



EVALUATION BRIEF



PROMOTING GENDER RESPONSIVE POLICIES IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2017-2019

Antonela Sula, 18, cook from Dibra, Albania. Antonela registered in a vocational training program and benefited from an employment scheme provided by the Ministry of Finance as a result of its gender-responsive budgeting program.

Photo: UN Women/ Gjergji Hamiti

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a well-recognized tool for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The tool nests gender directly into the financial normative framework of a country, through legislation and policy requiring GRB inside government and through the creation of transparent and data-driven budgeting public information that supports advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) by civil society and elected officials.

The initiative under evaluation, the third phase of the Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe Programme (the "Programme"), which ran from 1 February 2017 to 31 January 2019, was composed of a series of targeted approaches to introduce gender responsive budgeting and support for increased gender equality through programs and policies in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova to promote and adapt gender responsive fiscal laws, policies and national action plans and enable specific budgetary allocations for gender equality, as well as empower gender advocates and MPs to demand accountability from national and local governments on policies and budgetary allocations to support gender equality and women's empowerment. The Programme was designed to support the regional exchange of best practices and learning between participating countries.

What did the evaluation conclude?

- The GRB Programme was important to the partners – relevant to international and national commitments on gender equality and effective in building the normative, legislative and policy framework. The Programme resulted in millions of budget dollars allocated using a gender lens in three of the participating countries.
- The Programme was especially successful in 'institutionalizing' the concepts and the practice of GRB, through legislation, policy, training and capacity building for current and future public officials.
- The Programme worked well with the civil society to prepare civil society organizations to use GRB as a tool to advocate for realignment of strategy and planning towards greater gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The Programme used the regional programme model to advance cooperation and collaboration and to find efficiencies in training and sharing best practices.
- The political climate and bureaucratic 'readiness' in each of the target countries differed but each country experienced elections or another version of upheaval that prevented the Programme from working as effectively as intended with elected officials and government leaders to ensure the long-term adoption of GRB in the normative framework.

How can UN Women improve?

RECOMMENDATION #1 Actively assert its competitive advantage in GRB: No other entity brings the depth of expertise or experience in the translation of policy into direct improvement in the lives of women and girls in the way that UN Women does. UN Women has credibility in the region and with the country partners as an organization that can influence government and achieve results. The team is now regarded as expert in GRB and should be promoted as such.

RECOMMENDATION #2 Develop a big-picture and long-term approach to the GRB programme model: A big-picture approach to GRB that shows the full path to achievement of GRB, combined with country-specific indicators and targets, will help to ensure that future Programmes focus on activities that are relevant and contextualized to the partners and to the achievement of the goal. Development of a clear pathway to success that articulates the long-term goal and the intermediate signals of success along the way in combination with a package of offerings from UN Women will help to articulate the specific advantages and expertise that UN Women brings, create confidence in donors, and allow countries at different stages of readiness to find themselves on the path.

RECOMMENDATION #3 Complete and close the current Programme: There is a danger of fatigue by past donors or wariness by new donors, and a diminished enthusiasm inside target countries. It is recommended, subject to the wrap-up of ongoing activities from this phase, that an entirely new Programme be commenced.

RECOMMENDATION #4 Ensure programme resourcing for project management and manage the risk that comes from reliance on a limited number of contracted experts: To respond to the findings above with respect to the need for greater project management, reporting and data analysis, project management expectations should be increased in the Programme team.

RECOMMENDATION #5 Ensure country capability is enhanced and independent: A core focus of future GRB programmes must be on creating leave-behind capability and expertise in the target country. Conventional approaches such as train-the-trainer models can be combined with more innovative user-centric workshops and cross-sectoral discussions to create more local talent.

RECOMMENDATION #6 Continue to use a regional programme model: There are many opportunities with a Regional Programme to take advantage of economies of scale in capacity building, networking, political advocacy, donor attraction and retention, etc.

RECOMMENDATION #7 Find partnerships and linking opportunities with other projects and organizations: UN Women should openly search for partnerships that will permit it to emphasize its expertise but share the Programme burden.

RECOMMENDATION #8 Priorities the increased capacity of data users: Clear, current and trustworthy gender-disaggregated statistics on the impact of funding for different kinds of programs is an essential component of a GRB programme as a part of the development of the institutional framework. This information is critical to advocacy, program design and allocation of funds.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

5

countries visited

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, North Macedonia, Turkey (Regional Office)

of country specific recommendations developed: **38**

169 Documents reviewed



Online survey of training recipients:

surveyed **115** # of respondents **52**

of stakeholders interviewed:

	 Women Interviewed	 Men Interviewed	TOTAL
ALBANIA	21	2	23
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	25	6	31
NORTH MACEDONIA	26	2	28
MOLDOVA	12	3	15
REGIONAL	6	0	6
TOTAL	90	13	103