, who are willing to push the boundaries of what has been achieved and search for new effective means to advance the gender equality agenda in their respective fora. This publication is thus a tribute to their pioneering efforts in the field of gender-responsive budgeting.

At the same time, we believe that the publication will provide useful insights and inspiration to those who want to take forward GRB in South Eastern Europe and in other regions where it is in initial stages of implementation. UNIFEM remains committed to continue supporting national efforts to advance this new and effective tool for gender equality.



Erika Kvapilova
Regional Programme Director
UNIFEM Central and Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION

This publication captures lessons learned in the course of the UNIFEM project on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in South Eastern Europe (SEE). The project *“Gender-responsive budgeting in South Eastern Europe: Advancing Gender Equality and Democratic Governance through Increased Transparency and Accountability”* was implemented in four countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) of Macedonia, and Serbia¹ – in the period August 2006 to June 2010. It was realized with funding from the Austrian Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in FYR Macedonia.

Gender-responsive budgeting work is about ensuring that government budgets and the policies and programs that underlie them address the needs and interests of women and men, girls and boys. Sometimes defined as *“application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process”*, GRB means incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.² Gender budget work should therefore provide information that allows for better decision-making on how policies and priorities should be implemented and financed in order to achieve the goal of gender equality in different areas of life.

During the nearly four-year period of project implementation, a variety of approaches were used to promote GRB in each of the four countries, and across different government levels and institutions. The experiences demonstrate the richness of GRB as a tool, and that there are no cast-in-stone “recipes” for its implementation. They also demonstrate the challenges experienced in introducing a new tool in environments where sometimes even the basic preconditions for gender mainstreaming are missing.

This publication seeks to provide practical insights for those who want to embark on the often challenging, but – as we found – ultimately rewarding path of advocating for and implementing gender-responsive budgeting. The publication targets two groups in particular: gender advocates and development practitioners. The first group – gender advocates – is defined broadly and can include civil society activists, government representatives, academics, etc., all of whom have a stake in promoting the gender equality agenda in their countries and want to engage with GRB as a means for that. The second group – development practitioners – is defined to include representatives of development agencies, international organizations, and multilateral and bilateral donors, who are in a position to support and promote GRB either separately or as part of a broader development agenda.

The publication will be most useful to advocates and practitioners who work in countries where GRB is still relatively new and in initial stages of implementation. The experiences and lessons presented here are based on pilot interventions in the four SEE countries, where GRB is still a long way from being fully understood, implemented and institutionalized. Therefore, the publication’s main foci are on the first steps undertaken when introducing gender-responsive budgeting to a particular locality, sector or institution and on how to embed, in these early stages, the elements that would allow moving beyond piloting into more sustainable practices.

¹ In the period May 2007-May 2008, the project also included work in the Republic of Moldova funded from the Austrian Development Cooperation. The work on GRB was continued in Moldova in the following years with support external to this project.

² Council of Europe (CoE). 2005. *Gender budgeting: final report of specialists on gender budgeting (EG-S-GB)*. Retrieved June 2010, from [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/gender-mainstreaming/EG-S-GB\(2004\)RAPFIN_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/gender-mainstreaming/EG-S-GB(2004)RAPFIN_en.pdf)

The publication assumes a basic understanding of gender and GRB, and therefore does not include description of theoretical concepts and tools, which can be found elsewhere in the GRB literature.³ It instead illustrates how some of these concepts can be applied in practice, based on the experiences in the four SEE countries. It includes two main chapters:

- 1) Initiating gender-responsive budgeting in South Eastern Europe: the chapter focuses on the first steps that were undertaken in order to identify the entry points, establish strategic partnerships, and set up realistic goals; and
- 2) Implementing gender-responsive budgeting in South Eastern Europe: the chapter is divided into sub-sections devoted to various aspects of GRB implementation as experienced in the project and illustrated through case studies: how gender relates to “novel” forms of budgeting (program and participatory); how GRB has been piloted at the sector/program level; and how civil society organizations have driven various applications of the tool.

The publication includes case studies of a selected number of interventions that have been implemented in the four countries, and is not exhaustive of *all* initiatives and activities that have taken place in the framework of the project. For example, work with Members of Parliament that took place in some countries is not described at length. However, the experiences and lessons included reflect the general approaches taken in the project, and draw on other activities that are not presented in detail. Finally, the case studies are a summary of what has generally been a lengthy process of research, awareness raising, advocacy and capacity development led by national partners and UNIFEM. A full description of some of these processes is contained in other publications produced under the specific interventions and referenced as sources here.

³ See for example: Budlender, D., Elson, D., Hewitt, G., Mukhopadhyay, T. 2002. *Gender Budgets Make Cents. Understanding gender responsive budgets*. Commonwealth Secretariat London. or Elson, D. 2001. *Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives: Some key dimensions and practical examples*’ paper for the UNIFEM-OECD-Nordic Council Conference hosted by the Belgian Government on Gender-responsive budgeting, Brussels, October 16-17.

CHAPTER I: INITIATING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE



In this chapter, we look at the first steps that were undertaken in the project in order to identify the entry points for GRB pilot interventions, based on assessment of the context, existing preconditions and possible partnerships. Some of the common approaches which were utilized in all interventions are also presented.

Why gender-responsive budgeting in South Eastern Europe?

With an increasing number of government and non-governmental stakeholders engaging in GRB initiatives in different countries, gender-responsive budgeting has become a global movement. However, in the SEE region, at the time UNIFEM initiated the project in late 2006, GRB was largely an unfamiliar concept, with which only a few activists were acquainted and around which few small-scale initiatives were undertaken. Nevertheless, many gender advocates felt that new tools and approaches were needed to move the gender equality agenda in their countries forward, and were therefore interested in GRB. Where national commitments had been made in the form of gender action plans or laws, they were often poorly implemented and under-funded. Frequently, implementation revolved around a few activities within those plans that left untouched the large “slice of the cake” – mainstream policy making and implementation. GRB thus seemed appropriate, as the rationale behind it is precisely the need to move from commitments on paper into meaningful actions, and to tackle mainstream policy domains, where the bulk of public spending (and thus government attention) is concentrated.

At the same time, over recent years countries in the region had been implementing public finance reforms aimed at introducing more results-oriented forms of budgeting (i.e. program budgeting) as well decentralization processes intended to give more power to local authorities. These reforms, in theory, allow for a policy making and budgeting process that is more needs-based, transparent, accountable and participatory. Therefore, they potentially open doors for gender equality issues to be placed more firmly at the center of the policy making process. UNIFEM and its partners saw the reforms as “windows of opportunity” that needed to be utilized, but that required a different type of knowledge, skills and advocacy strategies than those often used by gender advocates.

This backdrop called for building understanding about gender-responsive budgeting and the ways in which it can be applied in the SEE context. Considering the novelty of the concept, the UNIFEM project was in many ways a pilot one and the interventions implemented in each country were pilot interventions.⁴ However, a conscious attempt was made to select areas of intervention and then carry them out in such a way so as to allow subsequent movement beyond piloting. Bearing this in mind, we will now turn to how the entry points for the pilot GRB initiatives were identified and selected.

How to identify the entry points for pilot GRB initiatives?

Strategically identifying the entry points for pilot GRB work in a context where it is largely unknown and unpracticed is a crucial first step. However, this is also an iterative process, as new possibilities that should be taken advantage of, might emerge over time. Generally by an “entry point”, we mean the place where the right constellation of factors comes together, and makes it likely that there will be positive impact. These factors include what some have called “prerequisites for gender budgeting” (see text box).

⁴ As part of its mandate, UNIFEM is devoted to supporting innovative and catalytic programmes, and is therefore involved in pilot interventions in various areas globally.

In the handbook *“Gender budgeting: practical implementation”*, Quinn identifies several key foundational elements, or prerequisites, on which GRB work relies. The following were also found as key for this project:

1) UNDERSTANDING GENDER – *“Knowing how gender and gender relations are constructed and perpetuated in society and in the institutions and processes of government, and that a mainstreaming approach is required if we are to redress gender inequality and work toward an equal society is a necessary starting point.”* (p. 11)

2) POLITICAL COMMITMENT – *“Genuine political commitment is demonstrated by political leadership and oversight, which in turn means setting the vision and ensuring the commitment to gender equality stays on the long-term agenda.”* (p. 12)

3) BUREAUCRATIC COMMITMENT – *“Within the structure of government departments and agencies, operational responsibility lies with civil servants at various levels of seniority”. “Commitment and leadership is required to change the perspective [of civil servants] to recognize that gender mainstreaming is in fact core to all activity.”* (p. 13)

4) ESTABLISHING DATA REQUIREMENTS AND SYSTEMS – *“Significant deficiencies in relation to data collection and management continue to hamper gender-sensitive analysis. Even the most straightforward exercise of recording the sex of beneficiaries of government services is, in some instances, not done. This failure is often because the need for sex-disaggregation is not recognized outside national statistics offices.”* (p. 15)

Source: CoE. Quinn, S. 2009. *Gender budgeting: practical implementation handbook*.

In addition, an important condition that UNIFEM identified in the course of the project was the need to have a gender equality policy in the first place. Particularly, working at the local (municipal) level in some cases required developing new policy documents where gender-related requirements and commitments that were specific for local authorities were made.

We should note that we do not consider these as prerequisites for a pilot intervention to be undertaken in the first place. However, we found them to be important requirements that need to be present or need to be established in the process of GRB work, in order to have sustainable and successful interventions. Therefore, the process of identifying entry points described below was intentional in trying to ascertain the extent to which these factors exist or the *likelihood* that they will take hold in a particular unit of intervention based on the current status quo (through for example further advocacy or capacity development). UNIFEM and its partners then worked towards establishing, maintaining or strengthening these conditions as an integral part of the project implementation.

In order to identify the entry points, UNIFEM undertook the following steps:

- Baseline studies were carried out in each country to obtain in-depth understanding of the budgeting systems and ongoing reforms
- Extensive consultations with national stakeholders were pursued in order to assess needs, capacities and interest (initially and throughout the project implementation)
- Based on above, strategic partnerships were identified and established.

The process presented here is not meant to serve as a blueprint for the chronological order or the particular steps that need to be taken when initiating GRB work. The type of information that would need to be collected, the methods for obtaining it, as well as the sequence of steps, will certainly depend on the contextual knowledge and positioning of those wanting to champion GRB. However, we consider the questions listed below as providing good guidance for scanning the environment and identifying where the opportunities and possible constraints for GRB exist.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND ESTABLISHING BASELINES

The baseline studies were carried out by local experts and were prepared on the basis of desk-top reviews and interviews with key stakeholders. They answered the following questions:

In respect of the budget and budgetary processes:

1. Under what budget classification type/s is the budget developed?
2. What are the stages of the budgetary process in terms of timeline, procedures followed, and actors involved?
3. What is the division of responsibilities between local and central levels of government?
4. How many budgets are there (e.g. current, capital, social security)? Are all monies reflected in the budget e.g. is donor money reflected?
5. How many budget-related documents are tabled each year, and what are they?
6. In the process of preparing the budget, what are the opportunities for civil society engagement?
7. What is the engagement of Parliament in reviewing the budget? What is their role in theory and in practice?
8. What budget documents are publicly available and what budget information readily accessible?
9. How willing are public officials to share and discuss details of the budget?

In respect of ongoing reform:

1. What are the *ongoing* and *planned* reforms in the budget field, e.g. fiscal decentralization, public expenditure, strategic planning and budgeting?
2. Who are the proponents of these reforms – government, donors?
3. Which are the institutions most advanced in implementing these reforms? What are the key reasons for their being “reform champions”?





In respect of gender perspective in the budgetary process:

1. What is the level of awareness and expertise on gender issues among stakeholders involved in the budgetary process (in Ministry of Finance and in line ministries)? Are they familiar with GRB and interested to work towards inclusion of gender perspective in their regular work?
2. Are sex-disaggregated data used in the budgetary processes?

In respect of relevant initiatives:

1. Are there any previous or ongoing GRB initiatives that have taken place at national or local level? If yes, who led those and who are the key stakeholders with relevant expertise?
2. Are there any ongoing initiatives related to participatory budgeting and civil society monitoring of the budget? Do these take into account the gender perspective?

