

# Increase of women participation in the policy making processes on local level:



# MANUAL

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



Increase of women  
participation in the  
policy making processes  
on local level:

## Manual for civil society organizations

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING,  
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# INTRODUCTION





A petition to demand increase of the capacities of state institutional housing for elderly people organized by the National Council for Equal Opportunities.

The event was part of the local level GRB outreach actions organized by the Strategic Development Consulting and Akcija Združenka and local partner organisations in the frameworks of UN Women Regional project "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe" supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Austrian Development Agency.

Skopje, May 2017

Photo credits: UN Women





# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Manual is intended for the civil society organizations working on improvement of the position of women and men and are involved in building democratic institutions through which women and men will be exercising their rights.

The purpose of the Manual is to provide directions for the civil society organizations on how to act in order to ensure greater inclusion of women in the public policy making process on local level and increase their impact in the community.

This document is trying, in clear and simple manner, to present to the organizations the potential long-term strategic approach for mobilization of women by stimulating their involvement in the creation of public policies on local level and the possibility to publicly express their issues and needs. The Manual is focusing on strategies for mobilization and empowerment of women from different environments, aiming to provide better informing, inclusion and active contribution of women in the community. The proposed approach or the priorities for action, the methods and tools that CSOs can use are based on an assessment of the challenges that women face and their motivation for greater participation in community planning and decision-making processes. Furthermore, the Manual also evaluates the current practice of interaction of the local organizations with women from the community and with the local self-government, including the legal possibilities the local organizations and women can use to increase the civil participation.

In addition, the Manual includes experiences, lessons learned and recommendations from the actions for wide inclusion of women in the field implemented by the local organizations aiming to identify the most effective ones for different local contexts and target groups. The local organizations can adapt these experiences and use them as continuous activities for various topics in accordance with their human and financial capacities.

This Manual was developed as part of the initiative for *Development of Strategies for Increase of the Inclusion of Women on Local Level*, supported by UN Women in the frames of the regional project for Promotion of Gender Responsible Policies in Southeastern Europe. It is a result of the cooperation with nine civil society organizations: Edna Mozhe! - Skopje, National Council



for Gender Equality, Women's initiative- Sveti Nikole, Eho - Shtip, Klea - Bitola, Women Forum - Tetovo, Radika De - Debar, Center for Education and Development - Skopje and Organization of Women - Strumica - altogether they worked on and tested the proposed models included in this Manual in ten municipalities in the Republic of North Macedonia - Aerodrom, Bitola, Bogovinje, City of Skopje, Gjorche Petrov, Mavrovo-Rostushe, Sveti Nikole, Strumica, Tetovo, Shtip.

We hope that this publication will assist the civil society organizations in the practical implementation of activities that aim to mobilize and ensure active involvement of women in the decision making process, especially when it comes to decisions that are relevant for them and for the community.

# WHAT IS A CIVIC PARTICIPATION?



Skopje, May 2016 Photo credits: UN Women





## 2. WHAT IS A CIVIC PARTICIPATION?

The modern democratic concept of active civic participation expects from the citizens to be vigilant in monitoring the work of their elected representatives and to be continuously involved in the development of local policies, and not just to react after those policies have been adopted.

In this regard, the civic participation is now understood as every activity with which the citizens are actively involved in the process of adoption of public decisions and they influence the quality of their life and the life of their fellow citizens. The civic participation acquires its true form and effect when the citizens are coming together in order to be informed and discuss the issues of their community – as a result of this they also offer potential solutions for the policy making.

- We will review the approach adopted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)<sup>1</sup> which assumes three different levels of cooperation between the citizens and the authorities in the public policy making process:
- Access to information – this is the first and core right and the entire process of participation is based on this right. This is a one-way process where the information is shared from the authorities towards the citizens. This type of interaction enables passive approach to the information, meaning upon request by the citizens, and active measures from the authorities to disseminate the information to the citizens (for example: requests for official documents, official gazette and websites of the authorities).
- Consultation – two-way communication in which the authorities call upon the citizens to provide feedback about particular document, by expressing their opinion, views and comments. This is a reactive way of participation – when the public is involved upon request from the authorities (for example: comments about draft law or legal proposals).

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<sup>1</sup> Citizens As Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making, drafted by Marc Gramberger, OECD 2001.



Active participation/ partnership – higher level of two-way communication in which the citizens are actively engaged in proposing alternative solutions and shaping of the political dialogue. It can be described as a situation in which the public representatives are sitting on the same table with the state authorities or bodies (for example: strategic partnership, membership in workgroups).

In order to achieve the third level (partnership cooperation) it is first necessary to build such partnership relation, that is, mutual trust between the citizens and the local government.

- The two-way communication is about having two sides in the process:
- Responsible authority (local government) that is interested, that motivates and encourages its fellow citizens for active participation, and

Active citizens with developed political culture, knowledge of the processes/ procedures and rights, and who are constructive in their approach.

This is in essence a social inclusion (social accountability) approach. It builds accountability based on civic engagement (public demand). The core belief of this concept is that the citizens are responsible for the conditions they live in. This is a concept through which the ability of the community (the citizens) to monitor and “discipline” the public authorities and the service providers is built in. This is the quest for complex social change where the citizens are not just users and ones that cast their vote during elections, but rather creators and those that start shaping things. In other words – transition from passive participants towards stakeholders in the public policy making process. Hence, instead of having the perspective of a measure/ project, they act from a perspective of someone who is aware of the entirety of the policies of (in this case) the local self-government. The citizens are now transforming from someone who is involved in the process, into someone who is implementing and monitoring/ evaluating the policies.

## 2.1. The women and the local civic participation

The participation in the local governance and decision making means that women and men are not only physically present but they are also acting as stakeholders that have potential to impose their influence. The participation of women in these processes is the key for achieving social and economic changes.

In order for the women to be able to express their opinions with self-confidence and to influence the quality of the management and the decision making process in their communities, it is necessary to work on their empowerment. In this context, the empowerment of women should be implemented on several



levels (access to information, acquisition of knowledge and skills in order to influence the decision making process on local process, development of self-confidence for negotiation, articulation of their needs and the needs of others in similar situation), at the same time taking into account the different levels of unequal relations of power between the women and men. The demands for equal rights and opportunities in terms of decision making are often seen as threat because they challenge the privileges and the existing relations of power in a society. Luckily, these power relations can change, and this is the basis for working with women towards their empowerment and involvement in the decision making process i.e. in the power sharing.

When it comes to participation of women in the local decision making processes, we should always have in mind the complexity of the gender relations and their shift from the common understanding as purely men-women relations. Otherwise, we are losing the opportunity to see the relations within the same gender (women vs. women in the family and on job) and in different relations (older brothers vs. younger sisters, woman manager vs. employed men).

In essence, the issue of participation of women in the decision making process has several challenges:

- Presence,
- Having their voice heard,
- Influence.

The first step is to prioritize the practical needs of the women and to secure their presence in the processes that are already used for resolving of the key issues in the community. The challenge here is that women need to move away from their already established habits and obligations and to approach a position that is not quite friendly towards them.

