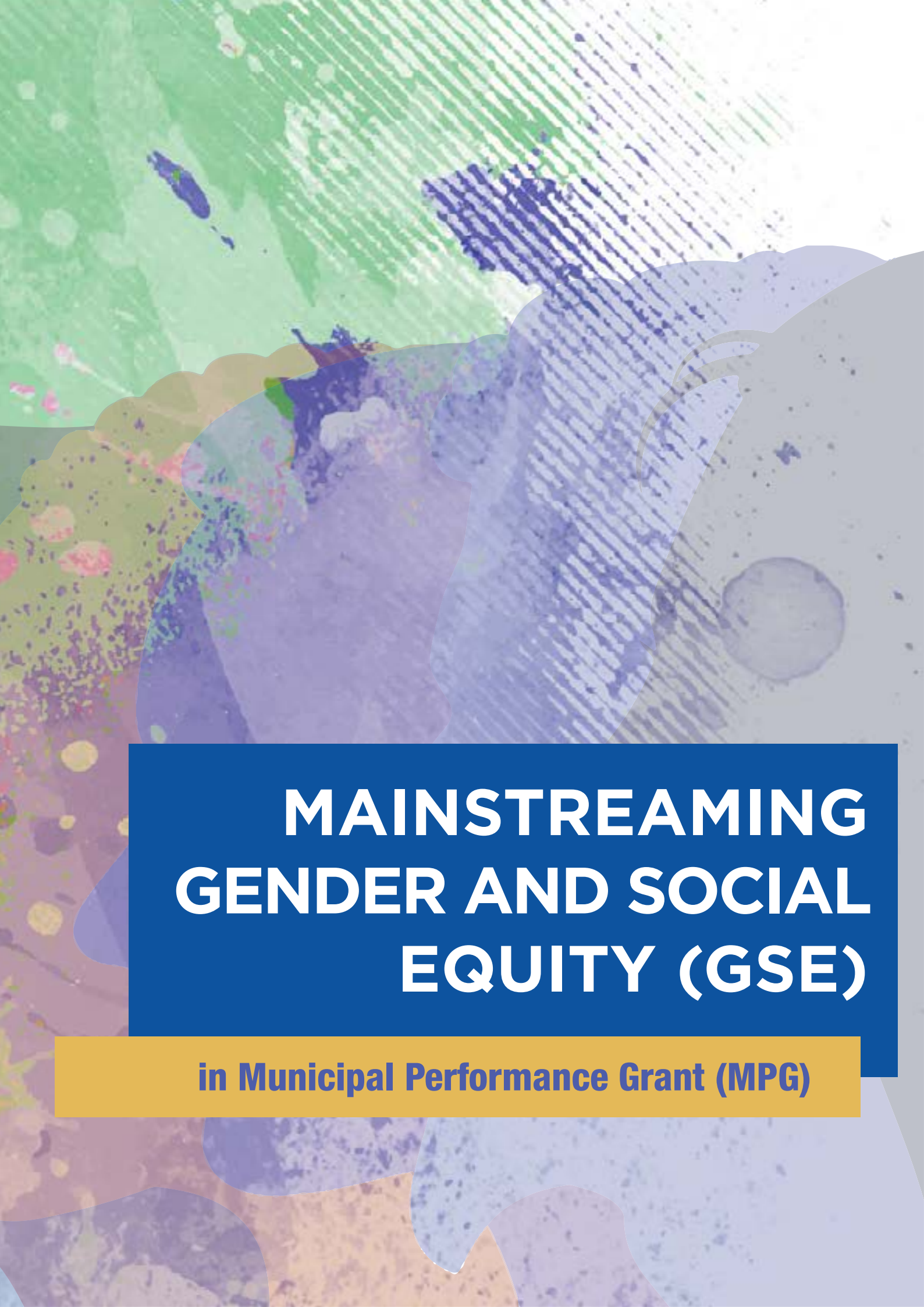




MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND SOCIAL EQUITY (GSE)

in Municipal Performance Grant (MPG)

**MAINSTREAMING GENDER
AND SOCIAL EQUITY (GSE)
IN MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE
GRANT (MPG)**

December 2020

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Methodology

Aim of the research:

Eight municipalities have been selected jointly with DEMOS as the sample size for the assessment of Gender and Social Equity (GSE) in the Municipal Performance Grant (MPG). Eight municipalities were selected among 25 municipalities qualified in 2018 and 19 municipalities qualified in 2019. The sample of eight municipalities includes two Serb-majority municipalities such as Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. These municipalities have benefited from the MPG through which certain capital projects have been financed lately. In relation to the time-frame, projects which have been financed in 2018 and 2019 have been selected for assessment or review. In relation to the number of projects serving as the sample size, 12 capital projects financed through the MPG in the eight municipalities have been selected jointly with DEMOS. These 12 projects have been selected out of 50 projects financed under MPG in 2018 and 36 in 2019 and relate to projects which have been financed also through the MLG share of funds. The following municipalities were assessed and visited:

No.	Municipality	No. of projects	Project
1	Istog	1	Regulation of the space and infrastructure around the Sports Hall
2	Kaçanik	2	Regulation and asphaltting of city roads Construction of sidewalks in the Imisht neighborhood
3	Lipjan	1	Placement of signaling devices in the city of Lipjan
4	Novoberde	1	Regulation of the football stadium in the village of Prekovic
5	Podujeva	2	Construction of the ambulanta in the village of Majac/Majance Construction of houses for social assistance cases at "Lagjja e Dëshmorëve" neighbourhood in Balloc/Balovac
6	Shtime	1	Regulation of sidewalks, public lighting and greenery at the "Koman-dant Kumanova" (the remaining part), "Tahir Sinani", "Anton Çeta" streets and of the parking facility at "Emin Duraku" school
7	Shtërpce	2	Reconstruction of public lighting, placement of LED technology in the village of Firaja Construction of concrete canals in the Shtërpce settlement
8	Vushtrri	2	Construction of the training ground of the football stadium in Dobërlukë/Dobra Luka Reconstruction of the spaces in the squares in Stanoc i Poshtëm/Donje Stanovce, Novolan/Nevoljane, Maxhunaj/Novo Selo Madžunsko, Bukosh/Bukoš, Nedakoc/Nedakovac, Druar/Drvare, Banjskë/Banjska, Studime e Poshtme/Donja Sudimlja, Stanoc i Epërm/Gornje Stanovce, and in the city of Vushtrri/Vučitrn (12 projects)
		12	

For assessment purposes, the following methods have been applied: design of three types of questionnaires for three target groups: 1) municipal officials from the directorates of budget and finance, public services, gender offices, offices for community affairs, project officers and representatives of Handikos offices in the eight municipalities, 2) Local NGOs which are active in the eight municipalities and deal in a way or another with marginalised groups, and 3) marginalised groups. The definition of marginalised/vulnerable groups defined by DEMOS has been serving to define the concerned marginalised groups. They are: people with special needs, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (RAE), youth (young women/men), women, pensioners/the elderly, rural-remote dwellers, and non-majority communities. Questionnaires have been agreed with DEMOS, transferred online and then distributed to the target groups, apart from marginalised groups. The latter have been interviewed mainly through phone interviews using the third type of questionnaire dedicated to marginalised/vulnerable groups.

Besides the online questionnaires, direct meetings with municipal officials and in most cases with local NGOs have been held in the respective municipalities. After the face-to-face interviews, visits on the spot where projects have been implemented (or are being implemented) have been conducted together with respective municipal project officers. In total, a number of 49 interviews were conducted with the three target groups. This aimed to see the benefits of marginalised/vulnerable groups from the capital projects implemented and whether such projects have improved the lives of marginalised/vulnerable groups in the municipality. In agreement with DEMOS, in municipalities where more than two projects had been selected for assessment, only one of them has been visited, although there were also discussions about the other project.