What we learned in the process of developing and using the baselines is that:

-  It is important to explore budgetary systems and processes both on paper and in practice, as the two might differ. Civil servants might be unwilling to provide information about such discrepancies, thus creative ways to obtain information need to be found. In this respect, establishing rapport with key stakeholders is key, as well as making it clear what the goals of such information gathering are.
-  It is important to explore who the champions of specific reform processes are – not only those who drive them (which could be donors or particular high-level politicians or institutions), but also those who are most “advanced” and responsible in their implementation (for example, a particular line ministry)
-  Understanding the sub-national context (at regional or municipal level) requires specific attention. Much of the above baseline mapping was focused on the national level, whereas policy-making and budgetary processes at the local level often follow different paths and need to be explored separately. Also, as with the first point, the planned course of fiscal and functional decentralization reflected in government laws and policies often differs from what is happening in reality.
-  One needs to be realistic about the kind of information that a background scan can provide. Depending on the length and scope of the scanning, important questions will likely require more in-depth examination to be fully answered. For example, in this case, questions related to the use of sex-disaggregated data in the budgetary process could only partially be addressed in the background studies, while a more thorough understanding required probing into the practices of specific budget users. Nevertheless, the studies were useful in highlighting the directions that needed to be explored further.

Alongside the baseline studies, UNIFEM consulted with stakeholders from government, civil society, academia and Parliament. This initial mapping of context provided crucial information about the existence (or lack) of some prerequisites for GRB, such as: to what extent does political and bureaucratic commitment towards gender equality exist? How is gender equality understood by key stakeholders? Is the government gender equality policy operationalized through concrete targets and benchmarks to measure progress? The consultations shed light on some of the reasons why preconditions were not in place, or only partially in place. In addition, one of the key findings of the entry point identification process, but also a lesson that has emerged throughout the UNIFEM project, is that gender-responsive budgeting is often misunderstood and needs to be “demystified” before one can really assess stakeholders’ real commitment and interest (see text box).

Commonly-held misconceptions about GRB

The statements below represent simplified versions of what was either explicitly stated or implied during discussions with different stakeholders.

- GRB interventions can be copy pasted – *“Yes, we are committed. Give us the recipe/the methodology and we will do it.”*
- GRB is an end in itself – *“If we put gender in the budget guidelines, we will have done gender-responsive budgeting”*
- GRB is only about separate funds for women – *“So you want us to give more money to the national gender machinery/women’s organizations?” “Why now gender budgeting – we already allocated money for free medical check up for women for breast and uterine cancer?”*
- GRB is a luxury in a country facing pressing economic problems – *“We are dealing with big problems related to unemployment/education/etc. We should prioritize those, and can not work on GRB as the wealthy countries do.”*
- GRB is primarily about economics and requires very specific expertise – *“We do not have capacity to work on GRB; we are not economists.”*
- GRB is the responsibility of the gender machinery (for example the department working on gender in the Ministry of Labour) and women’s non-governmental organizations
- GRB is a panacea for all existing gender issues

What we learned?

- Having a relatively simple message about what GRB is, and illustrating it with concrete examples, helps to avoid misconceptions. However, because GRB is so diverse, it is important to always stress that the examples given do not represent the nature of GRB in its totality.
- Presenting GRB to different stakeholders should be tailored to where they “sit”. Different arguments and examples work better for different groups.
- Language is important. The term ‘gender-responsive budgeting’ could be misleading, especially since it does not translate in a meaningful way in some of the local languages.
- Enough time should be devoted to coming to a common understanding of what is meant by different terms, and what goals we are trying to achieve when embarking on GRB initiatives. Part of this common understanding should be that GRB requires a long-term government commitment to gender equality and often means changing the traditional way in which policies and budgets are done.
- GRB is a process – after identifying the policy entry point, there is often considerable and lengthy capacity development and institutional strengthening required (i.e. improved data collection; establishing the required cross-department/inter-ministerial coordination; improved awareness and skills by policy makers on gender and gender analysis).

Based on the context mapping, which included identification of priority gender equality issues at local or national level (see below section), UNIFEM established strategic partnerships for the pilot GRB initiatives. In the process of establishing partnerships, the following aspects were considered with regards different groups:

GOVERNMENT GENDER EQUALITY MECHANISMS (GEMS):

- ☐ Is there commitment to increase knowledge and engage with mainstream policy and budget making processes that often fall outside of the domain of their traditional work?
- ☐ Is there openness to form partnerships and build bridges with non-traditional partners, who are important for pursuing GRB (for example, budget officials)?
- ☐ Is there a foundation or history within the gender machinery for convening and promoting inter-ministerial/inter-departmental coordination among authorities? How could this foundation be strengthened and systematized?

LINE MINISTRIES/SECTORAL DEPARTMENTS AS WELL AS MUNICIPALITIES:

- ☐ What is the level of political commitment of high-level officials in the particular institution/ municipality to engage in GRB work? To the extent to which this can be assessed, is this commitment genuine?
- ☐ What is the remit of the government departments/institutions *vis-à-vis* priority policies which impact women's lives? What is their budgetary competency in this regards?
- ☐ Is the institution/municipality dealing with issues that are important government priorities (i.e. that involve significant budgetary resources) and are at the same time important from a gender perspective?
- ☐ Are there ongoing reform processes in the institution/municipality (for example, towards program budgeting or participatory budgeting), and if so, are its champions sympathetic to integration of gender aspects into these processes?

MINISTRIES OF FINANCE:

- ☐ Is there an ongoing reform process in relation to performance-based budgeting?
- ☐ Is there understanding at a high political level about the need to integrate a gender perspective into the budgetary process?
- ☐ Is there openness to form partnerships and build bridges with non-traditional partners, who are important for pursuing GRB (for example, the GEMs)?

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOS):

- ☐ Have women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) identified the need to engage in new areas of advocacy, pertaining to good governance, gender mainstreaming and budgeting, to further advance their cause?
- ☐ Are there CSOs engaged in mainstream budget monitoring, costing exercises or other relevant work that are willing to integrate gender aspects in these?
- ☐ What are the key strengths and capacities of these two groups (women's NGOs and relevant mainstream CSOs) and are they interested in cooperating?

LEGISLATORS:

- ☐ What is the budget oversight function of national/local Parliament in practice?
- ☐ Are there institutional mechanisms on gender (for example a committee on gender equality) or individual members of national/local legislature who have the capacity and space to raise

gender-related issues in debates/discussions on the budget?

Are there legislators who are willing to advocate for changes in budget laws so as to integrate gender requirements?

RELEVANT DONORS:

Are the supporters of ongoing broader reform processes sympathetic to integration of gender aspects into them?

Are they willing to back their verbal commitment with concrete actions?

Is there space for UNIFEM and its partners to advocate for GRB with relevant donors at the country level?

Where many of the answers to the above questions are found to be positive, we can consider that some of the requirements for effective GRB work are in place, and therefore entry points in these particular organizations exist for pursuing gender budgeting efforts. Of course, this list is not exhaustive and more questions can be added to understand further the status quo in each of the possible partner institutions. The questions above do not, for example, go into issues around having sex-disaggregated data collection systems or strong bureaucratic commitment. These issues were explored in the beginning of the project only to a limited extent, as we found that they could be objectively assessed only *after* initiating GRB interventions.

As mentioned and as will be seen in the next chapter, a fully-fledged foundation for GRB work did not exist in any of the four countries. For example, where an acceptable level of political commitment existed, other elements were missing. Weak data collection systems for one were found to be a problem hindering all analyses conducted during the project. Often, the pilot interventions included significant amount of effort and time to put in place the important requirements for further GRB work.

What common approaches have been used in the pilot initiatives?

Once entry points and strategic partnerships had been identified, specific GRB interventions were initiated in each of the countries. Each initiative included a variety of steps and activities, and differed in terms of leading institution, scope, focus, and achieved results. The specificities of these will be dealt with in the next chapter. However, there were some commonalities in the approaches taken in all interventions that are presented here.

1. EXTENSIVE AWARENESS RAISING

Considering the novelty of the GRB concept and the fact that “gender” and “budget” were (and still are) rarely used in the same sentence, project partners made significant effort to raise awareness about the basics of GRB among important stakeholders, as well as in some cases, among the wider public. Awareness raising took different forms (see text box for one example). However, we should point out that awareness raising was not an end in itself, but a necessary precondition for rallying political and bureaucratic support for carrying out research and advocating for concrete changes in policies, allocations and processes.



Flyer used in the campaign

A Serbian NGO, Women's Entrepreneurship Academy, together with its partners in local communities incorporated the element of awareness raising and visibility campaigns in GRB initiatives that they piloted. The idea was that the new and often misunderstood concept needed to be presented, promoted and explained not only to the local decision-makers and administrators, but also to the women activists, local media and citizens. It was felt that there was a need to remind politicians about the simple principle of equality in decision making around the distribution of often scarce local resources, but also to acknowledge and showcase women's contributions to the local culture, economy and community life, and demand an inclusive development. The projects were given a visual identity (simple but effective flyers were designed) and press conferences and public meetings with citizens were organized. The latter were held in places frequented by citizens, such as local green

markets and town squares. Local women activists, and later members of the local gender commissions, were mentored to speak in public and to articulate simple and well-argued demands for gender equality in general, and for inclusive policy and budget processes. Inclusion of local activists in this activity had the side-benefit of empowering them and laying the ground for their ongoing activism in this field. Further, a high-profile event to sign agreement of cooperation between the NGO and three municipalities was organized in the provincial capital of Novi Sad. This raised the profile of the initiative among the local bureaucracy and citizens.

TV clips were also produced and aired in local media that interweaved ethnicity and gender. The clips presented gender-sensitive policies and budgets at the local level as a necessary and valuable contribution to the spirit of ethnic diversity and inclusiveness, seen as characteristic for this part of Serbia. This message was implicitly underlined by the fact that the clips were produced in four different languages that are spoken in these communities. The messages and scripts for the clips were prepared by the NGO team together with members of local gender equality commissions. They were delivered by well-known and respected men and women, members of the community. This contributed both to the credibility and authenticity of the campaign.

2. IDENTIFYING THE GENDER GAPS IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AS THE STARTING POINT

Nearly all pilot interventions started with a mapping to determine the priority policy issues for women and gender equality at the local or national level, which can be addressed using GRB methodologies. Gender budget analyses of government programs in specific thematic areas were then conducted. Since this was usually the first time GRB methodological tools were developed and tested in the local context, the *process* of conducting the analyses was as important as the findings. The findings and the process achieved multiple objectives:

- The findings demonstrated the *usefulness* of GRB analysis. For the gender advocates, it equipped them with new evidence and tools for advocacy in areas they considered important. It allowed them to enter key policy and decision-making domains. For the skeptics, the analysis illustrated in concrete terms the differences in needs and outcomes between women and men, and among different categories of women and men, which they might have doubted previously.
- The process showed the *feasibility* of carrying out GRB analysis, despite data availability and accessibility challenges. Even when only basic analysis was possible, it proved to be a worthwhile exercise (see next chapter).
- Analysis was carried out by local stakeholders, who developed *skills and knowledge* on how to elaborate and apply methodologies, and use research findings for advocacy. They also learned how to deal with challenges that hinder the analytical process – for example, related to transparency and access of budget-related information, data incompatibility among different sources, etc.

In order to achieve these objectives, a decision first had to be made as to which thematic areas and programs to analyze in each pilot initiative. The decision was made after considering several

factors, two of which played the most significant role: 1) identification of the key policy areas/issues for women in the community/country, and 2) willingness of relevant government or civil society organizations to engage. Other factors that were considered were the amount of funds allocated for the particular program (with bigger programs deemed as more attractive), and the strategic positioning of the interested partner organizations/individuals with respect influencing policy and budget decisions.

Based on these considerations, the selected thematic areas were as follows: in Albania, social assistance programs; in Bosnia and Herzegovina, agriculture and rural development; in FYR Macedonia, employment, social assistance and education and in Serbia, employment and local economic development. Particular programs within each thematic area were assessed. All of these foci related to “inside” government initiatives, whereas civil society-driven initiatives in FYR Macedonia and BiH analyzed spending related to domestic violence and a policy introduced in the healthcare sector.

A common feature across all analytical exercises was that researchers further developed existing methodologies, tailoring the ones described in the GRB literature to make them applicable in their context. Importantly, all analyses were carried out by local experts, even if in some cases international expertise was provided to support them. To the extent possible, the research was designed in such a way as to produce results that were “usable” for advocacy. In other words, the aim was that the analysis should not only tell us where the gaps were, but what could be possible reasons for these and, based on that, possible solutions. Where this was not achieved, the analysis pointed to where further research was needed.

