

Draft Sustainability Strategy

UNDP Gender Programme

Montenegro

Introduction

IPA 2015 Gender Program has taken into account outcomes, achievements and lessons learned from IPA 2010. Furthermore, IPA 2015 was also leaning on the built trust and reputation that UNDP has among local stakeholders and the results of the entire previous work of UNDP in this area.

Overall objective of this program was *to ensure that fundamental human rights have been protected and promoted in compliance with international standards* and it was conducted through four components: 1) capacity development support, 2) violence against women and domestic violence, 3) political empowerment of women and 4) women's entrepreneurship at the local level. Project managed to involve and engage relevant institutions, both on the local and governmental level, independent experts and agencies, media, private sectors and NGOs. The program contributed to a better understanding of the problem, identified the key causes and consequences of gender gap in Montenegro and helped to formulate and improve systemic and strategic documents. Also it supported networking and coordination of efforts of local actors working on gender equality issues. Additionally, important outcomes of the program were improved capacities of individual stakeholders to work on the protection and promotion of human rights and equal opportunities in Montenegro.

This document identifies potential issues in the sustainability of the project after and proposes measures to overcome them. Sustainability has been considered at the institutional, political and financial levels.

Institutional sustainability

Representatives of different ministries - the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (MHRM), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations, as well as representatives of EU Delegation, CoE – took part in the Project Steering Committee activities. However, MHRM was the only one providing tangible contribution and commitment to the project. New laws and strategies concerning gender equality issues and human rights have been adopted by the parliament, which shows awareness of the existing problems and political will to create mechanisms to deal with those problems, but there are always some issues in the implementation of these policies. Major reasons for such situation are budgetary constraints,¹ insufficient human capacities for the existing workload² (which is not always represented just in a number of personnel, but also in acquired skills, experiences and competences), envisaged time-frame (implementation of national-wide policies very often requires training of a myriad of people) and lack of the coordination between different levels of the government and/or implementation bodies and stakeholders.

¹ Example: Strategy for the women's entrepreneurship development was adopted in 2015, but almost no measures were implemented so far, due to the lack of finances for the implementation.

² Example: Gender Equality Department has only four employees

Therefore, following measures could provide better institutional sustainability of the project:

- Constituting inter-sectorial and multidisciplinary bodies within the parliament and the government, modelled like Operational Team that deals with GBV, involving personnel who can deal with the issues on operational level; such bodies should not only be in charge of the coordination on different levels, but also to be able to provide more concrete support to a policy implementation as well as to have mechanisms for evaluation of the already applied measures and to administer appropriate responses;
- Enabling stronger involvement of the Human Resource Agency, which introduces mandatory trainings for governmental employees, in all aspects of institutional capacity building needed for policies implementation;
- Building up the dialogue and cooperation with NGO sector, which proved to be a consistent partner in work on gender equality and human rights issues; NGOs should be counted in not just for the implementation of different policies, but also in monitoring activities, education and public awareness raising (especially in GBV and women's entrepreneurship);
- Ensuring the visibility of the identified problems in the society in order to increase public awareness, thus to gain support for the policy changes; this task should not be entrusted to NGOs only, although it could be done in cooperation.
- Practicing donor coordination among multi-lateral and international organizations that operate in Montenegro and support gender equality, children's rights and human rights like: UNDP, UNICEF, OSCE, CoE, RCC, and EU Delegation;
- It would be beneficial to include the results of relevant research and analysis (like the ones conducted during this project) in the open data portal of Montenegro³, in order to simplify the monitoring of the implementation of adopted policies;

Political sustainability

Political empowerment of women component have contributed to improved visibility and recognition of gender equality issues within programs and structures of some of the political parties in Montenegro. A creation of Women's Political Network (WPN), a group whose members are united around common goals although they are coming from 16 different political parties, both ruling and opposition, was an important step forward in political empowerment of women. On the other hand, parliamentary boycott of the opposition, one year before the WPN was launched, showed how political turmoil can create a blockade of some of the essential institutional mechanisms for women's advancement, such is Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality. Having that in mind, it is unclear if WPN will manage to stay on the course of dealing with women's issues in the society in case of another political crisis or the members will prioritize objectives of their parties instead. It has to be added that financing of women's forums within individual parties and their position and influence are still questionable.