Besides the abovementioned elements, four more elements have been investigated: a) implementation of budgetary hearings in the municipalities concerned, b) application of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) c) participation of citizens in policy and decision-making processes in the municipality and d) “leave no one behind” approach.

The “leave no one behind” approach was applied during the research, when each municipality was asked on the five factors to explain the reasons why needs and requests of municipalities were not taken into consideration when planning and designing the municipal capital projects. The five factors are: 1) discrimination, 2) socio-economic status, 3) geography (distance), 4) municipal governance and 5) lack of representation and participation. The first factor relates to discriminatory reasons why needs/requests of marginalised groups are not taken into consideration, while the second is also related to the first and actually tries to explain if needs are not taken into consideration due to the socio-economic status of such groups. The third factor is about the geography, meaning if the distance between the marginalised groups (for instance rural remote dwellers) and the municipality is a factor to explain why needs are not taken into consideration by the municipality. The fourth factor relates to the quality of governance, meaning whether the municipal governance is weak to take into consideration and address the needs of such groups. The fifth factor is related to the lack of representation of marginalised/vulnerable groups in the municipal bodies, as the reason why the municipality does not take into consideration the marginalised/vulnerable groups. Results from these questions for the eight municipalities are shown in the appropriate section of the report.

Findings

1. Municipalities assessed have not done any mapping of concerns of marginalised/vulnerable groups in the municipality and consequently do not know what their needs and requests are, besides individual requests of such groups;
2. Likewise, none of the municipalities assessed have identified a marginalised/vulnerable group where additional services/sources/projects are needed. On the other hand, five out of eight municipalities assessed have declared that priority is given to the needs of people with special needs (look for the specific municipalities below);
3. Much of the needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups are expressed to the municipalities by the respective groups through individual requests. This is how it works out in most cases in the municipalities assessed;
4. Therefore, municipalities find themselves supporting projects with no vision/plan which guarantees sustainability and therefore the possibility of financing almost the same projects each year exists. Such a selection process to finance projects has not proved to be sustainable, planned and leading to the improvement of the situation of marginalised/vulnerable groups;
5. Both municipalities and marginalised/vulnerable groups declare that needs/requests of marginalised/groups are taken into consideration to a large extent pursuant to individual requests, however, addressing of needs is sporadic, non-programmatic and is done in ad-hoc basis. Earlier planning of support for these groups is missing;
6. Financial support to project proposals by the municipalities for the marginalised/vulnerable groups is to a great extent directed towards representative organizations of such groups. For instance, if the municipality supports the Handikos office in yearly basis with, for instance, EUR 12,000, it considers that needs/requests of people with special needs and have been considered and addressed entirely. Based on the conversations with marginalised/vulnerable groups, this has not been proved to be the same. For instance, needs of individual people with special needs in the case of Kačanik/Kaçanik have been different from the needs/requests of Handikos office in this municipality. This means that financing of a representative organization is not equal to the support for needs/requests of the whole group;
7. Municipalities assessed have failed to bring any examples of when needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups have changed the list of capital projects to be implemented in the municipality. On the other hand, according to municipalities, projects where co-financing is secured are immediately put in the priority list and especially when co-financing is covered by international donors;

8. When the list of projects is planned and approved, no municipality have declared to take into account the needs/requests of marginalised groups during project implementation;
9. In terms of who is left behind – reasons why somebody from the groups is left behind (the five factors) – majority of municipalities have referred to the lack of representation and participation of marginalised groups;
10. In terms of how the municipality gathers the needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups, individual requests and public meetings take precedence before other forms of organizations or events;
11. No municipality have declared to be doing any special efforts to reach out to marginalised groups besides in election times or when such events are donor-driven activities;
12. The budget is not classified pertaining to marginalised/vulnerable groups. As such, project proposals submitted by such groups are dispersedly financed. A project may be selected to be supported by a certain directorate or by the Office of the Mayor – depending on the subject (topic) of the project, for instance, a project proposal related to education is supported by the directorate for education, etc.;
13. Eight municipalities subject to this assessment have Offices for Community Affairs, however, their budget is so limited under the category of subsidies whereby projects related to communities can be supported;
14. From the 12 projects selected in the eight municipalities, six of them have been part of the priority list of projects and six others have been part of the reserve list of capital projects;
15. From the 12 projects visited, youth is the most often the direct beneficiary of such projects. In fact, youth is the direct beneficiary in eight out of 12 projects visited;
16. Not all projects financed during 2018 and 2019 have been noticed completed when visited. Four out of 12 projects were not completed when visited on the spot;
17. In the case of Istog/Istok, the surrounding area of the Sports Hall financed through the MPG was not finished when visited in early November. Such was the case of the project with the football stadium in the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, which is neither finished nor has been put into practice yet. Two other cases in this regard have been noticed in Podujevë/Podujevo (project of building houses for families under social assistance in Balloc/Ballovac) and Vushtrri/Vučitrn, construction of the training ground in the village of Dobërllukë/Dobra Luka;
18. Projects financed through the MPG, where properly implemented and put into practice (cases of Shtime/Štimlje with the sidewalk, greenery, public lighting etc.), have improved the lives of marginalised/vulnerable groups;
19. Budgetary hearings are very formal and organized to a great extent due to legislative requirements. However, participation of citizens (including marginalised/vulnerable groups) has been assessed as critically low. In most municipalities, such hearings do not foster debate and certain local NGOs are assessing them as places where people affiliated with the local government take part in order not to leave them to fail;
20. The number of budgetary hearings varies from two (2) to ten (10) and includes other smaller locations and not only the town. However, participation is critically low, no evidences for

the participation of marginalised groups have been proved and there were no examples of when the needs/requests of such groups have been in the agenda of budgetary hearings organized last year;

- 21.** GRB is applied by the eight assessed municipalities to the extent the template from the Ministry of Finance requires so. According to two examples given by two municipalities, the GRB is reflected on three elements: 1) the general number of staff divided by gender (and planning for the next year), 2) the level of salaries for this staff, for instance how many of them receive between EUR 300-400 and this is further disaggregated by gender and 3) subsidies to beneficiaries disaggregated by gender including planning for the next year. However, gathering of this data is done manually by the Director for Budget and Finance or the Chief Financial Officer from all directorates and units from where budget in the form of subsidies has been spent. This means that there is no pre-defined system of classification of such expenses, but data is gathered almost manually from the system and integrated into the templates provided by the Ministry of Finance (have a look at one example under the GRB section);
- 22.** Besides the individual requests from citizens and marginalised groups to the municipality, participation of citizens in the policy- and decision-making processes of the municipality is weak since not many citizens take part in public meetings and budgetary hearings organized by the municipality. No other forms of consultations/participations between the municipality and citizens have been noticed to take place. Organization and effect of public meetings have a low trust, and simply neither the municipality nor the citizens are believing anymore in such events.

Considering and addressing needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups when planning municipal capital projects

Needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups are considered by municipalities especially when having direct and individual requests from these groups. Also, requests made through public meetings and budgetary hearings are not neglected. For illustration purposes, there was an individual request from a representative of a remote area to the Directorate for Public Services when the Municipality of Kaçanik/Kaçanik was visited since the meeting took place in the same directorate/office. The request was registered, contact information was taken, and it was promised to the representative that respective officials from the municipality will approach him and visit the place to examine the real situation. Also, as provided by the Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje (and this is valid in all municipalities visited), requests of marginalised groups are registered no matter where they are submitted, to the Mayor's office or to specific directorates. Then, special committees are established to review the requests gathered and decide accordingly. On this point, from the interviews with municipal officials, marginalised groups, and local NGOs, it can be said that needs and requests of marginalised groups are mostly considered through individual requests. Based on this, it can be concluded that needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups in the eight municipalities visited are considered and addressed, however, they are sporadically in ad-hoc basis, not continuous and non-programmatic.¹ This way, none of the municipalities have done a mapping of concerns or marginalised/vulnerable groups in the municipality. Moreover, no category/group of marginalised/vulnerable people to whom additional services/projects/resources should be made available has been identified in a formal/official manner. However, when asked if any category from such groups is considered a priority in your municipality, a few municipalities have listed certain groups where capital projects and resources for them are a priority.