3. TARGETED CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The project utilized a variety of capacity development strategies for each intervention. What was found to be particularly useful in all was targeted capacity development. This is due to the fact that even in small-scale GRB pilot initiatives, a variety of stakeholders are usually involved. For example, in the case of one intervention in BiH, stakeholders included: the government gender machinery, Ministry of Finance, strategic planning, policy making and budget units in one line ministry, women’s associations, and external researchers. The roles and inputs of the different stakeholders involved typically vary greatly. This demands custom-tailored capacity development, which takes the stakeholders’ regular functions as the cornerstone of any additional skills building, and recognizes opportunities and limitations at the individual, institutional and broader environmental level. The ultimate goal of such approach is that GRB-related knowledge is not considered something external, but something that can, over time, be incorporated in the daily work of the stakeholders. In the case of training, sessions that bring together diverse audiences have the advantage of allowing participants to engage in dialogue on issues that they rarely discuss jointly. They also help participants to better understand each others’ constraints and areas of expertise. However, such sessions need to be complementary to ones that go into in-depth skills-building in the particular area of work relevant to each group.

The training sessions that were delivered in the project therefore differed in content and scope, depending on the audience. For example, some focused on how to develop gender indicators when preparing annual strategic plans linked to the budget; some on how to develop and apply gender

budgeting methodologies, others on how to better perform a budget monitoring and oversight function with a gender lens (in particular when it comes to CSOs and legislators). In addition to training, the pilot initiatives included capacity development through provision of hands-on technical assistance by experts (both international and local with focus on the latter) and exchanges of experiences mostly with other countries in the region, but also with countries in the European Union (EU). Exchanges were realized through bringing stakeholders together during seminars, conferences and events, and through study trips to other countries. Cross-country learning was also achieved by translation of existing materials into local languages and development of new materials on GRB, which contributed to filling the existing information “vacuum”. Capacity development efforts in the project showed that rather than simply including more people, the focus should be firstly, on getting the right people for the right things, and secondly, on pairing individuals possessing different types of expertise to work together.

4. PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

It is often emphasized in the GRB literature that working towards GRB is not possible without establishing broad-based partnerships and bringing together individuals who do not normally sit on the same table. The project confirmed this and revealed both the opportunities and challenges encountered in such partnership building. While the case studies in the second chapter delve further into some of these challenges, here we list what we and our partners found to be important considerations to keep in mind at the start of partnership building on GRB. We should also emphasize that establishing partnerships is a means to an end, and every partner has a particular role to play towards achieving the goals of a GRB intervention. Thus, identifying the right partners should be done in light of these goals, and requires a thought-out process and strong knowledge of institutional and individual positioning and functions (for example, within a single government institution, different departments or people within departments should be engaged (or not) in different ways depending on a range of factors).

Partnership building on GRB – what to watch out for:

- Speaking “different languages” – the project encountered this to be the case between “gender people” and “budget people” in particular. However, this was overcome over time as the two groups learned more about each others’ work and learned to understand the basic jargon related to each, and to avoid over-use of jargon when talking about their own area;
- Resistance to “outsiders” due to fear of criticism – this was particularly the case when external experts or CSOs analyzed government budgets and needed to collect information from and consult with public officials. The project had a range of experiences: from resistance being overcome fully as public officials saw the analysis as beneficial to them as well, to resistance not being overcome due to persistent unwillingness to expose oneself to possible criticism;
- Differences in perception of each others’ roles – where a group sees its role in the GRB process differently from how others see it, mutual mistrust and blockages during the process can occur. It is therefore important to dispel misconceptions about GRB from the start, and to ensure everyone is on the same page with regards their roles and what the joint effort is trying to achieve. A particular understanding of one’s role also has to do with the incentives that one has for getting into the partnership in the first place. Therefore, for those driving or facilitating the partnership building process, it is important to understand the incentives of each stakeholder group.

5. UNDERSTANDING “WHAT IT TAKES”

From the very start of engaging in GRB work in a place where it is unknown or new, GRB champions should be fully aware of the length and complexity of the process. Gender-responsive budgeting cannot be “achieved” in a few years, even at the level of one institution or one program. When basic preconditions are missing, as was the case in many of the interventions pursued in this project, a lot of time is needed to establish them in order to move onto more ambitious tasks. One such task – institutionalization of gender in budgetary processes – takes a long period of time, as can be seen in the experiences of countries who have achieved that. Institutionalization in itself is also just one step in the process and is not a guarantee of real impact on the lives of women and men.

The phenomenon “one step forward, two steps back” that is well known to many GRB practitioners was also experienced in this project. This had to do with challenges common to pursuing gender equality objectives more generally, such as lack of or fickle political will. But it also had to do with broader governance-related challenges. These include: strategic planning and program budgeting still being in rudimentary form; poor coordination between institutions charged to implement laws and policies; lack of transparency and budgeting “behind closed doors”; and obstacles facing CSOs in monitoring government work. Therefore, the understanding that GRB is a long-term process needs to be internalized from the start of any GRB work, and reflected in the goals set for time-bound interventions.

CHAPTER II: IMPLEMENTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE



This chapter describes specific initiatives undertaken by national partners in the four countries, which utilized different GRB tools and approaches. The chapter is divided into four sub-sections: Integration of gender in public finance management reform, Gender and participatory budgeting, GRB at sectoral and program level, GRB initiatives by civil society. Case studies illustrating the different interventions are included in each sub-section. The chapter ends with brief description of UNIFEM plans going forward in the GRB area in each country.

1. INTEGRATION OF GENDER IN PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT REFORM

Over the last decades, there has been a worldwide trend towards greater emphasis on performance and “results orientation” in government budgeting. The budget has been increasingly seen as a *“tool to promote government accountability and effectiveness, rather than simply as a vehicle for allocating resources and controlling expenditures.”*⁵ The region of South Eastern Europe is no exception. In the past few years all four countries have undertaken steps, in some cases more substantial than in others, to replace traditional line-item budgeting with program budgeting, and to introduce longer-term, three- or four-year strategic planning and budgeting frameworks. The pace of change among countries differs, as well as the way program budgeting has been defined and practiced. However, all countries have recognized that this represents a major transformation in the work of public administrations and in the mindsets of civil servants. Therefore, they have taken a phased approach, with the new medium-term budget planning and program budget formats being introduced at first in a few pilot institutions, and then expected to be rolled out to more and eventually to all budget users.

Main characteristic of program budgeting, as one of the forms of performance-based budgeting, is the link between strategic policy priorities with their corresponding objectives and results, and the budgets that should translate them into action. The focus is not primarily on inputs (money), as is the case with more traditional forms of budgeting, but it is rather on activities, outputs (government’s services and products) and on outcomes (the intended effects of policy measures and instruments). As Klatzer notes, in general terms:

*“...there seems to be a direct and logical link between PBB [performance-based budgeting] and Gender Budgeting as both focus on results and a broader cycle of policy planning, implementation and evaluation. Enhanced accountability is an issue for both approaches. Equally, better governance structures, transparency, enhanced participation and democracy are elements in both.”*⁶

Despite a number of challenges in linking PBB and GRB in practice identified by Klatzer and other experts,⁷ UNIFEM saw that the reforms momentum presents an opportunity that should be utilized. We identified this momentum as strongest in Bosnia and Herzegovina where, as a result, the most favorable conditions were in place to seek to place gender into the public finance reform agenda.

⁵ Klatzer, E. 2008. *The integration of Gender Budgeting in Performance-Based Budgeting*. Paper presented at the conference Public Budgeting Responsible To Gender Equality June 9-10, 2008, Bilbao. Retrieved June 2010 from http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=doc_details&gid=930&Itemid=189

⁶ Ibid., p.6

⁷ See for example Sharp, R. 2003. *Budgeting for equity. Gender budget initiatives within a framework of performance oriented budgeting*. UNIFEM

CASE STUDY 1 – Integrating gender into public finance reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background

In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are several levels of political and administrative structures, as specified in the 1995 Dayton Agreement. The country consists of a state (national) level, two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS) – and the Brčko District, created in 1999 following international arbitration. In the last few years, there has been a significant shift in competencies to the state level, away from the level of entities. Entities and their cantons and municipalities, however, still have numerous competencies, from education to health to social policy. The country's complex governing system is illustrated by the fact that it has 13 Constitutions and 14 Ministries of Finance.

Ongoing reforms in BiH presented an opportunity for inclusion of a gender perspective in budgetary frameworks and processes. The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) is a key donor supporting budget reforms in the framework of several phases of a project "*Strengthening Public Finance Expenditure Management*" (SPEM). The first SPEM project (from 2001-2004) was instrumental in laying the foundations for the development of a medium-term expenditure framework, which was embodied in a Budget Framework Paper (BFP) at the entity level. The SPEM II project which followed (2004-2008) successfully expanded the preparation of BFPs to all 14 levels of Government, supporting Ministries of Finance (MoFs) in particular. From 2006, all government institutions in BiH were obliged to prepare their budgets according to a program budget classification, thus introducing a new approach to planning and drafting of the budget, where it is prepared on the basis of planned results, i.e. goals of the particular institution. These reforms enabled UNIFEM and its partners to promote and lobby for inclusion of gender in the new budgetary practices.

What was done?

In 2008, UNIFEM developed a basis for strong cooperation with the SPEM project. Numerous consultations took place in order to identify ways of enhancing the links between the work on GRB and the broader public finance reforms. As a result, in 2008-2010, UNIFEM formed partnerships with the gender mechanisms, MoFs and several line ministries at entity level who were eager to link program and gender budgeting to address the needs of different population groups. In 2009, Gender Centers in RS and FBiH undertook gender budget analyses in the sector of rural development and agriculture (see case study below). During the initial phase of the analyses, national partners recognized that introducing gender perspective in the work of the ministries responsible for rural development can be best achieved through broader changes in the budget instructions and forms. Advocacy for changes in concrete programs and allocations needed to go hand in hand with work towards such systemic-level reforms.

Based on the process and findings from the analyses, UNIFEM and SPEM have worked in cooperation with national partners on amending the standard budget templates to facilitate a more gender-responsive approach. This has been done using the "10 steps" medium-term budget planning and preparation framework which has been harmonized across the 14 government levels, through SPEM.

Continuous advocacy from both government and CSO gender advocates led to the achievement of several results:

- 1) Budget Instructions no. 1 for 2011-2012, in which budget users set out their initial budget estimates and proposals for new spending, was modified to require from users to undertake gender analysis to demonstrate the impact of any new spending on women and man (submitted in their Budget User Priority Tables).
- 2) A section on GRB is currently being drafted by the state Gender Agency and two entity Gender Centers to be included in the BFP for 2011-2013. This would be the first time gender will be mentioned in the medium-term expenditure framework, and is demonstration of a commitment by the government to consider gender issues in the process of longer-term economic planning.
- 3) A detailed GRB Action Plan for 2010-2013 has been drafted in the FBiH by a Working Group on GRB, and was adopted by the FBiH Parliament in early June 2010. The Plan includes six main goals and 24 activities and measures to incorporate gender perspective in the budgets over the next three years in the entity. The activities in the first two years focus on incorporation of GRB tools in the budget of line ministries responsible for implementation of rural development strategy, whereas the activities in the third year are designed to enable roll out of the GRB practice in all institutions at the FBiH level.

Training and assistance in respect of the gender aspects of budgeting were provided for both MoFs and budget users by local and international consultants within the UNIFEM and the DFID-funded project. The training emphasized:

- the need to consider the gender needs and priorities that are provided annually to all budget users by the Gender Agency and Gender Centers;
- that sex-disaggregated statistics released by the statistical institutes should be examined when developing policy priorities, and gender-related performance indicators used for each specific sector;
- that existing and new policies and programs should be examined to identify gender aspects.

Key lessons learned

Implementation of program budgeting and GRB are complex and lengthy processes in most countries where they have been initiated, and BiH is no exception. Besides a number of technical prerequisites, these new forms of budgeting require a different way of thinking about budgets, amongst the staff of MoFs and Treasury, but also amongst the managerial and operational staff of line ministries. The current reform environment in BiH offers opportunities for linking the two processes. Joint donor and national partners' efforts and initiatives have managed to raise the profile of GRB as a tool for more efficient and more equitable policy and budget making. However, the process is still in its early stages and many challenges and capacity gaps remain to be addressed to ensure that program budgeting is practiced in way that addresses the needs of both women and men, and fits the complex BiH governance structure.

2. GENDER AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

“Participatory budgeting (PB) is the process by which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources (International Budget Project, 2008). PB is prescribed by formal regulation that entrust a given local community the right to decide how to allocate a percentage or the totality of the local budget. It is increasingly recognized as an effective mechanism to strengthen citizens’ voice in decentralized systems, but also to secure good governance through more equitable public spending and greater transparency and accountability....