Introducing 40% quota for women's representation in local and state parliaments is another great breakthrough, which is yet to be achieved in the 2020 elections. Even quota of 30%, which was in effect during previous elections was not reached. In addition, women are not very motivated and

³ <https://www.data.gov.me/>

empowered to be actively involved in political organisations, due to traditional gender roles in Montenegrin patriarchal society and existing stereotypes and prejudices.

Potential courses of actions:

- WPN has to be recognized as a relevant partner and interlocutor on governmental, local and inter-party levels when developing and/or implementing gender equality policies and programs; WPN and their activities can benefit from institutional support as well as from regional cooperation;
- Even though this program has already improved image of women politicians in public and within parties, such practice should be continued; gender equality trainings within political parties, developing gender mainstreaming programs and involving both females and males in such activities may provide essential and sustainable improvements on the long run;
- WPN need to create stronger relationships and cooperation with women's NGOs and Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality.
- One of the priorities should be creation of favourable atmosphere that should not just enable but also further motivate women in Montenegro to become more engaged in political life; once again it is important not just to implement existing, adopt new and improve existing policies, but also to put more focus on visibility actions, awareness raising campaigns and promotion of role models;

Financial sustainability

The biggest sustainability issue is certainly in the financial domain, especially for future WPN's activities to ensure impact and for the continuation and expansion of women's entrepreneurship support programs. In addition, as already stated, implementation of some of the strategic documents (e.g. Strategy for the women's entrepreneurship or Strategy to address discrimination of persons with disabilities) is already behind schedule or will be, due to the lack of finances.

In order to improve financial sustainability prospects it is recommended to:

- Find a way to ensure financial support of WPN through institutional measures; WPN should also consider to become officially registered organization in order to be able to acquire funds from other sources, e.g. tenders and projects;
- Establish a mechanism for the conduction of regular cost benefit analyses, primarily in the women's entrepreneurship programs (e.g. how many women's businesses that have already received support are actually sustainable after one or two years period); it will provide an insight into further needs and potential restructuring of available budgets;
- Strengthen local support to women's entrepreneurship by providing tax reliefs and additional consultations in first two years of an enterprise's life; in addition, IDF and Employment Agency funds should be more gender sensitive i.e. to find a way to exclude women from providing endorsers or property as collateral, which is current practice; local governments, if possible, should consider conversion and adaptation of unused public buildings into hubs and co-working spaces for women's start-ups;

- Allocate bigger budgets in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights to support women's NGOs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare for NGO licensing for social services in the local communities (e.g. SOS hotlines, women's shelters, business consultations for women, day care centres);
- One of the activities within this project has generated gender mainstreaming intervention in four EU IPA sectorial documents and such method should be applied on other important policies and strategy documents to enable gender sensitive budget allocations;
- WPN is asking for change in the Law on financing of political parties i.e. 0.06 of Government budget to support women's forums in political parties vs. 0.6 that is already budgeted for each political party.
- Coach as many as possible women among NGOs, WPN and entrepreneurs to write proposals for EU funds including EU structural funds that would be main finding source once Montenegro becomes EU member.

What are the factors of change?

Change actors are local NGOs and international agencies. All of them are developing relationships with state institutions. However this political dialogue needs support and it lasts long. There is still cooperation among international/national agencies/NGOs with individuals that are trained and open minded in Government structures. That is not institutional cooperation or Government institutional capacity for gender equality.

National machinery for the implementation of gender equality includes: Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality, National Council for Gender Equality, Department for Gender Equality of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Gender focal points in respective ministries, Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms. Other main actors in implementation and monitoring of gender policies are: Offices for gender equality in local municipalities (or gender focal points where offices do not exist), National Employment Service of Montenegro, Vocational Education and Training Centre (VETC), Investment and Development Fund of Montenegro, Committee for Women Entrepreneurship, Directorate for SMEs, Montenegrin Employers Federation and Montenegro Business Alliance, Women's forums of political parties and women's NGOs.