In this regard, the municipalities of Lipjan/Lipljan, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Shtime/Štimlje, Podujevë/Podujevo and Vushtrri/Vučitrn have declared that priority is given to the concerns of people with disabilities. This way, the municipality of Lipjan/Lipljan² has built along the city 12 platforms which consist of sidewalks, crossings, traffic lights with alerting system which is adequate for people with special needs, especially for those with physical needs and deaf people who use the crossings in between the streets. Also, a few parking places along the town have been reserved as parking places for people with disabilities who use their appropriate cars to park. On the other hand, according to the Head of Handikos in the Municipality of Lipjan/Lipljan, these

¹ Interviews with two representatives from two Women Associations in two municipalities, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.

² Meeting with Shaban Sylja – Directorate for Budget and Finance, Valzium Mziu – Project Officer, Afrim Mena – Handikos office, and Hasan Luma – Gender Equality Officer, 19 November 2020, Lipjan/Lipljan.

parking places have proved to be not enough large since not enough space has been left for this category to open the door and leave the car, because more space is needed. Also, citizens not belonging to this category usually park their cars in such places and there are no punishments by the police. Moreover, according to the representative of NGO we met in Lipjan/Lipljan, there are around 200 young people with disabilities from 1 to 18 years old who have been supported only once by the municipality with a project estimated around EUR 2,000 and the project lasted about 4 months. According to this representative, such young people need to receive social services in daily and weekly basis depending on their needs, and they have not been consistently supported by the municipality.

In this regard, the Municipality of Kaçanik/Kaçanik³ has eliminated barriers in certain areas of the town between sidewalks by making them easier to be passed by the people with physical disabilities using the wheelchairs. Another example in this regard by the Municipality of Kaçanik/Kaçanik is given when the municipality has referred to a request of an individual with special needs who has lately established an NGO and has requested from the municipality an office for him and, in fact, for the NGO. As a result, the municipality has reserved him an office in the premises of the Center for Social Work but the person in question has not accepted this offer since the office is big, not proper and toilets do not meet the criteria of people with special needs. According to the municipality, this question has remained open for the moment and efforts will be made to solve it through the Handikos office.

The Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje⁴ also gives priority to the people with disabilities. According to the municipal representatives we met, there are several projects from which people with disabilities have benefited. For instance, three sidewalks done along three main streets from 2014 to 2019 implemented through MPG have helped the elderly, people with disabilities, youth and women walk freely along these parts of the city. Then, the park nearby the Youth Centre has been equipped with sports facilities to be used by youth, the elderly (since playing chess and ping-pong has been made possible) women, and people with special needs. Also, walking paths have been constructed around 10 km long between the villages Petrovë/Petrovo and Vanisht. There is also another park which is being constructed (close to the pines place) with several sports fields such as for ping-pong, tennis, football, volleyball, basketball – this is a project co-financed by the municipality and the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD) – it has started in 2020 and the first phase is expected to be finished this year, while the second phase is expected for 2021.

3 Meeting with Ramadush Osmani – Director for Budget and Finance, Fadil Guri – Office for Community and Return, Vedat Dema – Coordinator of the Office for Gender Equality, and Shkodran Sopa – Project Officer (not employed anymore in the municipality).

4 Meeting with Hamez Tershani – Director of Public Services, Fatmir Rexhepi – Project Officer, Ibrahim Demiri – Office for Community and Return, Kimete Uka – Chief Financial Officer, and Reshat Gashi – Gender Equality Officer.

The Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn⁵ is another example of a municipality which gives priority to the people with disabilities. According to the municipal officials we met and confirmed by the Head of Handikos in this municipality, Handikos office is supported each year with EUR 12,000 for their needs according to the project plan proposed, while the municipality organizes the transport of children with special needs – from their homes the rehabilitation centres – depending on their needs.

Another municipality which serves as another example in terms of considering the needs and requests of people with disabilities is that of Podujevë/Podujevo⁶. According to the municipal officials we met and confirmed by the head of Handikos in this office, the municipality awards scholarships in yearly basis to the people with special needs each time they present such requests. Also, the municipality organizes, in annual basis, one day of work in the administration of the municipality for people with special needs – depending on the ability of each person – and pays each one 10 euros for this activity.

On the other hand, the representative of Handikos we met has brought an example when needs of a family with special needs have not been considered. He referred to a case when a family with members with special needs had requested from the municipality to build a house for them, but the appropriate municipal committee decided not to since the family was not qualified for.

Designing and planning of municipal capital projects

Municipal officials we met declared to take into consideration needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups when planning and designing capital projects to be implemented in the municipality. However, when asked to point out cases when needs/requests of such groups have been considered for instance during the planning process last year, they hardly come up with any case in this regard. Also, when asked about budgetary hearings and whether needs/requests of marginalised groups have been a topic during last year budgetary hearings, none of the municipalities declared to have had needs/requests of such groups part of the agenda of the budgetary hearings.

⁵ Meeting with Njomza Rama – Cabinet of Mayor, Lutfi Gerguri – Director for Budget and Finance, Refik Maloku – Director of Urbanism, Remzije Zekolli – Gender Equality Officer, and Ekrem Miftari – Project Officer.

⁶ Meeting with Kadrie Ajvazi – Directorate for Budget and Finance, Naime Podvorica – Gender Equality Officer, Naime Ajeti – Emergency Officer, and Idriz Hoxha – Handikos Office in Podujevë/Podujevo.

Even when municipalities take into consideration needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups from time to time, it is not that the municipality has a formula or program on how to weigh the proposal and what needs to be done first and what next. This is a consequence of the situation where municipalities do not know about the situation of their marginalised/vulnerable groups in the municipality. As said, it is heavily, if not all, depended on case-by-case review, based on project proposal and with no vision what to support, how, when one request should be covered, and most importantly, the sustainability aspect is not guaranteed in any financing. When looking at the decisions of municipalities which spend through subsidies, mayor's office, and other offices (including through the Office for Community Affairs and Office for Gender Equality), it comes out that a large budget is spent for these categories, but their situation in a long-term perspective is not improved. This is because representatives of marginalised groups are financed and the same come again and again with the same requests. For instance, Handikos offices in most municipalities visited receive subsidies from municipalities in financing activities with people with special needs, or women who deal with agriculture receive financing through associations in this regard, or youth receive any financial support through their representatives, however, the same requests are made also next year (such as requests to cover office rent, electricity bills, office materials and for on-going small projects which are annually organized. This is a problem for municipalities since, first of all, there is no mapping of concerns for marginalised/vulnerable groups and the financial supports are provided in quite ad-hoc basis with no planning behind.

Gathering of needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups by the municipality

Municipalities visited as well as marginalised groups contacted⁷ have not pointed out any special forms how the municipality gathers needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups living in the municipality. In the case of Lipjan/Lipljan, according to the representative of NGO Polis, the latter does much more efforts to inform the municipality about the needs of such people than the municipality itself. According to the latter, budgetary hearings have been transformed into places where no debate/discussion is fostered and more people affiliated with political parties take part in such budgetary hearings just for the sake of not leaving them to fail due to non-presence of citizens.

In the question about the forms/ways how the municipality gathers the needs/requests of marginalised groups, the following table on the left side depicts alternatives whereas the right-side part lists the name of the municipality which applies that certain method.