It is also largely recognized that “participatory budget initiatives do not, unaided, guarantee that gender concerns will be incorporated in local planning and budgeting processes.” This occurs for various reasons - such as traditionally assigned gender roles, power dynamics and lack of time, lack of access to information and lack of capacity - which may preclude or significantly restrain women’s ability to influence PB processes as compared to their male counterparts. If women are not effectively participating at the planning stage, and actively voicing their needs and priorities, then these needs are even more likely to be ignored at the budget allocation stage. GRB practitioners warn that participatory budgeting carried out without taking gender differences into account and trying to address them can produce or perpetuate inequities between men and women. The same applies when no specific measures are taken to facilitate women’s organized and substantive participation in budget discussions such as timely invitation to meetings, schedules that take into consideration women’s reproductive roles, transportation to meeting venues, preparatory meetings and so forth. Since women do not constitute a homogenous group, further efforts may be needed in some cases to ensure that the needs of women from different class, race, economic groups etc. are taken into account.”

Source: UNIFEM. Forthcoming. Resource-kit for local planning and budgeting with a gender lens. p. 28-29

As described in the text box, participatory budgeting can provide entry points for gender-responsive budgeting at the local level. The baseline assessments and consultations done in the first stage of the GRB project identified Albania as a country where participatory budgeting was being undertaken by some municipalities, and where interest existed in securing a more inclusive participatory process for women.

CASE STUDY 2 – Strengthening women’s participation in the participatory budget process of Municipality of Elbasan, Albania

Background

The Municipality of Elbasan in central Albania is one of the few municipalities in the country to carry out participatory budgeting (PB). The way the PB process works is that every year the municipality commits to allocating approximately 30% of its locally raised revenue towards projects identified by citizens living in the municipality. In organized town hall meetings, citizens brainstorm on priorities of their neighborhood that fit into the budgetary competencies of the municipality and can therefore

be funded from the local budget. These competencies include cleaning of roads, investments in local schools and hospitals, investments in green areas in the city, as well as improvements of the water system, the waste management and cleaning the city, to name a few.

On average, the PB process lasts for approximately two to three months and is managed by municipal employees. The city is divided into 23 neighborhoods in which all citizens are invited to participate in town hall meetings where the discussions take place. A list of projects proposed by the citizens to be funded is drawn up. In each meeting, the citizens elect one person to represent them in an *ad hoc* “central commission”. The role of the commission is to review all projects proposed by the citizens, and select several (on the basis of predefined criteria) which are then submitted to the City Council for final approval. The City Council normally approves the submitted projects without further changes. Once projects are approved, implementation begins under the lead of local authorities. The municipality monitors the process in an attempt to record all changes in order to show in the next year’s citizen consultations what was achieved through the PB process.

What was done?

The municipality was interested to learn whether and how the PB process was engaging women’s voices and tackling women’s needs. As such, in 2007, UNIFEM established cooperation with the municipality to assess the ongoing participatory budgeting process and determine whether and how women were involved in the different steps described above.

Through a peer-mentoring process, UNIFEM partnered a national expert with a locally-based NGO to observe 10 of the neighborhood meetings of the 2007 PB process. The neighborhoods to be monitored were selected in a way that ensured a mix of city-based and more rural-based neighborhoods and varying levels of socio-economic development (i.e. areas where tourism has opportunity to grow, areas where Roma community are concentrated, etc). The NGO and expert monitored the meetings to see how many women participated, and how active they were in the discussions, how/if the content of their inputs differed from that of men; and how/if the municipality was proposing to capture these voices. The text box below summarizes the way monitoring was done and its findings.

WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN 2007 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS IN ELBASAN MUNICIPALITY

The monitoring showed that in general the number of women participating in the town hall meetings was smaller than that of men. Thus, approximately 32% of all participants in the ten meetings monitored were women. The time of the town hall meetings (5:30pm) may have accounted for this low turnout, as the power went off during most of these times and the roads were very dark. Further, many women would at this time of the day be busy with their household responsibilities and with the provision of care for children.

Interestingly, the average age of the women participating was roughly between 40 to 55 years old. This may be an indication that women of this age group have more freedom of movement, having fewer household duties and being less likely to have young children. Further, these somewhat older women might have developed an interest in civic engagement over the years. More generally, the unbalanced representation of women and men confirmed

a situation where men tend to represent the family in public and on decision-making issues; lack of freedom of movement on the part of the younger women, because of their household duties; and overall lack of understanding on the part of women on what role they can and should play in influencing local policy and budgets.

When comparing the quantitative participation of women in the town hall meetings to their “qualitative participation”, the gaps between women and men were even more striking. For example, of the 200 women who attended the 10 meetings monitored, only 30 were active participants out of a total of 635 participants. In some meetings, women were sitting together on one side of the room and men were sitting on the other side, and the facilitator of the meeting focused attention on the active group of men, without encouraging women to express their views. Some of women participants did not stay until the end of the meeting to see the results of voting. When they did speak out, the priorities that women expressed were somewhat different from those of men, and reflected their role within the family and community. Typical priorities put forward by women were improving the heating system in the school, better education and playground facilities for children, increased/improved street cleaning, and allocation of social services for women in need, children and the elderly.

To address the gender imbalance exposed by the research, with UNIFEM support, in 2009 a strategy was piloted in Elbasan municipality aimed at increasing women’s quantitative and qualitative participation in the PB process. The strategy included:

- A media campaign on the PB process, in which the municipality stressed the importance of equal participation of women and men of all adult ages. Through the local TV, newspapers, posters, and flyers the municipality not only informed citizens about town hall meetings but at the same time raised awareness about the process and the importance of participation.
- UNIFEM and the municipality supported a local NGO to raise awareness among local women about the PB process, its impact on their lives, the importance of their involvement, and how they can participate. Information was delivered through fliers that the NGO distributed in the places where women usually go such as day care centers, schools, parks, as well as door-to-door in almost all neighborhoods. TV advertisements were broadcasted. The NGO also organized meetings with women before the town hall meetings where it explained the municipal competencies and women discussed the issues they wanted to raise. Within these pre-meetings, the women identified representatives from the group to attend the neighborhood town hall meeting and voice their concerns.
- Training sessions were organized for the town hall facilitators, who were municipal employees, on how to encourage women’s more active participation in meetings. The training aimed to develop general facilitations skills which would allow the facilitators to elicit better feedback from the audience, with specific focus on increasing the participation of women, but also of other less represented or marginalized groups. Special focus was also placed on how to promote more equal participation of women and men in the *ad hoc* central commission.

As a result of the above, in 2009 approximately 30% to 50% of participants in the town hall discussions were women, compared to previous years where 10% to 30% of participants were women. Moreover, the central commission appointed by citizens to make the final decision on projects to be financed from the municipal budget witnessed a marked increase in women’s participation. In 2008, out of the 22 members, only three were women. In 2009, 11 women were elected to represent their

communities' needs out of a total of 23 community representatives. At the time of writing the full neighborhood projects for 2010 are still being developed, and the contrasts between some of the priorities articulated by women and men participating in the town hall meetings are clear. For example, many men stressed the importance of improving roads and street lights going towards recreational areas of the municipality (such as the football stadium), and moving the main garbage bins in town away from the centre and closer to home (as men are often responsible for the task of taking out the garbage). In contrast, women stressed the need to have proper heating systems in the schools, building ramps in the schools so that the entrances are more baby-carriage friendly, and keeping garbage bins well away from the residences, so as to be more sanitary and environmentally friendly.

3. GRB AT SECTORAL AND PROGRAM LEVEL

The case studies presented in this section describe experiences in analyzing specific programs in different sectors and at different levels of government – local, regional and central. These analyses and the learning, capacity development and advocacy related to them have been at the crux of most of the pilot interventions implemented. They have produced a wealth of information about the degree to which gender equality objectives are set and then achieved within particular programs, which target groups are being reached, how programs can be changed to become more fair and inclusive in their articulation and implementation, and what additional data are needed to have more thorough analysis that can inform policy making. This information has been used to advocate for changes in specific policies, programs, actions and allocations, but also to illustrate the usefulness of GRB methods more broadly and to expand to other sectors and departments. Also, efforts have been made or are ongoing and planned to communicate the findings to higher levels of government and to work on systems and processes (for example, related to addressing data deficiencies or integrating gender as a requirement in budget submissions) in order to start effecting change at a systemic level.

CASE STUDY 3 – Implementing gender-responsive budgeting at the regional level in Serbia: the case of Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality of Vojvodina

Background

The Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality (PSLEGE) is a governmental body in Serbia's Autonomous Province (AP) of Vojvodina established in 2002. Its activities focus on monitoring and improving conditions in the fields of labor, employment and gender equality. Specific responsibilities in the field of employment include: proposing and implementing active employment policy measures carried out on the territory of the AP Vojvodina; employment-related data collection and analysis; monitoring of all processes related to labor and employment in the territory of the province; outlining recommendations and proposing measures in this field; and implementing and improving employment and self-employment programs. In the area of gender equality, PSLEGE work is focused on: promotion of the concept of gender equality; cooperation with all relevant institutions and governmental and non-governmental organizations in achieving equal opportunities; and supporting the establishment of gender equality mechanisms on the local level.

A strong institutional framework for gender equality has been developed in the province. In particular, in 2005 the provincial parliament passed a Decision on Gender Equality⁸ which set the ground for establishing PSLEGE as the gender equality mechanism more firmly and gave the provincial government a mandate to pursue equal opportunity policies and positive measures in the field of employment. In 2008, building on this framework and the implied political will, PSLEGE started working on gender-responsive budgeting in order to advance gender mainstreaming in Vojvodina.

What was done?

The first UNIFEM-supported pilot initiative was implemented from April 2008 to June 2009. The PSLEGE team that led the initiative consisted of three civil servants, who wanted to build their own capacities for performing gender analysis and leading gender mainstreaming efforts. Their long-term goal was to facilitate the integration of a gender perspective in the budget of Vojvodina province, so as to reduce existing inequalities between men and women and advance gender equality. Towards this goal, they also wanted to raise awareness among decision-makers about gender-responsive program design and budgeting.

The focus of the first pilot initiative was on conducting gender budget analysis of programs that fall within the thematic portfolio of PSLEGE itself. Seven employment-related programs were selected for analysis, all of which were funded from the provincial budget and from privatization funds and were administered by PSLEGE and several other provincial institutions. The programs focused on the encouragement of employment and self-employment. Among their target groups were both the general population (for example, youth and Roma) and women as a specific group.

Methodology development was the first step in the process. The PSLEGE team developed methodology for the analysis with the support of a Swedish expert. They adapted the “4R methodology” used in Sweden to analyze government programs from a gender equality perspective⁹ and reformulated some of the tools to be more responsive to the specific local context. Data collection spanned both administrative data from the institutions administering the programs¹⁰ and qualitative data on beneficiaries’ use and satisfaction of the programs, collected through focus groups. Representatives of the implementing institutions were involved throughout the course of the analysis, and provided feedback on the draft findings. In this way, buy-in from the institutions to the analysis results and recommendations was sought and to a great extent achieved.

The analysis generated knowledge both on how to improve the specific programs that were examined, and more generally on the need for gender mainstreaming in the work of the provincial administration as a whole. Two sets of recommendations were consequently produced. The first one focused on integrating gender in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of individual programs so that delivery to beneficiaries could be more effective and responsive to their needs. The focus group findings were particularly useful in this respect. These recommendations

⁸ A decision constitutes the highest-level legal document that a provincial assembly can pass.

⁹ JämStöd. 2007. *Gender Mainstreaming Manual: A book of practical methods from the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee*. Retrieved June 2010 from <http://www.ann-boman.se/eng/verksamhet/Engelsk%20metodbok.pdf>

¹⁰ The collected data included the exact texts of open call announcements for programs analyzed, information on number of applicants by sex, number of approved and rejected applications by sex, information on planned funds for each program and funds spent, as well as amount of funds approved by sex, and in the case of ICT trainings information on employment status of training participants 6 months upon completion of trainings and breakdown of spending by type of training and sex.

were considered by the responsible institutions, but challenges were experienced in implementing them due to program and budget cuts. The second set of recommendations was more general and addressed the need for consistent and systematic gender mainstreaming of all programs and policies implemented by provincial bodies and institutions. The findings and recommendations of the PSLEGE analysis¹¹ were collated in an official report that was submitted to the Executive Council of Vojvodina for consideration and were subsequently adopted as Council Conclusions in August 2009. The Conclusions are:

1. *Provincial bodies shall undertake activities to integrate gender equality into all their strategies, programs, projects and other activities they are implementing.*
2. *Provincial bodies shall keep sex-disaggregated data on their program beneficiaries.*
3. *The Provincial Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality shall, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia which guarantees gender equality and the development of equal opportunity policy, as well as with the Decision on Gender Equality and the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Women and Advancement of Gender Equality, develop a strategy on gender mainstreaming of all activities of provincial bodies, in order for this approach to become a regular practice of provincial bodies, and shall ensure all necessary expert assistance and support to other provincial bodies.*

Further, as a result of awareness raising efforts in the project, the Provincial Secretariat for Finance included the following instruction in the Budget Call Circular for 2009: “Should it be considered of significance, the justification in submitted requests for funding may state the gender aspect (of the activity)”. Even though the justification of budget requests from a gender perspective is optional, this is an initial step towards a stricter requirement, and demonstrates willingness on the part of the Secretariat for Finance to consider gender equality when reviewing provincial bodies’ budget submissions.