Once the efforts to be present there where decisions are usually made are successful, it is necessary to provide opportunities for them to express their voices and needs regarding the issues being discussed or, even a bigger challenge, to put on agenda issues that are not discussed at all but are concerning them directly.

The biggest challenge is, once women are encouraged and start advocating for specific solutions, to be able to have their voice heard and generate results from that.

This is especially important to consider because the practice has shown that the gender inequality is also reflected in the structures of the community created for the purpose of influence and improvement of the conditions.





The gender and the participation should be seen through several aspects. One of the aspects is, when we are talking about women and their participation in the decision making process, we need to be careful not to subject their needs to the needs of the community, thus masking their different experiences and needs with those of the wider group.

Second important aspect is the regulation of the role of those individuals/ organizations/ experts that develop the participation models, in order to prevent the imposition of formats and tools that are inappropriate, impossible to implement and that will not yield any effect. The idea is to do the participatory processes “together with” and “from” the people, not “for” the people.

On the other hand, in order for participation of women to be effective and relevant, the local self-government needs to instigate and support such participation. In accordance with their legal structure, the local self-government units are the ones that are closest to the citizens and they have a special responsibility to improve the gender equality, taking into account that their policies and measures directly impact the living conditions of women and men. The local self-government units need to ensure that the rights and freedoms of women and men are met in order to protect their dignity, regardless of race, class, gender or ethnicity. In this context, the gender equality is a question of human rights – a key prerequisite for achieving efficient democracy, an issue of social justice, in a sense of improved employability of women, their education, working conditions and social protection, as well as issue of social and economic development. Hence, the local self-government units have essential role to play in promotion of the participation of women and men in the decision making process and in ensuring social, economic and political justice for all citizens in the community.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the citizens in the decision making process on local level is closely related to the decentralization. A successful decentralization requires a high level of participation of the local community (including equally women and men) in these processes. If the municipalities establish efficient communication with women and men, they will be able to embrace their ideas and recommendations and will be able to meet their different needs. That is why the communication between the local authorities and the citizens should be implemented through institutional mechanisms that can be changed and improved. The participation in the decision making process makes it possible for the citizens to get involved and to exercise influence in the resolution of issues that are relevant for their everyday life. This is also an opportunity for the local governments to secure support for their ideas and to obtain new and innovative ways of problem solving.





## 2.2. Role of the civil society organizations in the promotion of the civic participation of the women

The interventions of the civil society organizations are organized around three approaches:

- **Transparency and information (including transparency of the Budget) which is the essence for building accountability.**

The aim is to inform the citizens about the rights, opportunities, rules, regulations and decisions that have been made.

Tools that can be used: information campaigns, public reporting about the costs, civil charters, service centers, etc.

- **Inclusion – consultations**

The aim is to collect information regarding the needs of the citizens, as well as their suggestions and opinions in planning and implementation of programs/projects and public finances.

Tools that can be used: public discussions, focus groups, advisory bodies/groups, forums, membership in bodies, etc.

- **Accountability**

The aim is to ensure independent monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the various governments (relevancy, efficiency and effects from programs, measures, spending, etc.).



Tools that can be used: budget monitoring, social accountability<sup>2</sup>, community monitoring (evaluation cards), satisfaction surveys, citizen judgment, etc.

In order for women to be able to engage into these processes, or to initiate such, it is necessary to empower them. The empowerment is a process that results in ability to establish control over their own life, on individual or community level (group of individuals sharing common identities, interests). This enable acquisition of the following:

- Power to make informed decisions,
- Power to be heard,
- Power to put things on the agenda,
- Power to negotiate about new topics,
- Power within ourselves to reexamine the traditional beliefs.

The collective dimensions of the empowerment start from the assumption that the women themselves are the mean and the “owner” of the change, which is essentially social or political<sup>3</sup>, while the external stakeholders are catalysts, facilitators or supporters. It is expected that those having power will share it with those who do not have it. The empowerment is also about establishing communication that instigates knowledge, awareness, understanding, critical thinking, consensus and awareness/ sensitivity about the differences (gender, class or other differences which are basis for privilege or limitation, exclusion, submission). When talking about empowerment, the key question that is raised in order to select the appropriate methods are which individuals and which communities are empowered? Is it the women from rural areas, Roma women in one municipality, women from one local community, educated women from one municipality, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> The social accountability is based on the participation of the citizens through which they request, directly or indirectly, accountability from the decision makers – World Bank, available at: <https://saeguide.worldbank.org/glossary-social-accountability-tools-and-approaches> and <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/Resources/285741-1233946247437/21SAToolsSourcebook.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> “Introduction: Connecting Perspectives on Women’s Empowerment”, editors Deepta Chopra and Catherine Müller, Transforming development knowledge, IDS Bulletin, Volume 46, Number 1A, March 2016.

# LEGALLY DEFINED GROUNDS FOR LOCAL CIVIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN





Women from Debar region attending a gathering for promotion and sale of their hand -made/home-made products. The event was part of the local level GRB outreach actions organised by the Strategic Development Consulting and Akcija Zdruzenska and local partner organisations in the frameworks of UN Women Regional Project "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe" supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Austrian Development Agency.

Debarski banji, April, 2017

Photo credits: UN Women





### 3. LEGALLY DEFINED GROUNDS FOR LOCAL CIVIC PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Pursuant to Article 2 of the Constitution<sup>4</sup> of the Republic of North Macedonia, the sovereignty stems out of the citizens and belongs to the citizens. They participate in the government through the directly elected members of Parliament, through referendum and other types of direct representation. In addition, Article 9 stipulates that all citizens have the same rights and freedom, regardless of the gender, race, skin color, ethnic and social background, political and religious belief, property and social status. In general, the Constitution provides the basic framework in which the citizens can articulate their rights related to freedom of expression and influence the legislation.

With the adoption on the Law on Local Self-government<sup>5</sup> in 2002, Macedonia became a decentralized country. This Law establishes the legal framework for organization of the local self-government system in the country and provides the main directions for functioning of its units. This Law transferred large number of competencies from the central to the local governments.

The decentralization process increased the number of competencies belonging to the local self-government. This emphasizes even more the need for regular consultation and communication with the citizens on various topics and issues. The local governments have competencies for urban planning, environmental protection, local economic growth, communal activities, culture, social protection and children protection, education, basic health protection, crisis management and fire protection. All these responsibilities require creation of large number of public services for the citizens, thus making the communication between the citizens and the municipal authorities important and urgent issues.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia: Amendments of the Constitution I-XXXII, Official Gazette, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Law on Local Self-government, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia №.5, 29 January 2002.



### 3.1. Referendum

The Law prescribes the following forms of direct civic participation for women:

Referendum on local level is announced by the Council, for issues for which the Council has mandate for, upon its initiative or upon request by at least 20% of the citizens of the municipality. The decision adopted on the referendum is binding for the Council.