⁷ Telephone interview with one representative of marginalised groups from Blind Association in the municipality of Istog.

Table 1: *Ways how the municipality gathers needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups*

Public meetings with citizens	Istog/Istok, Kačanik/Kačanik, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Shtime/Štimlje and Vushtrri/Vučitrn
Individual requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups	Istog/Istok, Kačanik/Kačanik, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Shtime/Štimlje, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë
Budgetary hearings	Kačanik/Kačanik, Lipjan/Lipljan, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Shtime/Štimlje and Vushtrri/Vučitrn
Consultative meetings targeting needs and requests of marginalised groups	Vushtrri/Vučitrn

As can be seen from the table above, the municipalities do not organize any event whereby they gather needs/requests of marginalised groups. From the municipalities listed above, only the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn (also confirmed by local NGOs and marginalised groups) organizes smaller meetings and in villages/locations (villages such as Prelluzhë/Priluzhje and Gojbulë/Gojbulja) where marginalised groups live in order to gather their needs and concerns.

Special efforts of municipalities to reach out to marginalised/vulnerable groups when planning the budget

Under the framework of the communication between the municipality and marginalised/vulnerable groups, a special question has been posed to municipalities if the latter do any special efforts to reach out to such groups when planning the budget and capital projects under that. From the municipalities visited, NGOs met, and marginalised groups interviewed through the phone, besides the municipalities of Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Istog/Istok which have organized something in this regard, no other municipality has any record on this. In relation to the Municipality of Istog/Istok, such special efforts have even been done with international organizations such as USAID and OSCE, activities which have been organized in 2019 in the village of Dobrushë/Dobruša (where Bosnian community is present) to get better informed of their needs and projects proposals to be likely addressed with the next year's budget.

In the case of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, according to municipal officials we met, the municipality has in advance conducted an online survey with citizens to see what their priorities are in terms of capital projects. Projects related to drinking water supply, sewerage system, sidewalks and public lighting have derived as citizens' priorities addressed to the municipality.

Budget expenditures for each marginalised group

In order to analyse how much do the municipalities spend budget in yearly basis for marginalised/vulnerable groups, a separate question has been posed related to whether municipalities classify budget expenditures for marginalised groups. From all responses provided, it could have been understood that no municipality has a classification of the budget to be spent for each marginalised group. Consequently, project proposals from such groups are financed through various budgetary sources, such as from subsidies, Office of the Mayor and individual directorates. As to the manner how this is arranged, the Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje has declared that it establishes special committees to decide what projects to support and through what budget to support, while the Municipality of Podujevë/Podujevo, where the four directorates engaged in financially supporting projects from marginalised groups (agriculture, health, education, and culture), establishes separate committees to decide accordingly. This means that there is no budget classification or special categories where projects financed (budget) are allocated to specific categories. Moreover, in the case of the Municipality of Istog/Istok, the officials we met have declared that they cover certain expenses, including office rent and electricity bills, from the goods and services category. Also, the Municipality of Istog/Istok covers the monthly municipal expenses of Blind Association, Handikos and Youth Centre in Gjurakoc/Đurakovac through the municipal expenses' category. This way, it can be said that project proposals from marginalised groups are considered and financed, however, according to examples provided, it cannot be said there is unique and mainstreamed approach to financing project proposals.

From a simple scan of the Law on Budget for 2020, it has become evident that such expenses do not classify anywhere in the budget. In this aspect, the target municipalities in this report have been scanned whether they have a separate budget for community and return (as illustration) and what is their budget for capital investments and subsidies and transfers. The results are as follows:

Table 2: *Capital investments and subsidies and transfers budget of Offices for Community Affairs in 8 municipalities*

Municipality	Office for Communities and Return	Budget for capital investments (EUR)	Budget for subsidies and transfers (EUR)
Istog/Istok	Yes	150,000	5,000
Kaçanik/Kaçanik	Yes	0	0
Lipjan/Lipljan	Yes	0	2,000
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	0	0
Podujevë/Podujevo	Yes	0	0
Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	0	0
Shtime/Štimlje	Yes	0	6,500
Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes	0	0

Source: Law No. 07/L-001 on Budget for 2020, Ministry of Finance

Capital projects financed through the MPG – part of the priorities or reserve list

From the visited municipalities and projects financed through MPG, a special question has been raised to municipal officials whether the project(s) financed through the MPG have been planned as projects with a priority to be financed, or they have been part of the reserve list and when the MPG was offered, the municipality just came up with a capital project to be supported through the MPG. The following table makes a separation of projects under the priorities list and reserve list of the municipality – based on municipal answers (directorates of budget and finance) to this question.

Table 3: *Projects visited and financed through MPG – part of the priorities or reserve list in the municipal capital projects*

No.	Municipality	No. of projects	Project(s)	Priority list	Reserve list
1	Istog/Istok	1	Regulation of the space and infrastructure around the Sports Hall		√
2	Kaçanik/Kaçanik	2	Regulation and asphaltting of the city roads	√	
			Construction of sidewalks in the Imisht neighbourhood	√	
3	Lipjan/Lipljan	1	Installation of signalling devices in the city of Lipjan/Lipljan	√	
4	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	1	Regulation of the football stadium in the village of Prekovce/Prekoc		√
5	Podujevë/Podujevo	2	Construction of the ambulanta in the village of Majac/Majance	√	
			Construction of houses for social assistance cases at “Lagjja e Dëshmorëve” neighbourhood in Balloc/Balovac	√	
6	Shtime/Štimlje	1	Regulation of sidewalks, public lighting and greenery at the “Komandant Kumanova” (the remaining part), “Tahir Sinani”, “Anton Çeta” streets and of the parking facility at “Emin Duraku” school	√	
7	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	2	Reconstruction of public lighting, installation of LED technology in the village of Firajë/Firaja		√
			Regulation of the canal and sidewalk in Brezovicë/Brezovica		√

8	Vushtrri/ Vuçitër	2	Construction of the training ground of the football stadium in Dobërllukë/Dobra Luka		√
			Reconstruction of the spaces in the squares in Stanoc i Poshtëm/Donje Stanovce, Novolan/Nevojane, Maxhunaj/Novo Selo Madžunsko, Bukosh/Bukoš, Nedakoc/Nedakovac, Druar/Drvare, Banjskë/Banjska, Studime e Poshtme/Donja Sudimlja, Stanoc i Epërm/Gornje Stanovce, and in the city of Vushtrri/Vuçitër (12 projects)		√
		12		6	6

Benefits that marginalised groups enjoy from municipal capital projects implemented in municipalities

Overview

The list of municipalities and the projects financed through the MPG have been defined in advance and visits on the spot (at current projects) where projects were financed (took place) have been conducted. Each visit happened after first meeting with the municipal officials (specifically the specific project officer) and it was observed and discussed if and how marginalised groups have benefited from the project in question, and if that has improved the lives of one or the other marginalised group. In the municipalities where more than one project has been selected, due to the distance and earlier agreement with DEMOS, only one of them has been visited on the spot, however, questions pertaining to the other have also been posed. The following section provides a short description of the project, including a photo taken on the spot on the day of visit and a table judgement on the benefits of marginalised groups from the project. To be clearer, the table includes direct and indirect beneficiaries, meaning that direct beneficiaries are those categories or groups which have benefited directly from the project, and other indirect beneficiaries are not real beneficiaries. However, considering the fact that the project can still be used indirectly, the table has tried to show this as well.

Istog/Istok⁸

The project which has been implemented through the MPG in the municipality of Istog/Istok is: “Regulation of the space and infrastructure around the Sports Centre”. The Sports Centre itself is financed through the Ministry of Culture whereas the surrounding area including a water canal, greenery (a few plants), seats, parking places, including places reserved for people with special needs, seemed to have been financed in the surrounding area. Since the Sports Centre includes a few disciplines targeting youth (such as basketball, football, volleyball), youth is meant to be a direct beneficiary of the project implemented through the MPG in this municipality since it is around the Sports Centre which is mostly frequented by youth.