Overall, this pilot initiative sought to balance capacity development and analysis with outreach and basic awareness raising for key decision makers in the provincial parliament and government (both politicians and professional civil servants). It provided the foundation for advancing GRB work in the province, so as to include both expansion into other sectors and further work with the Secretariat for Finance. It also provided the foundation for the development of an overarching gender mainstreaming strategy.

Key lessons learned and challenges

- Due to measures taken by the Serbian government in response to the international economic crisis, some of the programs analyzed were discontinued, thus preventing implementation of the specific recommendations.
- While the positive response of the Provincial Secretariat for Finance and other institutions is encouraging, there is still lack of capacity within the provincial administration to plan, design and implement gender mainstreamed policies, on the one hand, and on the other – relatively weak commitment at the most senior level to push for them. To ensure stronger case for implementing potential recommended changes, as well as their long-term sustainability, involvement of senior officials should be sought from the beginning.

¹¹ For complete analysis see: PSLEGE. 2009. *Towards Gender Budgeting in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*. Retrieved June 2010 from http://gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=174&Itemid=189

- Despite the above, pilot internal sectoral and program-level analyses and targeted capacity development of portfolio staff provide concrete, tangible results and benefits that can be used to advocate for more overarching gender mainstreaming. Also, new institutions and their staff are motivated to be included in further work when they see what their peers have done.
- Reforms in public finances are ongoing but slow-paced, and may boil down to only minor changes to the line-item budget model, thus making the integration of a gender perspective more challenging. However, involving the Secretariat for Finance in sectoral work has potential benefits, as the usefulness of GRB as an instrument can be demonstrated on concrete examples rooted in local context.
- In addition to best practices from EU member states with advanced gender equality policies, examples from the region are useful in demonstrating that the applicability of new tools is not limited to “highly developed” countries.

CASE STUDY 4 – Gender-responsive budgeting at central level in FYR Macedonia: pilot initiative within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Background

In FYR Macedonia, national commitments towards gender equality are laid down in the Law on Equal Opportunities (EO) adopted in 2006, and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012. The Plan stipulates the “*inclusion of methods of gender budgeting at national and local level*” as a cross-sectoral approach to be pursued in all of its ten strategic areas of action.¹² The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) is the key institution responsible for the implementation of government policies in the field of employment, social protection and equal opportunities. The Ministry has specific responsibilities stipulated in the Law on EO of promoting the equal status of women and men in all areas of society and gender mainstreaming in government policies, programs and strategies. Charged with coordinating activities in this field is the Department for Equal Opportunities (DEO), situated in the MLSP.

What was done?

In 2008 the DEO expressed interest in undertaking analysis and capacity development around gender-responsive budgeting within its own Ministry. Staff of the DEO wanted to expand their knowledge on GRB, and to capitalize on ongoing reforms within the MLSP to move from line-item to program budgeting and to carry out long-term strategic planning. These changes have been part of a broader reform process taking place in the country since 2003.

In 2009 UNIFEM supported the DEO to carry out the first sectoral government-led pilot initiative on GRB. The DEO identified key interventions that were needed considering the novelty of the concept: establishing a GRB task group and developing its capacities, raising awareness of the gender equality coordinators (focal points in the line ministries) on the need to introduce GRB; developing methodology and conducting analysis of selected MLSP programs; and developing advocacy

¹² National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012. Retrieved June 2010 from <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/NPARR-finalen%20dokument.pdf>

strategy for more sustainable integration of gender into policy making and budgetary processes. One of the long-term goals was to enhance the budget call circular by including specific gender-related requirements for budget users in it.

A GRB task group was established consisting of government employees from MLSP and Ministry of Finance as well as independent experts. The group underwent several training sessions, aimed at familiarizing them with GRB concepts and analytical tools and developing their skills to create and apply methodologies for gender budget analysis of specific government programs. The task group and the DEO selected six MLSP programs to be analyzed: two cash assistance policies from the social protection portfolio of the MLSP and four active labor market measures and their budgets. These programs had been introduced to address high unemployment rate in the country and dependence on social assistance. They were seen as particularly relevant from a gender perspective given the high level of economic inactivity among women¹³ and the persistently high overall unemployment rates since transition. The analysis aimed at assessing the extent to which these policies and measures contributed towards improving the condition of women.

The methodology was developed by four local external experts, members of the GRB task group, in collaboration with MLSP staff, and with technical support of an Austrian expert. The methodology utilized some of the well-known GRB tools developed by Diane Elson (gender aware policy appraisal and sex-disaggregated incidence analysis)¹⁴ which were seen as at least partially applicable considering available data. On the basis of these tools, the experts developed a detailed methodological guide, specifying concrete steps and questions that needed to be answered to carry out the analysis.

The analytical process proved the importance of working jointly with Ministry staff responsible for implementation of the programs. The involvement of staff from the departments for social protection, employment, and budget and finance was crucial for obtaining needed data. However, sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries of some of the programs were not available, which posed serious hindrance to the scope and depth of the analysis. Nevertheless, the exposed data gaps triggered the MLSP to undertake some steps and the MLSP software for data collection was upgraded by introducing the sex variable alongside others such as age and ethnicity.

Despite the data challenges, the analysis produced important findings and recommendations. These include recommendations related to: the need to devise measures that target the inactive population (where women are majority), and not only those that are registered as unemployed; the need to strengthen the participation of women in trainings that actually lead to jobs; the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the different programs using gender indicators, etc.¹⁵

The exercise of conducting the analysis, combined with the training for the task group, generated knowledge among MLSP employees on how to consider gender in the process of developing

¹³ Around 65 % of women are economically inactive, i.e. they are in working age, but are jobless and are not searching for employment. State Statistical Office. *Labor force and activity rates in 2009*. News Release, n.2.1.10.07, 19 March 2010. Retrieved from www.stat.gov.mk.

¹⁴ Commonwealth Secretariat. 1999. *Gender Budget Initiative: A Commonwealth Initiative to Integrate Gender into National Budgetary Processes*.

¹⁵ For complete analysis see: MLSP. 2010. *Gender Budget Analysis of Social Protection and Active Employment Policies in the Republic of Macedonia*. Retrieved June 2010 from <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Rodova%20Analiza%20ANGLISKI%2001%20MART%202010.pdf>

programs and budgets and how to assess their impact on men and women. The DEO also undertook efforts to raise awareness among higher-level government officials and Members of Parliament about GRB as an important tool for improved governance and gender equality. A round table and a regional conference were organized where the research findings were presented, opportunities and challenges for making budgets more gender-responsive were discussed, as well as needed further steps. At the time of writing, the MLSP was preparing an official communication to the government, which contains key findings and recommendations from the analysis and proposals on how process towards GRB can be advanced beyond the program analysis level.

Key lessons learned and challenges

It is important to involve the Ministry of Finance in initiatives at the sectoral/program level, even if their role, as was in this case, is to act more as an observer or advisor with regards the budget process. Such involvement helps MoF officials to understand the logic and usefulness of GRB as an instrument for more effective and equitable public spending, and recognize the way in which it links to broader public finance reform processes. The project partners found that this takes time, not only due to the novelty of the concepts. Senior officials often have limited time to participate in capacity development activities and can see GRB as an additional requirement to their extensive workloads. Therefore, advocating with MoF for inclusion of gender in the budgetary process has been done using different strategies:

- providing concrete examples based on rigorous analysis to illustrate how gender budget methods can work in practice and what are the benefits they bring;
- presenting examples from other countries in the region that have taken initial steps towards GRB and are undergoing similar reform processes, and in which the MoF has become engaged;
- exchange of experiences with EU member states that can provide models on how they have implemented and institutionalized gender-responsive budgeting.

This initiative showed inadequate capacities of relevant departments in line ministries to conduct substantive policy analysis and to mainstream gender in their planning and budgeting work. Although the gender equality mechanism can initiate, drive and advise on a GRB analytical process, unless government representatives involved in policy and budget making clearly see its value and their role in taking it forward, externally-supported analysis risks remaining a one-off activity. To address this, UNIFEM ongoing and planned support is aimed at: securing higher level political commitment for GRB in the MLSP, other line ministries, and the MoF, equipping the gender mechanism with the tools to advocate for GRB with other government units, and trying to develop further administrative capacities to understand and respond to gender gap as part of civil servants' everyday tasks.

CASE STUDY 5 – Caught between political and administrative decentralization - Influencing core policies for women at the local level in Albania

Background

Since 2000, the Government of Albania has taken a phased approach towards decentralization. Government divisions (regional and local) were established which have some control over infrastructure, particularly in the areas of water, education and health. The policies addressing

health, education and public transport – to name a few areas – remain the remit of the Central Government, which delegates funds to branches at the local level and to the local authorities, which in turn implement the laws and funds. To date, the full transfer of authority has not been completed, and the division of competencies between central and local authorities remains unclear in some areas of policy implementation. A new decentralization strategy was elaborated in 2008, the aim of which is to review territorial division, financing and competencies at the regional level; develop integrated financial framework for local government and clarify the shared functions between local authorities and line ministries; and develop and implement standards for local services.

What was done?

In 2008, UNIFEM began work on GRB in four pilot municipalities, carrying out initial mapping of the situation of women, their key needs and priorities, with special focus on unpaid care work in the household. Partnerships were established with local authorities and grassroots NGOs and consultations carried out as to what were the most important issues facing women at the local level. This process revealed that women's unequal access to social services – including social assistance for poor women and their families – was a priority, particularly in the poorer regions of the country.

The Law on Social Services and Social Assistance is the remit of the Central government, with municipalities having only limited administrative and fiscal responsibilities in its application. According to the Law, eligibility for the main poverty-related cash transfers (in Albania, called “economic aid” (EA)) is defined as follows: full economic aid is paid to families when their working age members (a) are not economically active (b) are not part of a social assistance scheme (c) do not have property (d) have not migrated for reasons other than study or medical treatment. Partial EA is given when the household has some income from land, livestock, pension or other income. Partial EA is more common in rural than urban areas, despite the fact that poverty levels are worse in the rural areas. The “head of household” is responsible for applying on behalf of the household.

Several local authorities in Albania expressed interest in integrating gender equality into the application of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance in their municipalities, and were also interested more generally in capturing their experience of delivering social assistance to beneficiaries. Many local government partners felt that the decentralization process had stalled, and that the local level – which was experiencing firsthand the shortfalls of key social assistance policies – had something to say to the national level, based on their direct contact with citizens. The analysis that was initiated therefore served to assess how central government policies work on the ground through case studies in two municipalities. In so doing, it also provided a channel to raise the voices and concerns of local authorities to central authorities.