Referendum on local level can be announced for adoption of lower legal acts, for issues that need to be arranged in the municipality, for reconsideration of acts of the municipality that have been initially adopted or for issues that are not regulated by legal acts<sup>6</sup>. The decisions are considered adopted if they have been voted in favor by majority of the total number of citizens who voted, if the turnout is more than half of the total number of citizens included in the extract of the Voter List for that municipality. The municipal Council is required, within 60 days after the referendum results have been officially published, to arrange the issue that has been put to vote on the referendum in accordance with the referendum results.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
A lot of people express their standpoint at once for an important issue in the community.	The requirement for 20% of the officially registered voters to initiate the issue.
The municipality is required to respect the referendum results.	High census (51% to vote in favor) in order to have a successful referendum.
	Expensive because it requires informing of the public, establishing an infrastructure and engaging human resources.
	Complex procedure for initiation and implementation of a referendum.

<sup>6</sup> Gaber-Damjanovska (2008) – Participation of the civil sector in the decision making and law adoption processes in the Republic of Macedonia, research European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), Skopje, 2008.



### 3.2. Civic initiative



In order for a civic initiative to be raised, it needs to be supported by at least 10% of the voters in the municipality, meaning by the local community that is concerned by the issue. The municipal Council is then required to review the proposal within 90 days from the start of the initiative and to inform the citizens. The civic initiative is a form of direct vote of the citizens in the decision making, by raising initiatives before the Parliament and municipal councils. The civic initiative can be raised for submission of proposal for change of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, proposal for adoption of laws and for announcement of referendum on national level. It can be also used for adoption of specific acts of the municipalities and announcement of referendum on local level.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Opportunity to initiate solution for some important issue in the community.	The requirement for 10% of registered voters to initiate the issue
The municipality is required to reply, within 90 days, whether it accepts the proposal of the citizens.	Expensive because it requires informing of the public, establishing an infrastructure and engaging human resources.
	Complex procedure for initiation and implementation of a referendum.

### 3.3. Gathering of citizens



The gathering of citizens is called by the Mayor of the Municipality, upon his/her initiative, upon request by the Council or upon request by at least 10% of the citizens registered in the Voters List of the municipality i.e. in the Voters List of the local community for which the gathering has been called. The Mayor is required to call the gathering within 30 days after receiving the request. The municipal bodies are required to consider the conclusions and inform the citizens about their solutions within 90 days from the day scheduled for the gathering event. The civic gatherings are form of direct participation of the citizens in the decision making process when it comes to issues of local relevance and issues important for the local community. The gathering is called in order to hear the voice of the citizens about particular issues of local relevance and about issues important for the local community as well as for raising initiative for resolving issues of local importance. On these events, the citizens living in that area jointly consider the issues, establish standpoints and prepare proposals with regards





to the topics of direct and daily relevance for the life and work of the community or the local community.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Opportunity to initiate solution for some important issue in the community.	The requirement for 10% of registered voters to initiate the issue
The municipality is required to reply, within 90 days, whether it accepts the proposal of the citizens.	Expensive because it requires informing of the public, installation of infrastructure and engaging human resources.
	Complex procedure for initiation and implementation of a referendum.



### 3.4. Petitions/ proposals

Every citizen has the right, individually or together with others, to file petitions and proposals concerning the work of the bodies of the municipality and the municipal administration. In this case, the Mayor is required to provide possibility for submissions of petitions and proposals; to provide elaborated response to the filer no later than 60 days from the day of reception of the petitions and to submit the proposals that do not pertain to issues in the mandate of the municipal bodies to the relevant authority and inform the filer accordingly.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Opportunity to initiate solution for some important issue individually or as a group.	The municipalities not always provide the proper conditions for submission of petitions and proposals.
The municipality is required to reply, within 60 days, whether it accepts the proposal i.e. the petition of the citizens.	
The procedure is simple.	
If the bodies of the municipality are not in charge of the proposals and the petitions, the Mayor is required to submit them to the relevant bodies.	





### 3.5. Public forums



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Opportunity to publicly discuss some important topic with people who are knowledgeable in it.	There is no always clear distinction on who is organizing the public discussion and about what.
The procedure is simple.	The needs of the citizens are heard but there is not feedback on the results.
	Depending on where and how is organized, it can be inappropriate for different groups of citizens.
	The relations of power in the community can be also reflected in the public discussion, thus preventing specific groups of citizens to have their say.

### 3.6. Surveys



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Opportunity to quickly and easily hear the opinions and thoughts about particular issue relevant for the community.	The municipality has no obligation to act upon the survey results.
The procedure is simple.	If not implemented correctly, it could lead to fallacy.
It is possible to obtain gender-segregated information.	

### 3.7. Other possibilities for civic participation



The mechanisms stipulated in the Law are the minimum for taking into account the opinions of the citizens. The citizens and the civil society organizations also have a series of other means and ways they can use according to the possibilities and needs.

### 3.7.1. Municipal Council sessions

The Law requires for the Council sessions to be public and not to exclude public presence from debates concerning the municipal budget, annual financial accounts and reports of the municipality as well as urban plans.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
The Council sessions are public.	Prior notice by the participant is required.
Opportunity to hear directly the discussion in the Council of the municipality and the manner in which the decisions are made.	The citizens have no right to participate in the voting.
Opportunity to discuss and directly express specific issue with/ to the Council members and to the Mayor.	The session documents could be unclear or unavailable.

### 3.7.2. Local community

The Law on Local Self-government also prescribes that it is possible to establish forms of local (community) self-government in the municipality, such as urban communities (in the cities) and local communities (in other populated areas). The citizens can use the urban and local communities to consider issues, establish standpoints and prepare proposals on issues that directly concern the life and work of the citizens in that area on daily basis. They can also participate in the election of a council of the urban or the local community.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Closest to the citizens in terms of format and location.	Their status is not defined, which impacts their efficiency.
Opportunity to discuss and directly raise specific issue with/ to the President of the local/ urban community.	Over 90% of the presidents and council members are men, so the women have hard time getting involved.
	They are very often abused by the political parties (converted into political party staff).
	In the rural areas, the presidents and the members of the local community councils often are not familiar with the tools and manners for resolution of the problems.



### 3.7.3. Community forums

Each municipality can propose in its statute other forms of direct civic participation, in accordance with the Law and the Constitution. Such are the statutes of 2/3 of the municipalities in the Republic of North Macedonia that include the “community forums” as one of the ways of direct participation of the citizens in the decision making process..

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Enables partnership between the citizens and the local governments.	It is a process that takes more time.
There is already some infrastructure in place as well as practice of use.	Requires more human and financial resources from the municipality.
Opportunity to discuss and directly resolve specific issue.	

In addition to the legally prescribed forms of participation, there is also another ongoing practice as opportunity to communicate with the local authorities used by some of the municipalities:

- Open days with the Mayor
- Day of ideas
- Economic and social council
- Youth council
- Websites of the municipalities
- Facebook pages of the municipalities
- Petitions
- Meetings with the municipal counselors
- Municipal committees - Committee for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men
- Tenants association
- TV programs.

In order to use the above-mentioned participation opportunities, it is necessary to know the obligations of the municipal authorities for proactive informing.



The bodies of the municipalities, the committees of the municipal councils and of the public enterprises and institutions established by the municipalities need to inform the citizens about the decisions and their activities that are directly relevant for the life and work of the citizens in the municipalities, as well as about other public interest information. The obligation to inform pertains to the following:

- All acts adopted by the municipal councils,
- The manner and conditions of implementation of their rights,
- Obligations of the citizens stemming out of the mandate of the local self-government units,
- Plans, projects and programs in preparation,
- Services they receive from the public services and the municipal administration, and the manner in which they are receiving those services,
- The revenues they make and the manner of their distribution and spending,
- Public procurements for basic working means,
- Appointment of directors and representatives in the management boards of the public enterprises, institutions and schools,
- Other information stemming out of the competencies.