⁸ Meeting with Hysni Maxharraj – Director of Budget and Finance, Jashar Blakaj – Director of Urbanism (also Project Officer), Abedin Neziraj – Office for Communities and Return, Arlinda Kurtaj – Gender Equality Officer, and Enver Rugova – Director of Public Services.

However, when we visited this project on the 5th of November, neither the Sports Centre nor the regulation of the surrounding area were finished. Since the project includes the area around the Sports Centre, the following picture covers only one part of the respective project. It shows that the project is nearly finished and according to the municipality will be finished in ten days' time. Among the marginalised groups as indirect beneficiaries of the project, it may include women, people with special needs due to the parking places reserved for this group if they approach the Sports Centre to see any matches, and pensioners/the elderly who may use the surrounding area for walking as well as sitting. Although the project is not directly linked with RAE, the fact that youth are the primary beneficiary of the project means that young members of RAE community are also a beneficiary of the project.



Photo taken on the 5th of November

The following table attempts to better classify direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project “Regulation of the space and infrastructure around the Sports Centre”.

Table 4: Direct and indirect marginalised groups as beneficiaries of the project implemented through the MPG in the Municipality of Istog/Istok.

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	√
RAE	X	√
Youth (young women/men)	√	√
Women	X	√
Pensioners/the elderly	X	√
Rural remote dwellers	X	X
Other non-majority communities	X	√

In relation to the improvement of the lives of marginalised/vulnerable groups as a result of the implemented project, the representative of local NGO “ABA” in Istog/Istok says that “the sports hall has improved the access of youth to sports activities and the regulation of the surrounding area has made the whole area more attractive”.⁹

Kaçanik/Kaçanik

There are two projects which have been implemented through the MPG in the Municipality of Kačanik/Kaçanik in 2018 and 2019: 1) Regulation of sidewalks in the Imisht neighbourhood in 2018 and 2) Regulation and asphaltting of city roads. The first project has been visited whereas the second project has been observed in the city centre and the photo below is that of one part of the sidewalk implemented in the Imisht neighbourhood. This neighbourhood is in the Dubravë/Dubrava village and the village itself is around 7-8 km away from the centre of Kačanik/Kaçanik. According to the respective project officer and meeting with municipal officials, this project has been selected due to importance it had for the children to come along this way to the schools (the nearby area has two schools, a primary and secondary school). According to the project officer, the sidewalk is around 3km long and now serves as a safe walking area for the children, but it is also used by inhabitants including elderly/pensioners, women and rural remote dwellers coming from this area.

⁹ Local NGO “ABA”, answer provided on the 3rd of November 2020.



Photo taken on the 13th of November

The sidewalk has been constructed since it did not exist before, and eliminated the risk for pedestrians who so far have used the road to pass along the neighbourhood. For a classification of project direct and indirect beneficiary groups, look at the following table.

Table 5: Direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project financed through the MPG in the municipality of Kačanik/Kaçanik (Dubravë/Dubrava village, Imisht neighbourhood)

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	√
RAE10	X	X
Youth (young women/men)	√	√
Women	X	√
Pensioners/elderly	X	√
Rural remote dwellers	X	X
Other non-majority communities ¹¹	X	X

In terms of improving lives of communities, the project has improved the lives of youth who use the sidewalk to go to school, but also women as pedestrians use the sidewalk with kids to pass along the neighbourhood. According to the project officer who has been leading this project from municipal's side at that time, "before the sidewalk was regulated, it was dangerous for youth to walk along the street to go to school because of cars". According to him, they also tried to construct a larger sidewalk but inhabitants living nearby refused to do so because of property issues.¹²

¹⁰ Not present in this area.

¹¹ Not present in this area.

¹² Visit on the spot with Shkodran Sopa, project officer who no longer works for the municipality.

Lipjan/Lipljan

The project which has been implemented through the MPG in the municipality of Lipjan is: “Installation of signalling devices in the city of Lipjan”. According to the municipality, there are 12 or 15 such platforms for crossings which have been implemented throughout the city – and lighting above the crossing has been done, the crossing has been constructed in a way that is easily passed by the people with special needs (using wheelchairs), while traffic lights are equipped with alerting system – for the blind people.

In terms of project direct beneficiary groups, people with special needs have benefited from this project, however, all citizens who walk through, including women, the elderly etc., are indirect beneficiaries of the project. The following picture shows one of such platforms regulated in the city centre.



Photo taken on the 19th of November

The table below attempts to classify groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the abovementioned project.

Table 6: Groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project financed through the MPG in the municipality of Lipjan/Lipljan

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	√	√
RAE	X	√
Youth (young women/men)	X	√
Women	√	√
Pensioners/the elderly	√	√
Rural remote dwellers	X	X
Other non-majority communities	X	√

The project financed has improved the lives of marginalised groups, especially of people with disabilities, the elderly/pensioners, and women. According to the project officer, “the municipality of Lipjan/Lipljan serves as a good example for taking into consideration and addressing the needs of people with people with disabilities”.¹³ In terms of the impact on this category/group of the project financed through the MPG, the NGO Polis representative confirms that the construction of 12 platforms has improved the lives primarily of people with disabilities but also of other marginalised/vulnerable groups.¹⁴

Novo Brdo/Novobërdë¹⁵

The project which has been implemented through the MPG in the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë is the “Regulation of the football stadium in the village of Prekovce/Prekoc”. On the other hand, according to the project official, the project has been finished in January-February 2020 and could not have been used so far because of the pandemic situation. From this visit on the spot, one can notice that it is not being used, nor even finished as a project. Sides around the football field are not finished, there are no lights (basket nets and goal posts) – and according to the project official, these will be covered by the municipality.

Youth is the primary beneficiary of this project, youth living in the village of Prekovce/Prekoc – which is inhabited by Serbian community. Please have a look at the following picture too see the football stadium in the village of Prekovce/Prekoc.

¹³ Meeting with Valzim Mziu, Project Officer, 19 November 2020.

¹⁴ Meeting with Muhamet Qeriqi, NGO Polis, 19 November 2020.

¹⁵ Meeting with Slobodan Bogdanovic – Project Officer, and Sami Vllasaiu, NGO Kalaja, 9 November, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.



Photo taken on the 6th of November in Prekovce/Prekoc village (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë)

For a classification of groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, the following table tries to make a separation among direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project.

Table 9: *Direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project financed through the MPG in the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë (Prekovce/Prekoc, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë).*

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	X
RAE	X	X
Youth (young women/men)	√	√
Women	X	X
Pensioners/the elderly	X	X
Rural remote dwellers	√	√
Other non-majority communities ¹⁶	X	X

According to the local NGO GLV Kalaja, “construction of the football stadium in the village of Prekovce/Prekoc was needed”¹⁷, however, since the project is not completed yet and youth have not been able to use it, people interviews could not point out how this project has improved lives of marginalised/vulnerable groups living in this area.

¹⁶ No other communities live in the village.

¹⁷ Meeting with Sami Villasaliu, local NGO GLV Kalaja, Novoverde, November 6, 2020.

Podujevë/Podujevo

Two projects financed through the MPG have been selected in the Municipality of Podujevë/Podujevo. The first project is: “Construction of the ambulanta in the village of Majac/Majance” and the second project is “Construction of houses for social assistance cases in the village of Balloc/Balovac”. The second project has been visited on the spot and the following picture relate to that project. In relation to the first project, according to municipal officials we met, the construction of the ambulanta in the village of Majac/Majance (on the way from Prishtinë/Priština to Podujevë/Podujevo) has eliminated the need of the rural remote dwellers to come to Podujevë/Podujevo to benefit from services provided at the medical centre. In relation to the second project, “Construction of houses for social assistance cases in the village of Balloc/Balovac”, families under social assistance have benefited from this project. Until this was built, these families have been staying in the containers. War veterans and invalids are the group of primary beneficiaries of this project. There is a neighbourhood built with around 100 houses including the ambulanta in front of this neighbourhood. The following picture is taken nearby the neighbourhood and captures a certain segment of the whole place. Not the whole neighbourhood was finished at the time of visit, however, according to municipal officials, it will be soon finished and inaugurated.