UNIFEM supported local authorities in two municipalities, Elbasan and Kukes, to conduct beneficiary analysis of the Law and, as part of this, the procedures for implementation, using aspects of the Swedish 4R method.¹⁶ The latter involves the following elements: a) Representation – a quantitative mapping of the way in which men and women are represented; b) Resources – a quantitative mapping of the way in which resources are distributed and utilized; c) “Realia” - looking at the reasons for the distribution of representation and resources from a gender perspective; and d) Realisation – formulating new objectives and measures. The method (also referred to in above case study) was adapted for the purposes of this analysis. The research included the following techniques: desk-top

¹⁶ JämStöd. 2007. *Gender Mainstreaming Manual: A book of practical methods from the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee*

review of relevant laws and policies; interviews with national and local authorities on EA process; focus group discussions with beneficiaries receiving EA (women heads of households and women members of household); review of EA case files (within the parameters allowed by local and national authorities); analysis of the monitoring and evaluation systems of the current Law and national strategies; survey of 120 households (487 individuals) receiving EA to assess their experiences, conducted by local NGO with assistance from a national expert. The analysis was carried out in Elbasan and Kukes Municipalities by local experts and civil society organization, in close cooperation with the local authorities.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE ANALYSIS:

- De facto, the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance assumes that the head of household is a man. Unlike their male counterparts, if women apply as heads of household, they must first prove that they occupy this status with specific documentation. Interviewed women reported great difficulty in obtaining the documents to prove they are heads of households, more so compared to men.
- Only certain categories of women qualify as head of households. Women whose husbands are living abroad, but who do not send remittances, women who have left their husbands, but have not been formally granted a divorce, do not qualify as heads of household and are not eligible for EA.
- In Kukes municipality, the research found only two beneficiary households headed by divorced women and 130 headed by widowed women, with 93% of heads of beneficiaries households being men. In Elbasan, the male percentage was 85% while in addition to divorced and widowed heads there were also other categories of female heads who received grants. This difference occurred because in 2008 Elbasan municipality decided to allocate some funds from its own budget for categories not covered by the law.
- In both municipalities, the main concern of women focus group participants was the small amount of the grant. They reported that they had no choice but to spend all the money on food and medicine. Some reported that they could not even afford to pay for electricity, in which cases it was cut off because of non-payment. They also could not afford to pay for health insurance and childcare services.
- There was a clear difference in spending patterns between families with male and female heads. For example, male-headed households were more likely than women to spend money on cell phones and coffee and bars, leaving less money for essentials. Women-headed households were more likely to buy food and essentials.
- Both women and men heads of household did not fully understand how the economic aid system worked. They did not know how long it would take from when they applied to when they received money, how long they could continue to receive aid, and how the amount was calculated.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The primary recommendation of the analysis was that a head-of-household approach enshrines an inherent gender *bias*. The Law should instead target individuals, and within this, their dependents. However, until this significant shift in thinking towards social protection is effected, the recommendations focused on the need to expand the categories of female-headed households who are eligible for EA. Specific groups of women were suggested to be included.
- The law should also allow alternative documents for these categories of women.
- The amount of EA should be increased so that it can lift families out of poverty. The maximum limit should be removed as it discriminates against big families which often have more children.
- The national government should allocate the full amount needed to cover all the beneficiaries identified by communes and municipalities.



Economic Aid scheme drawn by participants during a training session. The dots show points in the process where participants thought that gender inequality could occur.

Through meetings between the central government and local authorities, and through UNIFEM advocacy, the recommendations were formally presented to the Ministry of Labour, Social Assistance and Equal Opportunity (MOLSAEO), as the institution with overall responsibility for the Law. This process was timely in that it coincided with the national elections of June 2009, at which time the ruling party expressed a commitment to amend the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance so as to ensure those in greatest need were effectively being reached.

Following the presentation of findings, UNIFEM cooperated with MOLSAEO in integrating key recommendations into the revised Law. UNIFEM's advocacy efforts focused on expanding the categories of "female-headed households" eligible for economic aid to include: victims of domestic violence; women who are separated from their husbands (there is no legal separation in Albania); elderly women who are abandoned; and trafficked women. The revised draft also included special exemptions and provisions for female-headed households. At the time of writing the revised draft Law is undergoing preparations to be sent to Parliament for approval. UNIFEM recommendations also focused on the secondary legislation such as regulations, and further work will be done in this area after adoption of the revisions to the draft Law.

CASE STUDY 6 – Analyzing education and social services programs from gender perspective in the Municipalities of Bitola and Tetovo in FYR Macedonia

Background

In FYR Macedonia, a complex and major reform process towards decentralization was officially launched in July 2005, following the 2001 Ohrid Agreement which included “Development of Decentralized Government” as one of its basic principles. Fiscal decentralization has been carried out in two phases. To enter the second phase, municipalities need to meet certain conditions mostly related to quality and capacity to manage financial resources. All municipalities are expected to enter the second phase in 2009 or 2010. The trend towards decentralization means that municipalities have more responsibilities to plan and implement policies that impact citizens in a greater number of areas – from social services and education to urban planning and communal affairs.

The Law on Equal Opportunities adopted in 2006 mandates the units of local self government to establish a Commission on Equal Opportunities as a regular body and to appoint a local government official to serve as Coordinator for EO. The bodies and the institutions of the local government, *“when adopting the development plans and other acts and decisions, are required to go over and take into consideration the proposed measures and activities by the Commission...and the coordinator...”*¹⁷

What was done?

In 2009-2010, UNIFEM supported two municipalities – Tetovo and Bitola – to undertake initial steps towards gender-responsive budgeting. These steps included introducing the concepts and tools of GRB to the local stakeholders, examining the effects of specific programs and budgets on women and men, and identifying ways in which GRB principles can be integrated into the work of the municipalities in a more systematic way. Variety of activities took place: training sessions for local councilors and civil servants, study trips to municipalities from other countries in the region; research in specific areas. Key partners in their implementation were the local Commissions and Coordinators for EO, and local NGOs were included in some of the activities.

As part of this initiative, analysis was carried out of the municipal programs and budgets in two areas – education and social services (with focus on kindergartens and care for elderly) – from a gender perspective. The areas were selected due to several factors. First, they are areas in which the local government has competencies and responsibilities for financing and monitoring. Second, they were pointed out as priority areas by citizens in surveys of their opinion conducted beforehand.¹⁸ Third, noting the importance of these areas for women and gender equality, the local Commissions for EO also expressed interest in understanding better the implementation of specific programs and how it can be strengthened. Finally, and as the analysis confirmed, a significant part of the municipal budget was devoted to these areas (particularly when it comes to education).

¹⁷ Official Gazette, n.66/06. 2006. Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. Article 16: Units of Local Self-Government.

¹⁸ Two surveys in each municipality were carried out by local NGOs – Women’s Civic Initiative Klea from Bitola and Women’s Forum from Tetovo. The surveys included representative samples of 2,500 citizens in Tetovo municipality and 2,173 citizens in Bitola municipality and assessed citizen satisfaction with locally provided services, their awareness and participation in decision-making at local level, and key priorities and needs.

The analysis was carried out by external experts, who worked in close cooperation with the Commissions and Coordinators for EO, the municipal budget departments, and officials responsible for the policy areas. The methodology that was utilized generally followed the five-step South Africa method¹⁹: 1) analysis of the situation of women and men, girls and boys in the particular sector; 2) analysis of the policy/program and to what extent it takes into account gender perspective; 3) analysis of budget allocations; 4) analysis of budget spending per beneficiaries. Each step was broken down into specific questions that required a variety of data sources, both primary and secondary, to be addressed. As in other initiatives supported in the project, the scope of the analysis did not include assessing impact – for this, additional data were needed that were not collected here. The studies were prepared and finalized through consultations with the local authorities, who are currently in the process of reviewing the findings and recommendations and considering ways to implement some of the most pressing and feasible ones.

Selected findings of the analyses:

- The analyzed data suggest that in both municipalities, the number of girls and boys attending school does not correspond to the number of girls and boys in the specific age groups according to the latest population figures. In primary education, there are more boys than girls than the gender ratio in the relevant population group, which shows that girls are included to a lesser extent. In secondary education, the situation is the same in Tetovo municipality and the reverse in Bitola municipality. However, no definite conclusions can be drawn due to certain data limitations and how the specific age groups are defined. Additional analysis is needed to validate these patterns and to determine the reasons behind them. Such analysis requires systematic collection of additional data, besides the ones that are currently available.

- The existing kindergartens in Tetovo municipality cover only 10% of the children up to 6 years of age, which corresponds to the national average but is far below international standards. The highest proportion among the children who attend kindergarten are from Macedonian ethnicity (62%), followed by Albanian (29%), and Roma (4%). This does not correspond to the ethnic structure of the population, which is majority Albanian. Also, the low participation of Albanian and Roma children directly correlates with the fact that almost 78% of the female population above 15 years of age is economically inactive. Women's economic inactivity is linked to their exclusive engagement in household unpaid work, including childcare. Recommendations include: awareness should be increased among parents about the importance of pre-school education; kindergartens and the municipality need to work towards making this service accessible to households with children of pre-school age, particularly among the Albanian and Roma populations; the importance of childcare services for allowing women to seek jobs and enter the labor market should be promoted.

For both municipalities, the studies also included recommendations regarding strengthening the roles of the Commissions for EO and the need for the existing local programs to be monitored and evaluated and more clearly linked to the budgets.²⁰

¹⁹ UNIFEM-UNFPA. 2006. *Gender Responsive Budgeting and Women's Reproductive Rights: a Resource Package*. p. 57

²⁰ For complete analysis see: Ilievska, N., Jovanova, V., Memeti, M. Miskovska-Raleva, A. (TE), Stalevski. N. (BT). 2010. *Gender-responsive Budgeting at the Local Level in the Municipality of Bitola (Tetovo): Summary of Analyses Conducted in a Pilot Project*. Retrieved June 2010 from www.unifem.sk

Key lessons learned

The analyses revealed both already known as well as new information. Some of the problems identified have already been recognized by the municipalities, and they have planned steps to address them. These mostly concern general problems related to internal capacities for service delivery, data collection and monitoring systems, as well infrastructure of institutions delivering services. The added value of the analyses was in highlighting the gender aspects of some of these problems, why they are particularly relevant for women, and how the solutions implemented should consider them from the start. The analyses also revealed new information about differences in use of public services between women and men, girls and boys that required further research or action to be fully understood and addressed. The research provided numeric expression and concrete evidence to back up claims by gender advocates about the importance of considering the gender perspective in the policy making process at local level. It also emphasized the role that the local gender equality mechanisms should play in strengthening municipal performance in the fields of education and social services.

An important finding of the analytical and consultative process was that the problems identified required actions to be taken at different levels of government – central, local or both – and for this to happen, broader decentralization-related challenges needed to be addressed. The process revealed in concrete terms that some of the lines of authority and responsibility at different levels remain fuzzy, and this is an obstacle in the provision of adequate, quality and accessible services to citizens.

CASE STUDY 7 – GRB analysis in sector of rural development and agriculture at entity level in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background

The interwoven web of administration and competencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina has also affected the setup of the government gender equality mechanisms. Gender mechanisms have been created in the executive and legislative branches at the state, entity, cantonal and municipal levels of government. At the state level, an Agency for Gender Equality was established, at the entity - Gender Center of FBiH and Gender Center of RS; within the state/entity – parliamentary assemblies and at the municipal level – commissions for gender equality. The country's commitments to gender equality are reflected in the Gender Equality Law of 2006 and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2006-2011, which has a specific Chapter on gender sensitive budgets.

What was done?

In order to develop practical steps for inclusion of GRB within sector-related strategies and financial frameworks, in 2008-2010 UNIFEM supported pilot initiatives led by the RS and FBiH Gender Centers. The initiatives included two entity-based gender budget analyses of the sector of agriculture and rural development. The Gender Centers selected this sector considering that in both entities: 1) there is widespread rural poverty;²¹ 2) rural women are “invisible” in the official employment and property

²¹ UNDP. 2003. *Female Headed Households Report*. Retrieved June 2010 from <http://www.undp.ba/upload/publications/FHHR%20ENG.pdf>

figures, yet their labor is a key resource for the advancement of the rural economy and communities; 3) these areas are government priorities and significant amount of funds is allocated to them. The analyses were conducted in line with specific recommendations in the BiH GAP, but utilized different methodologies and had differing foci. They were undertaken by local consultants, with support from a Spanish expert, and in close partnership with the entity gender mechanisms and the line ministries whose programs and processes were subject to analysis.



Poster used on the occasion of International Day of Rural Women

In the case of the FBiH, the *process* of budget preparation was examined in three Federal institutions: Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship and Craft, Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, and Employment Institute. Gender issues within the sector were analyzed as well as ways in which the gender perspective can be strengthened within the work of the three institutions. A report was produced which recommends a two-phased approach to implementing GRB in the FBiH.²² Some of the recommendations were used by a so-called “Working Group on GRB” - a group of civil servants from 4 ministries and one institute established beforehand for the purpose of developing a strategy for GRB in the entity. The Group used the findings of the analysis and other available information and developed FBiH Action Plan for Gender-responsive Budgeting 2010-2013, which was recently passed by Parliament (see also case study 1).

In the RS, the research roughly followed the five-step GRB analysis method developed in South Africa.²³ It encompassed the first four steps and focused on the programs and budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MoAFWM). In addition to desk-top review, focus groups with members of rural women associations were carried out to gain insight into the needs and constraints of rural women, and MoAFWM staff were surveyed on their gender awareness when carrying out their regular tasks.²⁴ An important aspect of the RS pilot initiative was the involvement of rural women during and following the analysis. In addition to focus groups with them, the final report was made public and linked to celebration of the International Day of Rural Women so as to achieve greater

coverage and public interest. To complement the findings of the research, RS GC produced a short video clip which highlighted the importance of addressing the status and hurdles faced by rural women, the significant contributions they make to local economies and societies, as well as the big

²² Innova Management Consulting. Pobric, B., Car, O. 2009. *Discussion Paper: Gender-responsive budgeting in Selected Sectors within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Retrieved June 2010 from http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=174&Itemid=189

²³ See footnote 19

²⁴ For complete analysis see: Rokvic, G. 2009. *Gender Budget Analysis in Agriculture and Rural Development Sector in Republika Srpska*. Retrieved June 2010 from <http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/centri/gendercentarrs/Pages/default.aspx>

potential impact of gender-friendly policies in transforming their lives and those of communities at large. The video clip was placed on YouTube and used as part of awareness raising campaign for the International Day of Rural Women.