The civil society organizations have the Law on Free Access to Public Character Information<sup>7</sup> that can help them receive information the municipality refuses to share. According to the Law, organizations and individuals can obtain information in any format that has been created (and is used) by the holder of that information, in accordance with his mandate. Holders of information are state administration bodies and other bodies and organizations as defined in Law, bodies of the municipalities, the City of Skopje and the municipalities in the City of Skopje, including institutions and public services, public enterprises, legal entities and individuals performing public authorizations as defined by law. The Law clearly prescribes the procedures and deadlines and is important as a tool because the organizations can use it to obtain important information that will help identify the current situation with regards to particular issue.

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<sup>7</sup> Law on Free Access to Public Character Information, Official Gazette No.13, 1 February 2006.

# ANALYSIS OF THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN





Debarski banji, April, 2017 Photo credits: UN Women





## 4. ANALYSIS OF THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN

The data about women inclusion is based on the self-evaluation results carried out by the nine organizations that worked in 10 municipalities, and on the results from the 20 focus groups in those same municipalities that covered 252 women. The self-evaluation was implemented with a questionnaire that was answered by the representatives of all nine organizations regarding the activities they implement to inform and educate the women from the community. The questions were about consultations and mobilization of women in order to involve them further in the local decision making processes, such as cooperation between civil society organizations and municipalities.

The focus groups also covered women who are marginalized and/or in social risk, such as housewives, unemployed, beneficiaries of social assistance, women with special needs, women from different ethnic backgrounds, as well as women who are recognized in their community as employed, educated, activists, students, judges, business women, etc.

The results were used to develop and deliver training for capacity building of the organizations that were included. They developed plans for mobilization of women in the municipalities in which they worked, and trial run was implemented of some of the modalities presented in this Manual. One thousand and seven hundred women were covered.



Dzane Kreshova, President of CSO Zenski Forum from Tetovo, addressing women in Municipality of Shipkovic, discussing main issues related to infrastructure and lack of connection from the municipality to the nearest town of Tetovo and consequences of the major flood and options for women's inclusion in decision-making processes.

The event was part of the local level GRB outreach actions organised by the Strategic Development Consulting and Akcija Združenska and local partner organisations in the frameworks of UN Women Regional Project „Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe” supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Austrian Development Agency.

April, 2017, Photo credits: UN Women





# RESULTS





## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Key challenges for civic participation of women on local level

The analysis of the women inclusion in general shows that women insufficiently participate in the process of consultations and decision making. Therefore, the directions of the strategic approach towards women are derived from several key challenges extrapolated from the analysis of the current situation, in terms of motives for the (lack of) participation of women in the local communities and the current capacities to act, including practice of acting, of the civil society organizations.

#### 5.1.1. Factors that influence the participation of women

- **Lack of information and lack of knowledge about the work of the local self-government units, the civil society organizations and the manner of participation**

There is a lack of information among women about the mandate and the key processes and the role of the local self-government units. This is especially visible among women from the rural areas, where some women are even physically limited in the possibility to inform themselves. Even in municipalities that have a higher level of informing, the information still fail to reach large number of women. Most of the women are informed from the local media and informal contacts – there is a risk with this that the information they receive are limited and “processed” in the context of the daily political topics. Some of the women (from urban areas, active women and employed women) are informed more but they are not using the information for any engagement and they are not sharing them in an organized manner. Small number of women are informed through the civil society organizations. What is worrying is the fact that most of the women have very little information and know very little about how the civil society organizations work. In addition, we can see that there is very little understanding about the way in which their daily problems are related to the obligations of the local self-government units. The women that will still decide to request information have problem to identify where, to whom and how to address.



### ■ Lack of trust

The lack of trust is higher in most of the women, regardless of their social group, towards the civil society organizations and the municipality, and there is a discouragement to communicate with these organizations. Such high level of discouragement is partially due to failed efforts and/ or prior bad experiences with civil society organizations or with the municipality, apathy and lack of interest for any action that could change or improve their situation. Some of the women also show resistance for any communication or engagement in the community. When it comes to the most marginalized groups of women, in all municipalities we can see some degree of anger, or despair, and some resistance. Equally important is the fear of sanctions that prevents the women to try to articulate a request. Some of the women also have perception that the local government would see the more active civil engagement as “act of the enemy”, and this is based on the experience some women have.

### ■ They see no need to be active

Many of the women are very vocal in expressing their daily issues. However, they do not see themselves as stakeholders in the efforts to resolve those issue. There is this syndrome of waiting for someone else to identify and resolve the issues (syndrome such as “Just give me what’s there” and “Someone needs to organize us”), regardless whether it is the civil society organizations or the local self-government. The personal interests are dominant among the women and rare are those that have the awareness that their issues also concern a larger community of women. This is most likely due to the less and less social interaction between the women (especially those in the urban areas, although it is more and more obvious in the rural areas as well, which was not the case in the past).

Another noticeable thing is the lack of interest, even refusal to deal with the public finances. In most of the women there is this attitude that they have no right to intervene in the processes of planning and decision related to budget. Some of the most marginalized women see the public finances as humanitarian aid, probably because they are communicating with the local self-government units mainly for the basic survival needs. These women perceive the civil society organizations solely as humanitarian organizations and this impacts their expectations regarding financial assistance from the association. The challenge to activate this group of women is greater and requires a long-term engagement and specialized approach, in accordance with their specific needs for empowerment.

### ■ Lack of self-confidence

In small number of women, regardless whether they live in urban or rural areas, we can notice interest for greater social engagement. In the urban areas these are women that are adults or had initial social engagement but have withdrawn



themselves due to different reasons and had prior experience in raising issues in the community and communicating with the institution on resolving them. When it comes to rural areas, those are women that have greater awareness about the wider community and who activate themselves when they face some exceptionally burning issue in the community. This interest alone is not sufficient for self-organizing of these two categories of women, and it requires external impetus. Here we must not neglect the above-mentioned challenges that require introduction of relations of trust, cooperation and continuous mutual support and strategic approach.

There is a high level of criticism (towards the organizations, the municipality or the Mayor) among the women who are or could be potential target groups for the civil society organizations; however, there is also a low level of self-criticism.

## 5.2. How the civil society organizations cooperate with women and local self-government units?

The above mentioned challenges of the women and the insufficient engagement of the local authorities for inclusion of women are the key for instigating a participation. It is therefore very relevant to consider the challenges related to the existing capacities of the civil society organizations and the manner of interactions with the women in the community and the local governments. This is important because of their potential to bridge the gap interaction gap as a prerequisite for ensuring two-way communication and cooperation which would make it possible to influence the quality of the decisions adopted on behalf of the female citizens.