Photo taken on the 25th of November in front of houses for social assistance cases in the village of Balloc/Balovac, Municipality of Podujevë/Podujevo

The following table attempts to better classify direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project “Construction of houses for social assistance cases in the village of Balloc/Balovac”. The project is not solely dedicated to any of the marginalised/vulnerable groups as defined in this assignment. However, indirect beneficiaries may be youth, women, pensioners/the elderly, and people with special needs who may be members of the families under social assistance.

Table 10: *Groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project implemented in Balloc/Balovac, Municipality of Podujevë/Podujevo*

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	√
RAE	X	X
Youth (young women/men)	X	√
Women	X	√
Pensioners/the elderly	X	√
Rural remote dwellers	X	X
Other non-majority communities	X	X

According to one municipal official who accompanied us during the visit to this place, construction of houses for families under social assistance is one of the most important capital projects implemented in the Municipality of Podujevë/Podujevo in the last couple of years. Based on the visit and explanations provided by the municipal officials, this project seems to have improved the lives of families of war veterans and invalids who have for several years lived in containers.

Štrpce/Shtërpçë¹⁸

The project which has been financed through the MPG in the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë is “Regulation of the public lighting, installation of LED technology in the village of Firajë/Firaja”. Firajë/Firaja village is around 7-8 km away from Štrpce/Shtërpçë and is inhabited by Albanians. The village has two schools, while public lighting of LED technology was installed in the surrounding streets. When looking at the marginalised/vulnerable groups as beneficiaries of the project, it can be said that youth benefit from it (since there are two schools nearby), however, there is no sidewalk in this area so neither women and people with special needs nor the elderly can benefit from it.

There is no RAE community in this village, nor any other community. On the other hand, when visiting the project and talking to the inhabitants, according to them, not all the lights are functional at the present time.¹⁹ This could not be proved since the project was visited during the daytime; the infrastructure is there but whether they work or not – this could not be proved. Moreover, the municipality hesitated to engage somebody to switch the light on for observation purposes. The following picture is taken in the village of Firajë/Firaja while visiting the project.

¹⁸ Meeting with Jeton Rrahmani – Directorate for Budget and Finance, Raif Bajrami – Directorate of Urbanism (also Project Officer), Ahmeti Aliu – Office for Communities and Return, 26 November, Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

¹⁹ Talking to inhabitants while visiting the place where the project has been implemented in the Firajë/Firaja village, 26 November 2020.



Photo taken on the 26th of November in one neighbourhood where public lighting LED technology is installed, village of Firajë/Firaja, Štrpce/Shtërpçë

The following table attempts to better classify direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project “Regulation of the public lighting, installation of LED technology in the village of Firajë/Firaja”

Table 11: *Groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project financed through the MPG in the village of Firajë/Firaja, Štrpce/Shtërpçë*

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	√
RAE	X	X20
Youth (young women/men)	√	√
Women	X	√
Pensioners/the elderly	X	√
Rural remote dwellers	√	√
Other non-majority communities	X	X21

20 Not present.

21 Not present.

The project which has been financed through the MPG in the Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje is: “Regulation of the sidewalks, public lighting, and greenery in two main streets of Shtime/Štimlje”. As there are two streets away from one another, we visited the Tahir Sinani street accompanied by the project officer and a photo was taken on the spot. Depending on the observation, youth, women, pensioners/the elderly are the groups of primary beneficiaries of the project. The following picture shows one part of the project which has been implemented along the Tahir Sinani street where a public school is nearby. This sidewalk includes public lighting and greenery (trees planted along the sidewalk) and is 850 meters long, whereas the sidewalk with the elements mentioned in the Komandant Kumanova street is 750 meters long. Both sidewalks are constructed in two sides of the streets.



Photo taken on the 19th of November, Tahir Sinani street, Shtime/Štimlje

As can be seen from the photo, beneficiaries of this project are all citizens who use this street, namely: youth, women (with kids), the elderly, people with special needs as now access to the sidewalk is appropriate for them. However, for a clearer classification of the groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, look at the table below.

Table 12: Groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project financed through the MPG in two main streets in Shtime/Štimlje

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	√
RAE	X	√
Youth (young women/men)	√	√
Women	√	√
Pensioners/the elderly	√	√
Rural remote dwellers	X	√
Other non-majority communities ²²	X	√

This project has improved the lives of marginalised groups through use of the sidewalk for walking, with public lighting and greenery also present along the sidewalk. According to the local NGO Youth Centre representative, the project has been beneficial for citizens since two main streets which are highly frequented by the citizens have been regulated with sidewalks, public lighting and greenery.²³

Vushtrri/Vučitrn

The project which has been financed through the MPG in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn is: “Construction of the training ground of the football stadium in Dobërllukë/Dobra Luka”. According to the municipality and the visit conducted to the field, the football stadium is not finished yet. Once it is finished, the football stadium will be managed by the Directorate for Culture and it is expected that the Directorate will have human resources to manage the football stadium. It is around three kilometres away from the town of Vushtrri/Vučitrn and infrastructure is lacking in this area. The lack of infrastructure makes the project not attractive to be used since the road is not paved in the direction of the football stadium, and the side infrastructure is also lacking. When we visited the football stadium, children were playing football on the stadium even though it was not completed yet by the company and the municipality is not managing it yet. To see the situation in which the surrounding area is, please have a look at the following picture taken in front of the football stadium.

²² There are no non-majority communities in the municipality of Shtime/Štimlje besides the RAE community.

²³ Meeting with Resul Gashi, 19 November 2020, Shtime/Štimlje.



Photo taken on the 16th of November in the village of Dobërllukë/Dobra Luka, Vushtrri/Vučitrn

As said above, the group of direct beneficiaries of the project is youth, however, it will depend a lot on the management by the municipality how the stadium will be maintained and organized, as well as the human and financial resources allocated to it. Also, the municipality will have to invest on the infrastructure such as the parking place, paving the road and so on to make the project functional and attractive for football teams to use it.

Table 13: *Groups of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project financed through the MPG in the village of Dobërllukë/Dobra Luka, Vushtrri/Vučitrn*

Marginalised/vulnerable group	Direct beneficiary	Indirect beneficiary
People with disabilities	X	X
RAE	X	√
Youth (young women/men)	√	√
Women	X	X
Pensioners/the elderly	X	X
Rural remote dwellers	X	X
Other non-majority communities	X	√

In terms of improving the lives of marginalised groups, if completed, managed well, with surrounding infrastructure completed and maintained, it has the potential to be a football stadium to be used primarily by youth. According to one municipal official²⁴, “having such a football stadium has been a request of youth for many times now and when the municipality benefited from the MPG in financing a capital project, it was easy for the municipality to select the project to be financed under the MPG”.

²⁴ Meeting with Njomeza Rama, Mayor's cabinet, 16 November 2020, Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

Who is left behind?

According to the municipal officials we met in all the municipalities, when asked to provide reasons why in some cases needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups are not considered, four out of eight municipalities have mentioned the lack of representation and participation. This could have been taken as the main factor why somebody is left behind. A particular question of the questionnaire has been put for this purpose, trying to list the reasons against the “Leave no one behind” principle. Among the factors listed, the table on the left side depicts the reasons/factors for this and the right side depicts municipalities which belong to the respective reason/factor.

