



# PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans April 2015

## PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN IN MACEDONIA



The SDC-supported project in Macedonia is raising awareness among members of civil society organizations of gender-responsive budgets in the public administration ©UN Women

In Macedonia, women are disadvantaged in the areas of employment, social protection and political participation. To promote equal opportunities, in 2006 the government passed a law on equal opportunities for men and women. To complement Macedonia's reform efforts jointly with national counterparts SDC is funding an equal opportunities project at the municipal level.

Inequality between the sexes is a major obstacle for economic development and reducing poverty. This is also the case in Macedonia where women are disadvantaged in a number of areas even though the Macedonian government ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) already in 1994. Only 35.3% of women in Macedonia are employed, placing the country significantly below the EU average of 58.5%. Similarly, in terms of qualifications only 15% of women have graduated from a university in comparison with the EU average of about 25%. In addition, political participation of women is severely limited in some localities. For instance, only 8.5% of women in rural areas are members of a political party or a non-governmental organisation and consequently rarely included in local decision-making processes (as of 2011 and 2012).

### EQUAL FINANCIAL PLANNING AND GENDER EQUALITY

Since January 2014, the SDC has provided technical and financial support for a UN Women project in Macedonia. UN Women is the United Nations agency that promotes gender equality. The project runs until the end of 2016 and is being carried out in ten municipalities in Macedonia, covering a population of approximately one million. A central concern is the planning of municipal tasks on the basis of gender equality, known as "gender responsive budgeting", which means that municipal authorities take into account the concerns of both women and men in their financial planning. Women naturally prioritize child-care centres; the safety of school children, particularly as it relates to traffic accidents; and adequate lighting of school facilities. Men, in turn, favor improved services particularly related to early diagnosis of generic diseases. In this way and taking into account budgetary constraints, services and facilities are funded accordingly and based on concerns of both men and women.

### FOCUS ON MUNICIPALITIES

SDC's main partners are municipalities and non-governmental organisations. Local elected councilors of the Municipal Council may also be interlocutors. The project provides technical support to municipal authorities to facilitate the identification of needs which are specific to women and men; and to take them into account in the planning process, and service delivery eventually.

The Macedonian Permanent Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is supported and strengthened within the framework of the mentioned UN Women project. Budgets and programmes in ten municipalities are closely examined and improved accordingly. Among the core priorities of the project is to sensitize municipal employees for gender equality.

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## FIRST SUCCESSES

In 2013, a national strategy on gender equality (2013-2020) was adopted in Macedonia. The city of Skopje was the first to enact a local strategy on equal opportunities for women and men as part of its efforts to implement national legislation and strategies. A working group is actively involved in ensuring the integration of gender issues in community work. Skopje also takes a leading role in other areas: within one year it increased the budget for the promotion of equal opportunities by 200% – from CHF 8,600 in 2013 to CHF 29,000 in 2014. With these resources it funds the “Women’s Rights Nights” public event on 8 March (International Women’s Day) which has been held in Skopje already for the third time. Another portion of the money is directed towards the construction of a family centre, where victims of domestic violence are treated and receive counselling.

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

“Women’s Rights Nights” public event in Skopje (en):  
[www.womensrightsnights.net/](http://www.womensrightsnights.net/)

Law on Equal Opportunities For Women and Men (en):  
[www.refworld.org/pdfid/44b26f664.pdf](http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/44b26f664.pdf)

The current situation regarding gender equality in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – Country Profile (en):  
[ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/epo\\_campaign/country-profile\\_fyrom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/epo_campaign/country-profile_fyrom_en.pdf)

## THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

### NAME

Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in Southeast Europe – Contribution to UN Women

### DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

### THEME

Human rights (including women’s rights), local governance

### COUNTRY/REGION

Macedonia

### PARTNERS

UN Women (Istanbul regional office), Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC)

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SDC has made a one-off financial contribution for a project in Macedonia to promote equal opportunities in countries in south-eastern Europe carried out by UN Women. The aim of the project is to introduce “gender responsive budgeting”, that is to establish measures within the public budgeting process that promote equal opportunities for women and men.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Gender responsive budgeting is to be integrated into national and local policy.

### TARGET GROUP

Finance and equal opportunities mechanisms at the local and central levels  
Officials and advisers of ministries  
Ten local self-governing districts (covering approximately one million residents)  
Members of parliament  
Civil society organizations  
Research institutions

### PHASE DURATION

January 2014–December 2016

### PHASE BUDGET

CHF 1,170,400

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## CONTACT

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