### ■ Limited number and institutional capacities of the civil society organizations

At present there is a limited number of local organizations working in the area of gender equality/ women rights. Due to the fact that these organizations have limited human and financial resources, they are mainly focused on project planning and this limits their capacity for long-term and strategic planning. Furthermore, most of these organizations have difficulties in attracting young educated staff, partially due to financial constraints but also partially due to focusing on activities based on the existing knowledge and capacities. Some of them do not have permanent staff but their activity is based on occasional engagement of members who are already professionally working elsewhere. As a result, they have difficulties in developing approaches adapted to the needs of their users, which is a prerequisite for increase of the constituent base and, with that, increased influence of the organization in the community and towards

the local government. On other hand, some civil society organizations do have potential to strengthen the links established with the women (they are their target group) if they are supported in maintaining continuous communication, increase of the support for women established as leaders by the local women and their active inclusion in participatory research, monitoring and advocacy towards the local self-government units.

- **The civil society organizations do not a systematic practice of communicating with the women from the community**

The interaction between the civil society organizations and the women in the community is mainly in frames of project activities. It is not continuous, systematic, long-term and focused strategy of the organizations that would aim to provide programming and delivery of their mission. In other words, most of the organizations implement activities for communicating with women two to four times a year. The civil society organizations do not differentiate levels of communication and they are using same methods/ formats for implementing the three basic communication objectives – informing and education, consultations and mobilization. Most of the organizations implement activities for *informing* and *education* for greater involvement of the women from the community. The commonly used forms for this are forums and public events, informal contacts via meetings and telephone communications, including campaigns. Some of them use trainings and social media for the same purpose. It is peculiar that the focus groups, the surveys and the researches are referred to as methods for informing and education. There is no mention of the inclusion, in the function of democracy, as a specific issue and no mechanism for inclusion of the women are used.

Furthermore, the topics on which they educate the women are reduced and they are usually related to current project activities of the organization or the current focus. The most common topics are the economic empowerment, women rights as human rights and gender based violence. There is a small number of civil society organizations that educate women in other topics such as democracy and transparency, social inclusion and introduction of the gender issue in all social mainstreams through gender-responsible budgeting – for example:

- **Limited scope of women**

The local civil society organizations mainly work with limited profile of women. These are usually young women, unemployed, activist and employed. The civil society organizations more rarely include rural women, women from political parties, business women and there is even less inclusion of women pensioners, passive women and women from vulnerable groups (women with disabilities, poor women, social assistance beneficiaries, v victims of violence, etc.).



- **The civil society organizations have no practice of participating in the decision making process of the local self-government units**

Presently only several organizations communicate with their local self-governments on regular basis. Most of the organizations have not yet been involved in processes of planning, decision making and reporting by the municipal governments. Of those few organizations that have been involved in these processes, most of them were involved in preparation of annual plans, smaller number in the budget planning and only one in the organization of the notification process. Almost all civil society organizations are not using the formal mechanisms for civic participation in the planning/ decision making in the local self-government units (public forums, gatherings of citizens, etc.). Most of the civil society organizations have no experience that would help them influence the key decision making processes in the municipality.

# PROPOSALS





April, 2017, Photo credits: UN Women







## 6. PROPOSALS

### 6.1. Proposal for approach/ Strategy for overcoming the challenges

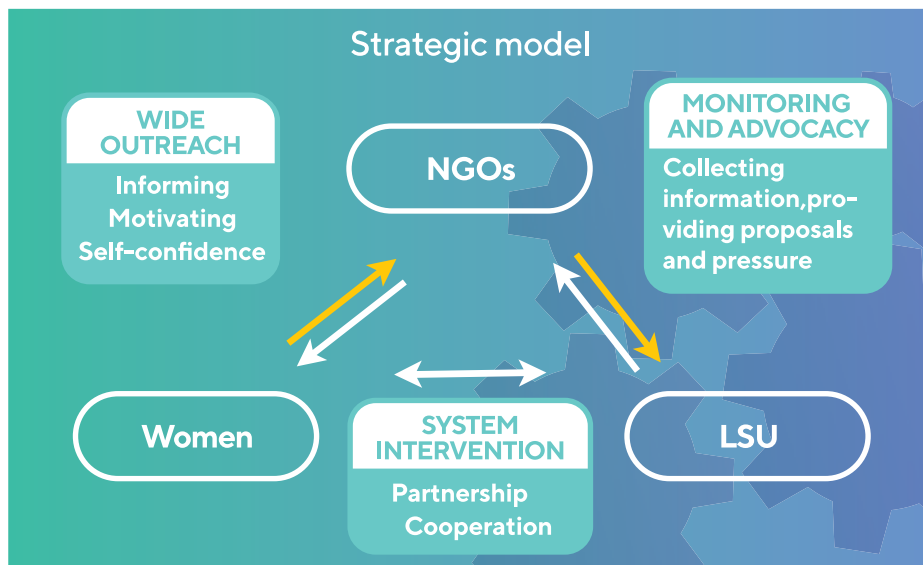
The approach proposed here starts from the **vision** for establishment of transparent, accountable and inclusive local self-government that will provide quality life for the women in the community. In that regard, the local self-government will offer improved services for women in the respective municipality. **Long-term objective** expected to be met by the Strategy is increased participation of women from the community in the local decision making processes. As mentioned above, it is expected that the three levels of participation will be met: presence in the decision making processes, the possibility to speak out about the needs and to express influence i.e. positive results from the participation.

**The results** expected to be achieved and are based on the key findings regarding the challenges are the following:

1. Empowered women. This means the women are informed, educated, motivated, with better self-confidence, articulated or vocal and active/engaged;
2. Better interaction between women, civil society organizations and the local government. This means introduction of regular two-way communication for the purpose of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the service relevant for women;
3. Increased support for the women coming from the community. This would include promotion of values related to gender equality and nondiscrimination, reduction of the resistance for mobilization and participation. Campaigns and promotion of successful stories are the methods that can be used.

In order to achieve these results it is necessary to strengthen and promote the values in the community such as equality, empathy and solidarity.

The basis of the strategic model we are proposing aims to establish systematic intervention that will be based on partnership and cooperation between the women from the local community and the local governments, in which the civil society organizations will have the role of facilitators of the dialogue.



Presently there is no communication between these two stakeholders (the women and the local self-government). In order to be able to implement this systematic intervention (partnership and cooperation), two prerequisites are necessary, as priorities in the activities of the local organizations:

### 1. Establishment of continuous two-way effective communication between the civil society organizations and the women (who are, of course, their constituents).

This communication should be implemented through campaigns with wide outreach that aim to inform, strengthen and mobilize. The civil society organizations are those that need to approach the women, having in mind the above-mentioned challenges for participation of women. The civil society organizations can develop activities that are relevant for the objective and in this regard it is necessary to combine the communication objective, paying attention to the needs of the specific groups of women they will be working with (young, adults, old, educated, uneducated, etc.). These are some of the activities the civil society organizations can use and adapt to different topics and issues:

- Development and implementation of programs for civic education and leadership for civic participation;
- Promotion of outreach services provided by the civil society organizations;
- Creating secure platforms for identification of common topics;
- Establishment of women solidarity groups;
- Inclusion of women in the implementation of the advocacy activities;



- Participatory research in cooperation with women;
- Joint development of petitions.