Table 14: *Reasons for not taking into consideration needs/requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups*

Discrimination	None
Distance (geographic reasons)	Istog/Istok, Kaçanik/Kaçanik
Municipal governance	Istog/Istok, Lipjan/Lipljan
Socio-economic status	None
Lack of representation and participation	Istog/Istok, Lipjan/Lipljan, Podujevë/Podujevo, Štrpce/Shtërpçë

Implementation of budgetary hearings by municipalities and participation by citizens

Budgetary hearings are organized by municipalities, from minimum two as required by legislation to 10 such hearings as in the case of Lipjan – organized in the town and in smaller locations around. However, based on the discussions with municipalities on the whole process of budgetary hearings – from the early organization to their effect, it seems that budgetary hearings are organized mainly for the sake of simply organizing them and due to legislative requirements in this regard. However, it seems that municipalities themselves are not believing in the way/form they are organized, number of participants, debate fostered and their impact on the capital project proposals and the draft budget itself. All municipalities we met have raised concerns about the low participation of citizens and the lack of debate in them. On the other hand, based on the discussions through meetings with NGOs present/active in the municipalities, the same impression of non-interest, non-participation and non-debate has been raised by them. Further, such as in the case of Podujevë/Podujevo, an NGO representative says that the municipality has not organized any such hearings this year. The same was mentioned by another NGO representative in Lipjan/Lipljan – where budgetary hearings are organized with people affiliated with political parties and not ordinary citizens – just to be able to say that the municipality has organized budgetary hearings required by legislation. In this aspect, municipalities have seemed to show more willingness to fulfil the legal criteria on this, rather than seemed interested to really do something in this regard.

As can be seen from the table below, the number of budgetary hearings organized per year ranges from two (Kaçanik/Kaçanik) to 10 in the case of Lipjan/Lipljan. However, when asked if such hearings foster debate between citizens and the municipalities, only three municipalities have declared that they do foster debate. When asked about the number of participants including marginalised groups, the common reference is less than 20 participants. In terms of the agenda, municipalities have declared to first present the draft budget (either by the Mayor or Chief Financial Officer as in the case of Shtime/Štimlje) and then the Director of Budget and Finance further details the budget, namely the category of capital investments. In terms of participation of marginalised groups in the budgetary hearings, most of the municipalities (and based on phone interviews with marginalised groups) have confirmed that participation is critically low. Moreover, none of the municipalities have been able to point out examples when requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups submitted last year have changed the list of capital projects' priorities.

Table 15: Several characteristics of budgetary hearings organized by eight municipalities

Municipality	Number per year	Debate	Agenda	Participants	Marginalised groups-participation last year	Common requests of citizens	List of priorities changed due to requests of marginalised groups last year
Istog/Istok	4	Yes	Presentation of the list of capital projects	Less than 40	All marginalised groups	Infrastructure	No examples
Kaçanik/Kaçanik	2	No	Presentation of draft budget, Mayor then Director	Max 20	People with special needs, women, youth, the elderly	Public lighting, water supply, regulation of side streets	No examples
Lipjan/Lipljan	10	Yes	Presentation of draft budget in general and that of capital investments in particular	Max 20	No	Asphalting, drinking water, public lighting, schools and ambulanta	No examples
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	2	No	Draft budget	Less than 20	No	No	No examples
Podujevë/Podujevo	2	No	Presentation of the draft budget	Less than 40	No	Asphalting, water supply, sewerage, public lighting	No examples
Štrpce/Shtërpçë	2	No	No presentation of budget, citizens are asked for their needs	Less than 20	No	Sidewalks, water supply, public lighting	No examples
Shtime/Štimlje	7	No	Presentation of the draft budget	Less than 20	No	Sidewalks, public lighting, side streets	No examples
Vushtrri/Vučitrn	6	Yes	Presentation of the draft budget	Less than 20	No	Sidewalks, infrastructure, public lighting and water supply	No examples

The aspect of budgetary hearings, meaning organizing them properly from the initial stage down to their effect in the policy planning by the municipality, should be addressed in substantial basis. On one hand, municipalities organize them simply to mark a tick, on the other hand, citizens do not have trust on such organizations and consequently do not attend. Moreover, there is not a cause-and-effect chain where citizens see their inputs (as causes) and municipalities react on these effects of the inputs. Such a chain has not been observed in any of the municipalities visited. In this framework, the participation of marginalised groups is not a concern for municipalities and there is no formal policy (in none of the municipalities) to develop an inclusive and comprehensive process where marginalised/vulnerable groups have their say.

Application of gender responsive budgeting by municipalities and the way they do that

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is applied by municipalities to the extent it is required by the Ministry of Finance through budget circulars.²⁵ Based on such a document issued by the Ministry of Finance in 2019 to all budget organizations, for the preparation of the budget for 2020, the budget should be prepared according to the GRB as defined by the Law on Gender Equality. According to this law, to eliminate gender discrimination and achieve gender equality, public institutions at all levels are responsible to implement legislative and other measures, including “inclusion of gender budgeting in all areas, as a necessary tool to guarantee that the principle of gender equality is respected in collection, distribution and allocation of resources”.²⁶

According to the discussions developed with municipal officials, including officials from the budget directorate and those for gender equality, the GRB is applied by municipalities and is reflected in three aspects: 1) the current number of staff in the municipality and those planned for the next year disaggregated by gender, 2) salaries and per diems as totals disaggregated by gender, 3) planning of salaries for the next year (for instance in 2019 for 2020) divided by categories/levels of salaries disaggregated by gender and 4) budget spent and planned to be spent through subsidies disaggregated by gender and the number of beneficiaries disaggregated into man and women. According to the discussions with municipalities, three standard tables are prepared to present the abovementioned data and they are submitted to the Ministry of Finance twice a year, the first in mid-year when the Mid-Term Budgetary Framework is prepared and the second by the end of September for the budget of next year.

On the other hand, besides the requirement of the Ministry of Finance, the municipality’s planning and execution of budget for gender-related purposes is dispersed among several directorates and Office of the Mayor. This is because a project proposal which concerns women may be supported by whatever budget line it is possible. For instance, if the project proposal concerns women but is channelled through the Directorate for Health (due to the type of request), the budget supporting the proposal may be found from that directorate and then also registered in the accounting system under this directorate. Then, after all these expenses are made in gender-related projects by several directorates and Office of the Mayor, it is up to the Director for

²⁵ Ministry of Finance, Budget Circular (see one example): <https://bit.ly/2P9IXvn>

²⁶ Law No. 05/-020 on Gender Equality, Article 5, point 1.5: <https://bit.ly/2KsRtXT>

Budget and Finance or the Chief Financial Officer (the case of Shtime/Štimlje) to first gather this data and then disaggregate it according to the templates of the Ministry of Finance.

From the municipalities visited and Gender Equality Officers met, none of them has a special office for gender equality besides one employee for gender equality belonging to the Office of the Mayor. In the case of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, there are two such officials dealing with gender equality. When it comes to separate budget lines for gender equality, none of these officials have declared to have a separate budget line through which programs concerning gender are addressed and supported. Based on a reading of the 2020 budget, 15 out of 38 municipalities have a subprogram called “gender issues” as listed under the Office of the Mayor. From the municipalities visited and subject to this report, only the municipalities of Istog/Istok, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë have such a subprogram established under the Office of the Mayor and a little bit of categorization of this budget is given below. The following table shows the budget under the subprogram “gender issues” in the three municipalities.