As a result of this analysis and other ongoing efforts by the RS GC, changes were proposed and incorporated in the newly developed Rural Development and Agriculture Strategy's Action Plan for 2010. These include sex-disaggregated data collection per programs, special measures for improving the living conditions of women and youth in rural areas, special measures for stimulation of female rural entrepreneurship, etc.

Key lessons learned

The GRB studies were among the first of such kind carried out, and even though they attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, certain issues of interest were left out due to lack of data or the need to prioritize the research areas given limited available time and resources. However, the methodologies developed and the learning gained in the process provide basis for further modifications in order to examine other areas of interest. It has been very important to also pinpoint which areas cannot be analyzed due to the way budget information is presented, and what type of data is missing. This has resulted in numerous recommendations related to needed changes in processes and formats, in addition to changes in the content of programs (the latter refer only to the RS analysis).

This work showed the importance of building on other ongoing efforts and carrying out research at the "right" time. For example, simultaneously with the GRB analysis, RS GC worked on harmonization of the Rural Development and Agriculture Strategy's Action Plan for 2010 with gender equality standards and conducted a situation analysis on rural women in RS. As a result, the RS Government mandated the MoAFWM and RS GC to develop a specific Action Plan for Improvement of the Status of Rural Women in 2010 as part of operational implementation of the general Action Plan. Also, conclusions agreed by the RS National Assembly²⁵ demand action by all RS ministries to work towards improving the conditions of rural women. This establishes a firm basis for further work on GRB in the agriculture and rural development sector.

4. GRB INITIATIVES BY CIVIL SOCIETY

The functions normally performed by civil society organizations in GRB initiatives are numerous and diverse. In this project, CSOs have worked on: performing different types of research and analysis (costing, beneficiary assessments, etc) and in this process developing tools and methodologies; conducting awareness raising and capacity development activities for other CSOs, government stakeholders or the general public (round tables, campaigns, training, etc.); advocacy with both elected and appointed officials for adopting gender policy commitments, taking into account recommendations from analyses and more generally for considering gender issues in their work; developing some of the first materials that reflect application of gender budget methodologies in the local contexts and in local languages.

This section presents three case studies where civil society organizations have taken the leadership role in specific GRB interventions. However, as seen in the preceding examples, CSOs and individual experts coming from civil society, academia and research organizations have been important

²⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska, No. 109/09. Zaključci na Informaciju o položaju žena u ruralnim sredinama u Republici Srpskoj.

participants in all other pilot initiatives implemented. The expertise and drive of civil society groups and individual experts have been instrumental in pushing forward the GRB agenda overall, and in using specific GRB analytical tools to demonstrate policy and resource allocation gaps and advocate for necessary changes.

CASE STUDY 8 – Impact of a reform in the healthcare sector on women’s unpaid care work in FYR Macedonia

Background

In 2007, a healthcare reform, called Diagnosis Related Groups (DRG), was piloted in selected hospitals in FYR Macedonia with the intention of being fully introduced over time. DRG is a policy measure that aims at increasing the efficiency of the work of hospitals by rationalizing the services they provide and in this way reducing public expenditures. It implies, among other things, faster discharging of patients and less time spent in hospitals. International experience with such reforms suggests that they lead to transfer of care from the visible public sector to the “invisible” care economy where women pick up the care for the sick as part of their unpaid household duties. The only Time use survey conducted in FYR Macedonia in 2004, shows that women spend approximately 5 hours per day on domestic activities, while men spend approximately 2 hours per day.²⁶ However, except for care for children, the Time use survey does not provide evidence on the time devoted to other care activities, including care for the ill.

What was done?

In 2008, UNIFEM supported a think-tank organization, Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), to carry out an assessment of the gender implications of introducing DRG. For the first time in the country, an analysis was undertaken that applied elements of two GRB analytical tools: gender aware policy appraisal and analysis of the budget on time use²⁷, in respect of a specific policy measure. Several research methods were used to assess the effects of DRG introduction. These included a desktop review of the legislative and policy framework in the health sector and the DRG system; a survey on time use of case study families who had had an ill family member discharged from a DRG-implementing hospital; and a nation-wide survey on care work including care for the ill.

The assessment showed that DRG is a budgetary measure that generates savings in the public health care system, but has significant gender implications. Government budget savings were incurred thanks to the reduction of stay in hospitals and the transfer of care from hospitals to households. The surveys showed that the burden of care was disproportionately allocated between women and men and that the DRG would increase women’s responsibilities to care for patients discharged earlier from hospitals.²⁸

²⁶ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia. 2005. “Time use survey”. Retrieved June 2010 from http://www.stat.gov.mk/english/statistiki_eng.asp?ss=07.03&rbs=5

²⁷ See footnote 14

²⁸ For complete analysis see: CRPM. 2009. *Diagnosis Related Groups and Unpaid Care Work of Women*. Retrieved June 2010 from http://www.crpm.org.mk/Papers/Press/unifem_eng1.pdf



Poster used in CRPM awareness raising activities

The findings of the study were used to advocate for redressing some of the implications of the reform and to explore in particular possibilities for community-based services to compensate for the transfer of care. In 2009, with UNIFEM support, CRPM carried out awareness raising activities for stakeholders from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Association of the Units of Local Self-Governments in the country. At a series of round tables organized, participants discussed the findings of the assessment, the implications of this reform for the private and professional life of women, and possible remedies. The main advocacy message was the need to allocate some of the savings generated through the reform to support community-based care services, and in this way to ensure adequate care for the sick, but also alleviate the expected care burden for women. A documentary film was also produced on the introduction of DRG in FYR Macedonia and presented to relevant stakeholders. The film featured the experiences of two other countries in the region, Slovenia and Croatia, which have already implemented the DRG reform and have at the same time

carried out initiatives to offer community-based care services to people in need of care – in this way also contributing to alleviation of the need for unpaid care work in the household.²⁹ The visualization of these experiences “brought the issue home” to Macedonian stakeholders and proved to be an effective advocacy strategy.

This pilot initiative, parallel with other efforts outside of it, contributed to a decision by the city of Skopje, the Macedonian capital, to make specific allocations in the 2010 budget for: 1) assessing the needs and capacities for opening a community care center, and 2) opening a community care center. Based on the assessed capacities and needs, the city of Skopje is further discussing the possibility of cost-sharing for the community care center with the other local self-government units from the Skopje area.

²⁹ The film is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeGbGFZbHlw&feature=related>.

CASE STUDY 9 – The role of civil society organizations in gender budgeting initiatives: the case of Serbia at local level

Background

The legal and institutional framework for gender equality at the local level in Serbia was underdeveloped at the time of initiation of the pilot GRB work. The first local level gender equality mechanisms were gender focal points, which were established in the period 2002-2005 through an initiative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the goodwill of local authorities. Since 2004, a lax quota was introduced in local elections, which led to an increase in the total number of women councilors (from under 10% in 2000 to around 20% in 2004), but unevenly spread across Serbia's diverse municipalities.

In the absence of a national Law on Gender Equality (adopted only in December 2009), the AP Vojvodina passed the Decision on Gender Equality in 2004. Subsequently, strengthening of local level GEMs picked up pace in the province, with assistance from the Provincial Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality and support of international organizations. The University of Novi Sad held a course "Introduction to feminist economics and gender budgeting", which resulted in the publication of *"Towards Gender Budgeting: A Guide"*, supported by UNIFEM. This was the first such material in Serbian language.³⁰ Within the Norwegian-supported *"Women Can Do It"* program for training of women politicians and activists in local communities, civil society advocates carved a space for introducing the new topic of GRB, which at that time meant empowering participants to start considering budget allocations as decisions impacting the position of women and gender equality, and thus as a legitimate area of interest for them. Overall, the GRB pilot initiatives took place in a context of slow and partial transfer of powers to the units of local government, volatile coalition politics, still predominant line-item budgets, and no obvious legal foundation for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into local decision-making processes.

What was done?

Against this backdrop, GRB initiatives conducted in Serbia with UNIFEM support since 2007 have mostly consisted of pioneering civil society efforts to set up some of the preconditions for GRB at the local level. These include raising awareness about the connections between budgets and issues of women's condition and gender equality, setting up a legal and policy background that requires gender issues to be taken into account, and introducing basic tools for integrating a gender perspective into local decision-making processes and administrative practices. This has been done often in the face of political and institutional resistance not only to gender, but also to change in general.

The pilot projects were implemented in cooperation with two non-governmental organizations: 1) Women's Entrepreneurship Academy (WEA), which led a project in the municipality of Bački Petrovac in the period 2007-2008, and a follow-up project in 2009 in Kovačica, Bački Petrovac and Žitište; 2) Association of Business Women (PAŽ) which led a project in the cities of Pančevo, Valjevo and Kragujevac in 2008 and a follow-up project in Stara Pazova, Irig and Pančevo in 2009.

³⁰ Đurić-Kuzmanović, T. 2007. *Ka rodnom budžetiranju: vodič. Ženske studije i istraživanja i Futura publikacije*, Novi Sad.

The barriers CSOs met with in the implementation of these projects were the following:

- Inadequate genuine political will or interest in supporting gender equality initiatives (even when agreements were made)
- Line-item budgets and “traditional” budgetary process (separate from policy considerations, with no or weak links to priorities where they have been defined), coupled in 2008 with a crisis in funding
- Weak institutional legitimacy and internal capacity of gender equality mechanisms (unclear or weak mandate, procedures and support inside local government/administrative structures); or no GEM at all (the case of Bački Petrovac municipality)
- Lack of sex-disaggregated and other data needed to monitor the position of women and gender equality; where data were available, low capacity and knowledge how to use them.

The responses to these challenges have differed, but some key ones are:

- *Adjusting the scale, aims and tools based on context*
 - Basic skills building and awareness raising for environments where there has not been much previous work related to gender equality; where such work has been carried out – supporting GEMs to further strengthen their capacities and mandate, and developing new, contextualized tools for their and administrations’ use;
 - Assessing data availability and conducting gender analysis and reviews of documents and policies to define needs for data collection and targeted research efforts; when it comes to budget scrutiny, its objectives in most cases needed to be scaled down in light of the fact that the line-item format allowed for mostly general analysis and recommendations.
 - Careful presentation of criticism to local government practices as it may strain the already weak partnerships between civil society and local government
- *Creating legal foundations for gender-based policy and budget interventions*

The gender advocates found that establishing a legal policy basis at the local level is a necessary precondition for substantial work on GRB to be carried out. The approach taken was the development of a completely new legal basis for gender equality: local Decisions/Acts on Gender Equality, designed as contextualized and condensed versions of basic gender equality legislation. The local Acts were drafted through cooperation between a constitutional law expert and representatives of the local GEMs in workshops conducted as part of the WEA follow-up project. The first one was drafted and adopted in Žitište municipality in 2009, and was the first document of the kind to be passed by a local parliament in Serbia, preceding national-level legislation. In March, 2010 the local Assembly in Bački Petrovac municipality also passed a municipal Act on Gender Equality, making it the second such document in the country.

The Acts are rooted in the Serbian Constitution, the provincial Decision on Gender Equality and the Law on Local Self-Government. They aim to integrate gender equality into all policy areas in the municipalities, and especially into strategic documents, including those that enable the exercise of municipal competences through budget allocations. The Acts also strengthen the mandate of the GEM by stipulating its involvement in key development processes and decisions to be made by local government, including the budget. Finally, the Acts include guarantees

for women's participation in decision-making, including quotas for appointments to working bodies, senior administrative posts and official delegations.

- *Strategic alignments: "seizing the moment" of administrative, political or policy change*

Where it has been possible, "inserting" gender or GRB, or "tagging on" an existing process of reform has been beneficial. For example, in the Municipality of Stara Pazova, a large, relatively developed municipality close to Belgrade, a newly elected mayor was interested in creating a new, more progressive and modern image for the town, and was open to including gender in the process of generating the town's socio-economic development strategy. The NGO PAŽ local consultant team and the chair of the local GEM provided key inputs into this strategic document, based on research on women's entrepreneurship and gender analysis of existing budget allocations and priorities (see below).