The idea is that the civil society organizations are informing women about their rights, opportunities, about the work of the local self-government units, thus motivating them for action and participation and building their self-confidence with knowledge and skills for active participation. These types of actions provides possibility for the civil society organizations to identify and strengthen local infrastructure of local allies and supporters, thus building the capacities of the civil society organizations. This aspect is essential in order to be able to implement the second aspect of the communication (civil society organizations – local self-government units) and these actions are very often interrelated among themselves.

## 2. Establishment of two-way communication between the civil society organizations and the municipality.

The communication in this case is also occasional, one-way and is not impacting the decision making processes. The communication between the civil society organizations and the local self-government units should be carried out through the approaches for monitoring and advocacy by the civil society organizations regarding the needs of women. In such case, the civil society organizations collect information about the work of the local self-government units, give proposals to them and exercise pressure for particular issues relevant for the women. The civil society organizations can use the following activities:

- Continuous collection of information and analysis of the content of programs and specific issues in the interest of women (about the budget, sectorial programs, etc.), including the dynamics for implementation of the programs;
- Monitoring of decision making processes;
- Participation in consultations;
- Initiation of relevant mechanisms for inclusion of the women;
- Evaluation of the service quality;
- Development of formal proposals, requests and organization of civic initiatives

All these activities are desirable to be planned and implemented with the local women, including here the sharing of feedback about the progress of the advocacy activities.

## 6.2. What are the steps for successful field work?

In the case of the field work, there are some general rules that need to be taken into consideration.

### Field work rules

DO	DO NOT
Give impression to the people that you have come to learn something	Ridicule them publicly
Explain the objectives and the flow of the discussion	Give false hope about future assistance or support
Be prepared to listen to them carefully, to understand them and to learn from what they are going to say	Use complicated methods that would difficult for the people to follow
Ask questions at the end of the discussion/ talk	Rush the organization of discussions
Explain the methods in details before the beginning of the process	Force anyone to participate
Encourage them to give you clear information	Become impatient
Work with team spirit	Ask too many questions at once
Carefully control the participants dominating the discussion	Introduce many topics at once
Write down the key points from the discussion	Give signals to the members of the team
Show respect to the people	Interrupt the discussion with frequent questions
Use local or easy-to-understand language	Act
Create vivid and pleasant atmosphere	Deviate from the main points
Act naturally	Talk too much or too fast
Self-criticism	Use unknown words and acronyms
Conclude the discussion by showing gratitude	Show too much closeness



### 6.2.1. Plan for field action

Steps for development of your plan for field action<sup>8</sup>

Develop a long-term action plan before you start implementing your scope activities. Here are some proposed steps:

#### 1. Identify and allocate the needs (for informing, empowerment or mobilization) and evaluate the available resources

What is required?

- To increase the informing, knowledge of the women (about particular topic/ service provided by the local self-government unit or your civil society organizations, etc.),
- To increase the scope/ number of cases (if the civil society organizations provides specialized services for particular target groups – legal assistance, shelter for women, psychosocial support, mediation with institutions, etc.),
- To identify what are the specific areas with less services or unsatisfied needs in your community (for example: economic empowerment, needs of particular ethnic groups, areas in the municipality that are not covered with services, etc.)
- To identify what staff and program resources the civil society organizations have for implementation of the field activities.

#### 2. Identify your target groups

Who do you want to reach to? (for example: young, rural, urban women, women from different ethnic communities, single mothers, women with disabilities or women taking care of people with disability, service providers, etc.). The main focus should be on the group you want to reach to. This does not mean that, when planning these field actions, you will exclude other groups as target audience, but rather that with a combined approach of methods you can also cover other groups as target audience with your actions (such as, for example, the general public).

#### 3. Setting the objectives

What would you like your primary target audience to do once it has heard your message? This primarily goes for women from the community you are working with and for the specific expectations about the results from your communication with them (for example: to stimulate them to think, to change

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<sup>8</sup> Source: California WIC Program: Outreach Resources, 2005



their attitude about a particular issue, to stimulate them for specific action). When setting the objectives, it is necessary to consider and to efficiently allocate the funds the civil society organizations has, to see what is feasible in accordance with the resources of the civil society organizations and to define who will do what, how, where and by when.

#### 4. Identify the outreach activities

What field methods and tools you are going to use? Will they be **one-off, short-term** or **current**, or a combination of several methods and tools? At least one of the activities that should be included in the field plan need to be planned as a field activity<sup>9</sup>.

#### 5. Implementation plan

Activate your plan through operationalization of the specific activities, the specific obligations and identify indicators through which you are going to follow the progress in the implementation and the changes you are implementing. Make adjustments is necessary.

#### 6. Evaluate the plan

Before implementing the plan, determine how you are going to evaluate it. How will you know that your plan works? What basic information you are going to collect before implementing the plan? What outcomes you are going to measure? What feedback you are going to collect from the participants, the potential participants, the service providers, etc.? What can you learn that will help you to be more successful in the future?

Pay attention that the indicators need to show how many women you managed to cover and what have been the changes (changes in the understanding, the attitudes, etc.). The evaluation is the key in order to see whether some of the approaches is working or not, and whether maybe some different methods for work with the target group are needed.

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<sup>9</sup> Sourced and adapted from "Getting Your Message Out: Types of Outreach", California WIC Program: Outreach Resources, October 2005.

### 6.3. Methodological approaches for field outreach

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The actions that were shown in this part were tested by civil society organizations involved in the project and they turned out to be appropriate for outreach to women in the community. Four types of methods turned out to be most appropriate and functional for the existing context in the communities and capacities of the civil society organizations. These methods were separated as the most successful in the establishment of effective two-way communication with the women and in the same time they have the potential to realize the second link i.e. they have the potential to provide two-way communication with the municipality.

Below we are showing the type, the steps, the objectives and the lessons learned for each of the methods on the basis of the experiences in their implementation. These are structured into four approach types with different objective.



### 6.3.1. Information-educational campaigns in the field

ACTION TYPE AND TITLE: INFORMATION-EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN THE FIELD	
DESCRIPTION	<p>The campaign can be about any specific topic relevant for the women in a particular community. It can be implemented through the following activities: door-to-door campaign, street actions for informing with information stands on public places, information meetings with women groups from different environments. The field campaign can be also combined with social media activities for better outreach, especially for young people.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creating messages, content and materials (fliers, banners, posters)</li> <li>■ Identifying locations (places with large frequency of people and households)</li> <li>■ Identification of proper time period for implementation,</li> <li>■ Selection of appropriate persons from the organization</li> <li>■ Distribution of materials and direct communication with women</li> </ul>
OBJECTIVE/S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased informing of women about particular topic or issue in the mandate of the civil society organizations or the local self-government units</li> <li>■ Education of women about particular issue</li> </ul>
ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Direct communication with the women from the community</li> <li>■ Outreach to women not included in the work of the civil society organizations</li> <li>■ Greater visibility of the civil society organizations in the community</li> <li>■ Greater public visibility of the issue for which the action is organized</li> <li>■ Specific topic/ issue is made more available and more clear</li> <li>■ Does not require significant human and financial resources</li> <li>■ Possibility for securing individual feedback here and how</li> <li>■ It can be implemented simultaneously on several locations</li> <li>■ Provides possibility for cooperation with other associations for promotion of issues of common interest</li> <li>■ They are not common, and they attract attention.</li> </ul>