Table 16: *Subprogram “budget issues” in the municipalities of Istog/Istok, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë*

Municipality	Subprogram	Staff employed	Salaries/per diems	Goods and services	Subsidies and transfers
Istog/Istok	Gender issues	1	EUR 7,300	EUR 5,000	EUR 2,000
Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Gender issues	2	EUR 11,789	EUR 3,000	N/A
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Gender issues	1	EUR 7,200	EUR 2,000	N/A

Source: Budget for 2020

As can be seen from the table above, the role of the Gender Equality Officers in the sense of supporting gender-related programs is minor, if not inexistent. From the three municipalities, only the municipality of Istog/Istok has a small budget in the category of subsidies and transfers which can be used for any women-related activity or project. The two other municipalities spend for their salaries in yearly basis and goods and services.

Moreover, for a clearer picture of how the GRB according to the MF requirements is planned and executed in templates by all municipalities, look at the following example. The data are real, however, the name of the municipality is not shown in the tables since the document based in which the following tables are drawn is internal and for municipality purposes only.

Table 17: Gender Responsive Budgeting planning and execution in municipalities**Table 17.1: Number of staff in the municipality X disaggregated by gender**

Year	Total staff	Women	Men	Salaries (per di-ems) for women	Salaries (per di-ems) for men
2018	650	274	386	1,684,139.52	2,305,924.48
2019	665	274	386	1,684,139.52	2,305,924.48
2020	665	256	409	1,824,052.00	2,953,728.00
Planning for 2021	665	329	337	2,124,905.38	2,235,998.62

Table 17.2: Levels/categories of salaries for 2020 in municipality X disaggregated by gender

Levels of salaries	Staff pertaining to the level	Men	Budget spent for men	Women	Budget spent for women
EUR 201 – 400	112	66	419,494.66	46	254,714.20
EUR 401 – 600	482	231	1,453,569.12	251	1,617,695.01
EUR 600 +	71	41	358,956.00	30	256,475.00
Total	665	338	2,232,020	327	2,128,884

Table 17.3: Number of beneficiaries from subsidies pertaining to different directorates (where applicable)

Year	Budget for subsidies	Total beneficiaries	Women beneficiaries	Men beneficiaries	Budget for women	Budget for men
2019	131,766	90	51	39	67,200	64,565
2020	150,000	105	61	44	87,000	63,000
Planning for 2021	150,000	85	55	30	97,500	52,500

Participation of citizens in policy- and decision-making processes in municipalities

Participation of citizens in policy- and decision-making process in the municipalities concerned has been evaluated as critically low by the NGO representatives we met for this purpose. Also, this participation is exclusive only to public meetings and budgetary hearings which are mandatory for the municipality to be organized. In the case of Istog/Istok, NGOs like “Vision 02”²⁷ and “ABA”²⁸ stress that they are sometimes invited, sometimes not, through social media of the municipality and their participation is rare. Also, according to them, citizens participate in very small numbers in these events and that can be translated as critically low. The same trend is reiterated by the NGO “Youth Centre of Kaçanik”²⁹ and much of the interaction between the municipality and citizens depends on individual requests/contacts of citizens to the municipality.

In the case of Lipjan/Lipljan, the NGO Polis representative³⁰ says that citizens do take part in the public meetings, however, their participation is very low, and participants are affiliated with the local government. In the case of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, the NGO Kalaja representative³¹ says that citizens are not invited to take part in the public hearings, nor the NGO Kalaja is invited to do so. The same trend has been reiterated by local NGOs in the Municipality of Podujevë/Podujevo (NGO Rule of Democracy³²), the local NGO DEA³³ in the Municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë, local NGO “Youth Center” in the Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje and the local NGO “Fodem”³⁴ in the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn.

27 Meeting with Regj Malaj, OJQ Vision 02, 5 November 2020, Istog/Istok.

28 Telephone interview with Head of the NGO, 7 November 2020.

29 Meeting with Bafti Dogani, 15 November 2020, Prishtinë/Priština.

30 Meeting with Muhamet Qeriqi, 19 November, Lipjan/Lipljan.

31 Meeting with Sami Vllasaliu, 16 November, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.

32 Telephone interview with Rexhep Zeka, 25 November 2020.

33 Telephone interview with Betim Musliu, 26 November 2020.

34 Meeting with Xhavit Mehmeti, 12 November 2020.

Recommendations

1. Municipalities should do more to know their situation with marginalised/vulnerable groups living in the municipality. In this regard, municipalities should do a mapping of concerns of marginalised/vulnerable groups and thus have a clear picture of the needs and requests of such groups. DEMOS should consider supporting a selected number of municipalities serving as pilot project and, if proven successful, follow the model to the rest of municipalities.
2. Under this framework and always based on the situation with marginalised/vulnerable groups deriving from the above mapping, municipalities should identify a marginalised/vulnerable group where additional resources/projects are needed. This further paves the way for even more concrete support and help regarding the improvement of lives of marginalised groups. DEMOS should consider supporting municipalities in this regard too.
3. Municipalities, with the support of DEMOS, should logically proceed to compiling visions and (multi-year) programs/plans for the advancement of marginalised/vulnerable groups living in such municipalities. The plan should be oriented towards sustainability of results/projects during the preceding years in order not to fall into a cycle of supporting what comes first and depending on ad-hoc judgement and criteria.
4. DEMOS may support municipalities to organize bigger events with potential donors in Kosovo where the abovementioned documents are presented and discussions on the potential financing of concrete projects should take place. Such documents (as above) will help every potential donor in terms of what and where they can financially support. In this regard, municipalities should first do their own job.
5. DEMOS should consider how it can provide incentives to municipalities which propose capital projects to be financed through the MPG, where the marginalised/vulnerable groups are direct beneficiaries of the project. This means that municipalities may receive a little bit of more funds provided that the project proposed concerns directly needs and requests of marginalised/vulnerable groups. A formula is needed to be developed here by DEMOS, as complementary to the way the MPS is done today.
6. DEMOS should support municipalities to make special efforts to reach out to marginalised/vulnerable groups when planning the capital projects to be implemented next year.
7. DEMOS should support municipalities to classify and register the budget based on programs according to marginalised groups, either as a category or a set of categories/programs under a single main one. In this regard, further support should be provided to allocate budget for subsidies/transfers through which projects/activities either of the municipality or of marginalised/vulnerable groups can be supported.
8. The situation with establishment of Offices for Community and Return is better compared to establishment of Offices for Gender Equality. DEMOS may be involved in cooperation with the Agency for Gender Equality under OPM to analyse the future support on this process. On the other hand, even where Offices for Community and Return exist, the budget

available is low and often non-existent in the category of subsidies/transfers. This way, these offices are limited to supporting either communities or women in any projects for the advancement of their rights and benefits.

9. GRB is not applied by municipalities in the sense what GRB means. It is applied to the extent it is understood by the Ministry of Finance. Making this change is a huge endeavour and DEMOS should analyse how it can support municipalities on this, always in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and other experts on GRB and the budget overall.
10. DEMOS should consider staying closer to municipalities in following if the project financed through MPG is finalized in time, if the same project as proposed is being implemented, and if the municipality is allocating additional resources to maintain the project and make it produce its best effects (as originally planned). This is because projects financed under the MPG visited may not be sustained if the municipality does not allocate extra human and financial resources to make the project alive/sustained and beneficial (on-going) to the citizens.
11. Budgetary hearings have come to that stage that they are not perceived as fruitful anymore by the municipality and the citizens. Innovative ways should be analysed and found to increase the level of participation of citizens in budgetary hearings. On the other hand, municipalities should draft an agenda of these budgetary hearings in order to be serious in relation to the attendees, at the very beginning. If the municipality does not at least present a draft budget but waits from the citizens to get engaged in the debate without proper information, it means the municipality is not serious in the organization of such events.
12. Likewise, participation of citizens in policy-making and decision-making processes in the municipality should be re-thought and new processes should be designed for the benefit of both parties, the municipality, and citizens. The formality of public meetings has reached to that point that other forms of interactions between citizens and municipalities should be seriously considered.



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