A second example of seizing an opportune moment was another first of its kind administrative decision: the assigning of two local administration employees (part-time) to work on *"issues in the field of gender equality,"* as part of a new systematization of positions within municipal administration. This was done in the municipality of Žitište, where a strong, self-driven and committed group of gender advocates in the local administration and parliament had been working continuously on gender equality for more than five years. The Žitište team used the opportunity created by central government-mandated rationalizations in local administration to identify two existing employees already tasked with project development and coordination and with a personal interest in working on gender. The team worked with the administration to change their terms of reference to include responsibilities such as *"monitor and report on the implementation of the municipal Act on Gender Equality"* and *"perform jobs related to statistical-evidence collecting and others as tasked by the Commission for Gender Equality and the member of local government in charge of gender equality portfolio."*

Behind-the-scene lobbying and reliance on personal relationships and influence, or leverage of other outside actors were employed to strengthen appeals for "inserting gender" into existing local-level legal documents, development strategies, or municipal projects reliant on outside funding (such as creation of new business incubators). In Bački Petrovac municipality, on-going efforts towards program budgeting, which are supported by various donor organizations, provided an opening to integrate gender into the new framework. Eventually, the segment of the new budget template related to support to local economic development included references to gender and targets directed at women.

- *Conducting practical and targeted research on issues of community interest to develop concrete recommendations for advancing gender equality*

Research focusing on concrete issues was conducted in all municipalities, but here we focus on the experience in Stara Pazova. The GRB initiative led by NGO PAŽ, in partnership with the local GEM, focused on analyzing both the process of budget making and a specific thematic area, entrepreneurship. Stara Pazova prides itself on the large numbers of small entrepreneurs, whose tradition goes back to socialist times. Despite this, no funds were allocated in 2009 or in earlier years to provide ongoing support to small business growth, as the municipality focused on other development priorities instead. In addition, reliable data were not available

on entrepreneurs, and no research had been done on the status of women in entrepreneurship or gender equality.

Three local experts were engaged by PAŽ to work with the GEM and conduct a survey and focus group discussions with men and women small business owners, in order to assess the status quo and identify needs and priorities. Out of a total of 522 businesses that submitted their annual accounts in 2008, a representative sample of 102 was covered in the survey. Focus groups were conducted with women and men business owners to discuss their starting positions, information and resources available, problems they faced, and their needs in developing their businesses, including support by the local government. This information was all the more relevant since the timing of the analysis coincided with the locally-led process of drafting a Sustainable Development Strategy for the municipality for 2010-2020.

The research found a variety of issues to be hampering entrepreneurs, related to tax collection, services by the local administration, and insufficient knowledge on how to improve their business practices. Specific issues relevant for women entrepreneurs were also identified. For example, more often than men, women went into business in order to supplement their incomes (i.e. entry was based on necessity rather than business opportunity). Their businesses were less likely to be profitable, and more often than men, women did not have the support of their spouse or other family members in their ventures. The research resulted in recommendations that included a consideration of both men's and women's needs and were based on solid evidence which was previously not available. The local GEM with support of the project team advocated for the recommendations and as a result, some of the proposed activities and objectives were integrated into the Sustainable Development Strategy adopted in late 2009. The adopted recommendations included support for women's entrepreneurship, as well as support for the local GEM to work on advancing gender equality and monitoring the status of women in the community.

Key lessons learned

Civil society-led GRB initiatives in Serbia were marked with a great deal of enthusiasm and learning-by-doing, as they were pioneering for the country in many respects. Over time gender advocates in civil society and their associated experts built upon their knowledge and skills to become successful social entrepreneurs. Together with their partners in local GEMs, they devised strategies to make local decision-makers see the benefits of a strategic, targeted and evidence-based approach to planning local development and gave them tools to engage in it. To ensure sustainability of their work, CSOs engaged in building the capacity of local GEMs to be able to perform variety of tasks in the future. Institutionalization of the GEM role and mandate in the local structures, and assigning of staff to deal with gender issues were also pursued as important preconditions for future GRB work. However, sustainability was also found to rest on personal motivation and drive that can only be indirectly influenced and stimulated by external factors.

Successes so far have ultimately depended on the political will of elected officials and the responsiveness of senior administrators, whose buy-in and role are crucial for further mainstreaming of gender into the budgetary process. Civil society can advocate, motivate and provide support in form of expert guidance for analysis and tools development. However, it cannot replace the will, motivation, knowledgeable engagement and strength of mandate of those whose job is ultimately to ensure that men's and women's needs are taken into consideration in local development.

CASE STUDY 10 – Securing budgets for shelters for survivors of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Background

Due to lack of state-provided services to women who have survived domestic violence (DV), women's NGOs emerged in all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to offer free legal assistance, SOS telephones and shelters. Both in the RS and in the FBiH, shelters for survivors of domestic violence have been run by women's NGOs, and the majority of them have been until recently financed entirely through donor and other external funds.³¹ Although there was no specific provision for public shelter financing in the national legal framework, and no by-laws regulating the work of the shelters, national legal framework exists that forbids violence against women and the violation of women's human rights. A decision was also adopted by the Assembly of the City of Banja Luka in 2002 that shelter running costs were to be financed from the Banja Luka budget. In 2003 a one-off donation from the Government of Republika Srpska was provided to the NGO United Women for the purchase of a building to serve as shelter.

What was done?

In 2007, UNIFEM supported the NGO United Women Banja Luka, together with two partner NGOs, Buducnost in Modrica and Lara in Bijeljina, to implement a pilot initiative focused on advocating for state funding of costs related to the running of shelters for women and children who have experienced domestic violence in the RS. The main goal of the project was to secure sustainable public financing of this important service. As a first step towards this goal, partners carried out review of the budgets of three local Centers for Social Work (in Banja Luka, Bijeljina and Modrica), and of the RS Ministry of Health and Social Protection. The analysis included: 1) Assessment of the situations of women who have experienced DV and the usage of existing shelter services. The latter were costed based on the amount spent to accommodate women and children in the shelters in Banja Luka and Modrica. 2) Identifying if there is a link between the need and the existing government policy/legislation; 3) Assessing if adequate resources are allocated to implement the policy or satisfy the need.

The NGO teams collected data on the institutions' beneficiaries and analyzed the budgetary process through questionnaires administered to public officials and desk-top review. By better understanding how the budgets of the four institutions were created, the teams were able to identify the most strategic avenues for advocacy towards sustainable public funding for shelters. The analysis revealed that there were no resources allocated for support of DV survivors in the budgets of three of the four institutions. There was lack of sex-disaggregated data in all cases and lack of data on individual beneficiaries in one case. This made it very difficult to analyze what problems were being addressed through budget allocations. The analysis found that creation of separate budget lines was not the only change necessary. Changes in specific laws were also needed, namely the RS Law on Domestic Violence Protection and Law on Social Protection, in order to have a legal basis that would define and make obligatory government financing of shelters. Without this, budget lines can be introduced

³¹ At the moment, there are seven shelters in BiH: in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar, Bihac, Modrica, Zenica and Banja Luka. Their total maximum capacity is 120 places.

and later on disappear.³² Also, in the process, the NGOs discovered that any financing obligation needs to be shared by the entity and municipal level of government, taking into consideration their competencies and budgetary restraints. The project team decided to lobby entity officials to take responsibility for fixed costs and local officials – for variable costs of shelters. Advocacy was pursued through organizing round tables with responsible officials, and lobbying individual Members of Parliament.

In the final phase of this initiative, the experiences and methodology were shared with other NGOs in the country dealing with insecure shelter financing. Based on expressed interest of NGOs in the Federation of BiH, in 2009 United Women partnered with several of them to replicate some of the work done in the RS. As the draft of the new Law on Domestic Violence Protection in FBiH entered parliamentary procedure, a coalition of NGOs formed within this initiative, and submitted amendments to the draft that stipulate government financing of shelter running costs. As a result of the two pilot initiatives, the following results were achieved:

- A specific budget line was created in the 2008 budget of the RS Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport (later transferred to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection) to provide for domestic violence shelters;
- The City of Banja Luka allocated funds for shelter operating costs;
- The Municipality of Bijeljina allocated funds for construction of a shelter;
- Amendments to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in the RS were passed in 2008 mandating public entity (70 percent) and municipality (30 percent) budget financing of shelter running costs;
- NGO capacities in budget analysis and advocacy were strengthened;
- A country-wide coalition of NGOs working on issues of sustainable shelter financing was established;
- Funds for shelter running costs were allocated in one of the FBiH cantons;
- NGOs organized to lobby for amendments of the Law on Domestic Violence Protection in FBiH.

Key lessons learned and challenges

- For United Women and its partners, this was the first time GRB analytical tools were used and this required external assistance and technical support. However the tools were found to be useful as a great deal of new information was generated that proved critical in their advocacy work.
- The research team faced significant problems with the willingness of some government officials to provide information required to carry out the analysis. Although cooperation improved during the project duration, such obstacles demonstrate that transparency of public policy and budget data is still not a given, despite existing commitments on access to information, and relies on the political will of senior officials.
- Prior cooperation and excellent working relations with women parliamentarians were crucial in lobbying for the inclusion of the shelter costs in the local/entity budgets. Selected

³² For complete analysis see: United Women. 2007. *Opportunities and Challenges for Introducing Gender Sensitive Budgeting in the Area of Domestic Violence on Local and Entity Level in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Retrieved June 2010 from <http://www.unitedwomenbl.org/docs/Gender%20budget%20ENG%20web.pdf>

parliamentarians at both levels were supportive during the entire process and were instrumental in getting the recommended legal amendments adopted.

- Further detailed and in-depth analysis on costing domestic and gender-based violence is needed to improve the effectiveness of lobbying for additional provision of services to survivors and for prevention efforts, in particular with the MoFs and line ministries.

5. PLANS GOING FORWARD

In all four countries, UNIFEM plans to continue building on the initiatives that have been started, and to support national partners in their efforts towards policy making and budgetary processes and outcomes that are more equitable for women and men.

In **Albania**, the Municipality of Elbasan's experience with gender-sensitive participatory budgeting is serving as an example for other municipalities to work towards making their budgets more transparent, inclusive and responsive to the needs of both women and men. UNIFEM will continue to support the Municipality to ensure qualitative change in the gender-responsive nature of the projects approved, and to share its experiences with other municipalities in the country and in the region. UNIFEM is also working with the central government in ensuring that the revised Law on Social Services and Social Assistance is effectively implemented. Research is being expanded into rural communes to determine how procedure may differ at the village level. UNIFEM is also supporting two urban municipalities with which it worked previously to improve the tracking of the status of women, especially women who face particular vulnerability and forms of exclusion.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, future initiatives will prioritize training for budget users to be able to respond to the new gender-related requirements that have been introduced in the budget instructions. This will be done in particular in the areas of health, education, rural development, employment and social welfare, which is in line with Goal 8 of the BiH GAP and the FBiH GRB Action Plan 2010-2013. In partnership with relevant bilateral donors, UNIFEM will continue to support training for GEMs, MoFs and budget users, either as a part of official civil service training curricula or as separate activities. Technical advice and support on collection and analysis of sex-desegregated data will be provided, and collaboration will be sought with CSOs and think tanks working on public finance and governance reforms to integrate gender aspects in their work.

In **FYR Macedonia**, further cooperation with the MLSP and MoF will focus on advocating for changes in the design, implementation and monitoring of the analyzed active labor market measures, as well for inclusion of gender references in the budget call circular. UNIFEM will seek to engage in GRB analysis and capacity development other line ministries and institutions which deal with areas where gender inequalities are most pronounced. Cooperation with Members of Parliament will be continued in order to further strengthen their capacities to perform oversight of the budget from a gender perspective, as well as with selected municipalities to place gender issues more centrally in their policy and budget making processes, and serve as "models" for others.

In **Serbia**, UNIFEM is continuing cooperation with PSLEGE on strengthening the understanding and use of GRB as a tool for advancing gender equality at the provincial level. Ongoing work includes: capacity development followed by gender budget analysis of programs from selected government institutions and advocacy for recommendations; capacity development of financial officers and

the development of a model for gender-sensitive budget justification; assistance in the use of sex-disaggregated statistics and development of gender indicators for measuring progress. At the local level, UNIFEM continues to cooperate with selected local governments to build capacity of their GEMs and support work aimed at more gender-responsive local government and development planning. UNIFEM will also share lessons learned and use the pioneering experiences of past local-level GRB initiatives to expand the work on gender mainstreaming to other municipalities, encouraging further partnerships between civil society and local governments. At the national level, UNIFEM will seek to engage selected line ministries and institutions in capacity development and analysis around GRB in areas of key importance to women.

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