LIMITATIONS/ RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Absence of women (or specific category of women) in public spaces</li><li>■ Weather conditions (bad weather, bad timing, etc.)</li><li>■ Limited interest for inclusion</li><li>■ Limited duration of the implementation.</li></ul>
RESOURCES	<p>The resources vary depending on the context and format. These usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Information and expertise on the topic,</li><li>■ Staff (members of the organization and/ or volunteers),</li><li>■ Development of materials (flier, banner, poster, etc.),</li><li>■ Translation costs,</li><li>■ Transportation costs.</li></ul>
LESSONS LEARNED / ADVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The key aspect in the field campaigns is the transfer of content in simple and easy-to-understand language, as well as using as creative as possible visualization of the messages and the media used for transfer of information and data – they are supposed to attract the attention of the passers-by.</li><li>■ It should be known that the women present on a public space are in a hurry and it requires planning in advanced about the most appropriate way to establish first contact and to retain their attention.</li><li>■ In more closed (rural) environments, the women are more open to talk when they are in their local (domestic) environment (this goes for door-to-door campaigns).</li><li>■ They selection of persons who will be conveying the message is the key for these types of campaigns. In this respect, it is good to involve people from the community who will feel free to communicate with unknown persons.</li><li>■ It is necessary to train the female activists who will do the field work on how to do such work and about the basic points related to the specific topic.</li><li>■ The organization needs to follow up the proposals that have been submitted to the municipality and to give feedback to the women.</li><li>■ It is very important for these actions to cooperate with the local media and to ensure they are conveying the information. They can also support the street action with statements, guest appearances in the media, etc.</li></ul>

### 6.3.2. Participatory research

ACTION TYPE AND TITLE: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH	
DESCRIPTION	<p>Process of collection of relevant information through direct communication and in cooperation with the women from the community. They can be about identification of needs, attitudes regarding specific issue, evaluation of services provided by the local self-government or the civil society organizations, planning of civil society organization activities, drafting proposals, identification of manners of cooperation and inclusion of women. It is relevant to mention that the objective of these research activities is not to prepare scientific studies or analysis, but rather to establish communication with women by collecting information. One of the reasons to use these activities is to identify the directions for future actions of the organizations by collecting information. This is implemented through focus groups, consultation meetings with women in the community, street survey and door-to-door.</p> <p>The focus groups provide insight in the manner in which the women think, and they provide deeper understanding about the phenomena that are studied. A focus group is essentially a small group of around ten women managed by a trained female moderator in an open discussion.</p> <p>The consultation meetings with women in the community can be in a form of greater outreach of women, but also in a form of small meetings with groups of women from the community from different categories in order to identify, through discussion, the key burning problem or the issue for which the women would be engaged to resolve, to take specific standpoint about particular decision or plan of the municipality, or to plan some specific action.</p> <p>The information can be collected with surveys that can be implemented on the street or through a door-to-door approach.</p>
OBJECTIVE/S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Collection of information from the women</li><li>■ Creating a base for planning of programs and activities</li><li>■ Stimulation of thinking about specific issue</li></ul>



ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ This type of activities provides planning that is not based on assumptions but on the specific needs of the women.</li><li>■ The possibility for socializing of women is increasing.</li><li>■ It assists the opening of informed debate about the needs and issues among the women themselves;</li><li>■ Useful as consultation tools when there are different categories of stakeholders in terms of type of influence, group characteristics or their location.</li><li>■ Women with leadership skills are identified – those that are potentially able to share the knowledge and would assume in the future the role of leaders of female lobby groups and groups of female civic activists.</li><li>■ The discussions of the focus groups can be relevant for especially sensitive issues and topics.</li><li>■ Allows the different categories of stakeholders to speak-up their attitudes, including those that are marginalized.</li><li>■ Facilitates the processing of issues or interests that are not widely known or understood.</li><li>■ They provide exchange of ideas or testing of possible objectives and scenarios</li><li>■ They provide exchange of ideas or testing of potential objectives and scenarios among interest groups of stakeholders, in order to assist the planning of the consultations process.</li></ul>
LIMITATIONS/ RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Greater preparations are needed (relatively more time and expertise) since they include larger group of participants and there might be a need for specific consultations with different groups of stakeholders on different locations.</li><li>■ Since the female participants in these activities are not representatives of the population (statistically speaking), their standpoints and statements cannot be generalized as statements of the wider community/ population</li><li>■ It is possible that some group members would dominate the discussions – it is important to have a trained female facilitator in order to ensure that everyone was given the opportunity to speak</li><li>■ In order to obtain relevant information, it is necessary to pay attention to the relations of power between the women and to cluster them accordingly.</li><li>■ No appropriate (secure) space in some environments that could impact the participation level.</li><li>■ Lack of participation of women due to family and work obligations.</li></ul>



<b>COSTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Facilitator</li> <li>■ Preparation of the materials;</li> <li>■ Refreshment for the participants;</li> <li>■ Costs for the premises;</li> <li>■ Costs for communication for organizing the event and inviting the participants (Internet, telephone)</li> </ul>
<b>RESOURCES</b>	<p>The resources vary depending on the context and the format, and they usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Time for preparation, meaning a good plan and instruments for implementation of these activities</li> <li>■ Information and expertise on the topic</li> <li>■ Staff (female members of the organization and/ or volunteers)</li> <li>■ Translation services;</li> <li>■ Transportation costs</li> <li>■ Premises and equipment</li> <li>■ Refreshments (tea, coffee, snacks)</li> <li>■ Administration, post, materials</li> <li>■ Transportation of the participants</li> <li>■ Office supplies</li> </ul>
<b>LESSONS LEARNED/ ADVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Attention needs to be paid to the (diverse) structure of the focus groups. In order to be proper, the groups need to include women with which the organizations usually have no communication.</li> <li>■ It is necessary to create a secure space/ premises for different structures of women. In some environments in which the cultural norms require from the young people to keep quiet before the older people, it is necessary to organize separate group discussions for young and for adult people, and these should be managed by persons they can identify with.</li> <li>■ It is recommended to mix the participants in the urban environments.</li> <li>■ It is recommended to structure the focus groups around carefully chose question – usually not more than 10 – but please allow for the discussion to flow. Ideally, the participant comments will stimulate and influence the opinion and sharing of the others. Some people even change their opinions and thoughts during the course of the group.</li> <li>■ It is necessary to use experienced female facilitator who is trained, neutral and governs the topic well. She needs to ask questions and request for information, without being partial in looking for answers, she needs to deal with potential conflict discussions in the group and to prevent the female participants from dominating or refocusing the discussions. She also needs to prevent them from raising irrelevant questions.</li> <li>■ The expectations of the stakeholders need to be managed and to clearly explain what can be and what cannot be achieved through consultations/ discussions in group.</li> </ul>



### 6.3.3. Building support networks

ACTION TYPE AND TITLE: BUILDING SUPPORT NETWORKS	
DESCRIPTION	<p>The building of support networks is a long-term process that includes several consecutive steps. This approach is especially relevant for organizations that have already established contacts (history of cooperation) with individual women from the rural or urban areas and/ or with women who have prior experience with a social engagement.</p> <p>This approach is about continuous and systematic strengthening and inclusion of those women that will further take on the role of the organizations in the strengthening and creation of cores of women groups, meaning establishment of wider infrastructure of local supporters. In essence, the strategy is about starting small, then using the existing potential and, via continuous strengthening, to enable spillover of the knowledge and skills acquired to as large group of women as possible. For organizations that do not have this structure, the steps are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identification of potential individuals for contact with the community. They will work with these individuals on their strengthening and leadership.</li><li>2. Establishment of teams in the urban and rural areas, each consisted of three women who will choose a team leader from themselves. This will establish the basis for women – promoters for further actions i.e. improved approach to the women groups and motivating them to raise more types of issues and needs that concern their living environments.</li><li>3. Strengthening of the teams on the basis of evaluation of needs for learning and skills, including the aspect of strengthening of the leadership abilities. It is important for this education to be field-oriented for the women in the rural areas, meaning it should be delivered in the place where they live. This process needs to take place through educational interactive workshops, mentoring or involvement in activities of the civil society organizations.</li><li>4. Expansion of the teams to include other women from the community and sharing of the knowledge and skills acquired through consultation meetings, focus groups, etc. Ideally (but not necessary), these groups should be similar in terms of characteristics, interest, social and economic status, place of residence, age – as key prerequisites for mutual interconnection and joint actions for the purpose of informing, education, advocacy and mobilization.</li><li>5. Sharing of joint activities with the teams. In this entire process, the role of the civil society organizations is to provide support and to have partnership approach.</li></ol>
OBJECTIVE/S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Increase base of constituents of the civil society organizations</li><li>■ Increased mobilization capacities of the women for the purpose of advocacy towards the local self-government units</li><li>■ Improved legitimacy and capacity of the society organization to represent the women from the community</li></ul>



<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This approach ensures sustainable capacities among the local community of women for independent actions</li> <li>■ Builds the trust between the civil society organizations and the women. The likelihood for success of the advocacy actions is increasing</li> <li>■ Increases the potential for active participation.</li> </ul>
<b>LIMITATIONS/ RISKS</b>	<p>Requires long-term dedication and capacity of the civil society organizations. This means that the organization first needs to strengthen its own knowledge and skills for this type of work in order to secure support of the local women. The civil society organizations should have sufficient human and financial resources in order to ensure continuous support because of the risk of losing the women trust in the organization (if the support stops). This approach needs to be included in the annual plans of the organizations because this is not a one-off project activity but a multiyear strategy.</p>
<b>RESOURCES</b>	<p>The resources vary depending on the format and the context. They usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Time for preparation, meaning good plan and instruments for implementation of these activities</li> <li>■ Knowledge and skills for knowledge share from the staff</li> <li>■ Staff (female members of the organizations and/ or female volunteers)</li> <li>■ Training costs (premises, equipment, materials, translation)</li> <li>■ Transportation costs</li> <li>■ Costs related to the women activities</li> <li>■ Administration, post, materials</li> <li>■ Communication costs</li> <li>■ Office supplies</li> </ul>
<b>LESSONS LEARNED/ ADVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The key for implementation of these types of actions is to listen to the women and never to impose the interests of the civil society organizations.</li> <li>■ When the women recognize that the organization works in their benefit, and not vice versa, in that case the actions are more successful.</li> <li>■ This approach builds the sense of community.</li> </ul>



### 6.3.4. Mobilization for advocacy

ACTION TYPE AND TITLE: MOBILIZATION FOR ADVOCACY	
DESCRIPTION	<p>This approach is used when some burning issue concerning larger group of women in the community has been identified, and is focused on motivation, ensuring of support and/ or joint approach towards the local authorities. The local organizations here have a key role to play in organizing the advocacy actions. First, the civil society organizations must collect sufficient information and make analysis of the issue, and identify the relevant municipal structures supposed to resolve the issue. In addition, they need to establish a group for support of the initiative that is consisted of women who are most directly concerned by the issue. The third step is to develop a petition with demands and to secure support with signatures to that petition. They can do this informally, with door-to-door approach, street campaigns for collecting signatures or to use the formal mechanism of civic initiative.</p> <p>Joint submission of the demand to the local self-government unit, meetings with representatives from the local self-government unit and/ or lobbying with municipal counselors.</p>
OBJECTIVE/S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Stimulation of the civic responsibility among the women</li><li>■ Greater knowledge about the decision-making processes in the municipality</li><li>■ Acquisition of advocacy experience</li></ul>
ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Raising of the issue and potential for resolving it</li><li>■ Greater visibility of the issue</li><li>■ Greater potential for instigating responsibility among the local self-government units</li><li>■ Useful experiences for further planning of future advocacy actions</li></ul>
LIMITATIONS/ RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Requires excellent knowledge of the competencies, procedures, authorizations, responsibilities, current mechanisms and practices for civic participation on the local self-government unit. For example, in Skopje there is a division of the responsibilities between the city and the municipalities, so it is important to identify the responsibility for resolving the specific issue.</li><li>■ Requires more field work and communication with larger number of women and detailed elaboration of the arguments and of the expected outcome in order to secure the support.</li><li>■ Possibility for political stigma, especially in the smaller environments, that could influence the degree of support by the women.</li><li>■ Possibility for the women who are already included to withdraw from the process at some point.</li></ul>

RESOURCES	<p>The resources vary depending on the format and the context. They usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Time for preparation, meaning good plan and instruments for implementation of these activities</li><li>■ Information and analysis for elaboration purposes</li><li>■ Staff (female members of the organizations and/ or female volunteers)</li><li>■ Operational costs for the initiative group</li><li>■ Transportation costs</li><li>■ Administration, post, materials</li><li>■ Communication costs</li><li>■ Office supplies</li></ul>
LESSONS LEARNED/ ADVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The media support is very important here (both from traditional and social media). If possible, it would be good to establish cooperation with journalists covering the issue in order to ensure their support for greater visibility of the issue.</li><li>■ When articulating the requests submitted to the local self-government units, it is advisable to also provide directions for potential solutions. It is therefore advisable to consult experts that will provide support to the group of initiators.</li><li>■ It is crucially important to give continuous information about the flow of the action and feedback of the outcome.</li></ul>



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A petition organised by CSO Civic Initiative of Women of Sveti Nikole, requesting introduction of public transportation with a subvention level from/to villages near Sveti Nikole, voicing the needs of rural women for better mobility.

The event was part of the local level GRB outreach actions organised by the Strategic Development Consulting and Akcija Zdruzenska and local partner organisations in the frameworks of UN Women Regional Project „Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe“ supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Austrian Development Agency.

April, 2017

Photo credits: UN Women



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# ANNEXES



April, 2017, Photo credits: UN Women







## 8. ANNEXES

### 8.1. Field Action Plan template (Part 1)

<b>1. Resources available and needed</b>	
<b>2. Target groups</b>	
<b>3. Objectives</b>	
<b>4. Field activities</b>	
<b>5. Staff</b>	
<b>6. Evaluation</b>	

### 8.2. Field Action Plan template (Part 2)

<b>Objective:</b>				
<b>Who</b>	<b>What and how</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>







