

# A toolbox for Local Governments to implement SDG#5 on Gender Equality

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Annika Björkdahl<sup>1</sup> and Lejla Somun-Krupalija<sup>2</sup>



## 5 GENDER EQUALITY



### Introduction

In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development tackling a broad range of global challenges, aiming to eradicate poverty, reduce multiple and intersecting inequalities, address climate change, end conflict and sustain peace.

**Sustainable Development Goal #5** focuses on gender equality and aims to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

This policy brief summarizes the findings from our investigation into SDG#5, and the efforts to turn this global goal into local policies and practice in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH).

#### Globally, gender inequalities persist:<sup>3</sup>



In case of food shortages, women are often the first to go hungry.



Girls do better in school and university than boys, yet the gender pay gap stands at 23 % globally. It will take another 68 years to achieve equal pay.



Women’s representation in national parliaments is at 23.7 %, which is still far from parity.



49 countries have no laws that specifically protect women from such domestic violence.



Women continue to do 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work that men do.

### About ICLD

The Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is part of the Swedish development cooperation. The mandate of the organisation is to contribute to poverty alleviation by strengthening local governments.

<sup>3</sup> See data from UNWOMEN.

## Why does SDG#5 matter to local government?

### SDG#5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- **Ending all forms of discrimination** against all women and girls everywhere
- **Elimination of all forms of violence** against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- **Elimination of all harmful practices**, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Recognition and valuing of **unpaid care and domestic work**
- Ensuring women's full and effective **participation** and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- Ensuring universal access to **sexual and reproductive health** and reproductive **rights**
- Reforms to give **women equal rights to economic resources**, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources
- Enhance the use of **enabling technology**, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- Adopt and strengthen **sound policies and enforceable legislation** for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels



#### A matter of justice

Women account for half the population and therefore have the right to be represented as such. Female leaders in local government can challenge gender stereotypes, set an example to younger girls, and enable women to feel truly represented and recognised in the democratic process. A society in which women are not part of the political system is an unjust society.

#### A matter of democracy

Women's experiences are different from men's and need to be represented in discussions and decision-making. A growing body of research suggests that where women are present in critical numbers and are able to participate effectively in local government, the result is more socially responsive governance outcomes and a more transparent way of working.

#### A matter of interest

Decisions by municipalities about development priorities, services and regulation affect the quality of life of both women and men, but not necessarily in the same way. In most countries there are significant differences between women and men in the resources they command, the work they do, and in the responsibilities and the decision-making power they have.

#### A matter of obligation

Local governments have the responsibility to protect women's and girls' rights, and mainstream gender issues. They are also responsible for implementing legal and policy frameworks that aim to end violence against women and girls, promoting women's political participation and creating programmes that will economically empower women.

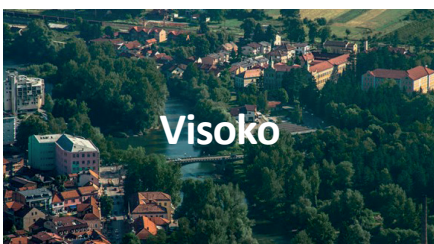


## SDG#5: not implemented but there is political will

In Visoko Municipality and Žepče Municipality in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and East Ilidža Municipality in Republika Srpska, SDG#5 on gender equality has not been implemented. The local governments however demonstrate political will to empower women and girls and mainstream gender issues.



1. Visoko Municipality is the only city in Bosnia and Herzegovina led by a female Mayor (now in her second term).<sup>4</sup> Women are empowered by the Mayor as a role model paving the way for more women to take on leadership roles.
2. Žepče Municipality was one of the first municipalities to develop a gender equality Local Gender Action Plan, which is used as a model of best practice in the country.<sup>5</sup>
3. East Ilidža Municipality is at the forefront of developing and implementing gender mainstreaming policies and has an active political party association of women, as well as one of the first established Municipal Council Committees on gender equality.



Visoko



Žepče



Ilidža



<sup>4</sup> ICLD ITP – Local Political Leaders - Capacitating Women in Politics

<https://icld.se/en/project/itp-local-political-leaders-capacitating-women-in-politics>

<sup>5</sup> OSCE Priručnik za gender mainstreaming na lokalnoj razini (Guidelines for gender mainstreaming at local level), pp 30, 47.

## Obstacles to implementation of SDG#5

- Lack of awareness of the sustainable development goals
- Limited understanding of what gender equality entails
- Patriarchal structures, values and norms in society
- Lack of capacity of political parties to implement principles of gender equality
- Lack of political will of elected officials and those in executive functions
- Lack of funding and a separate budget line for gender equality
- Non-functioning committees for gender equality
- No gender focal point
- Lack of Local Gender Action Plans
- Lack of implementation of election law
- Lack of cooperation with Gender agencies at the national level

## The study conducted in the municipalities shows:

### The most prominent tools to implement SDG#5:

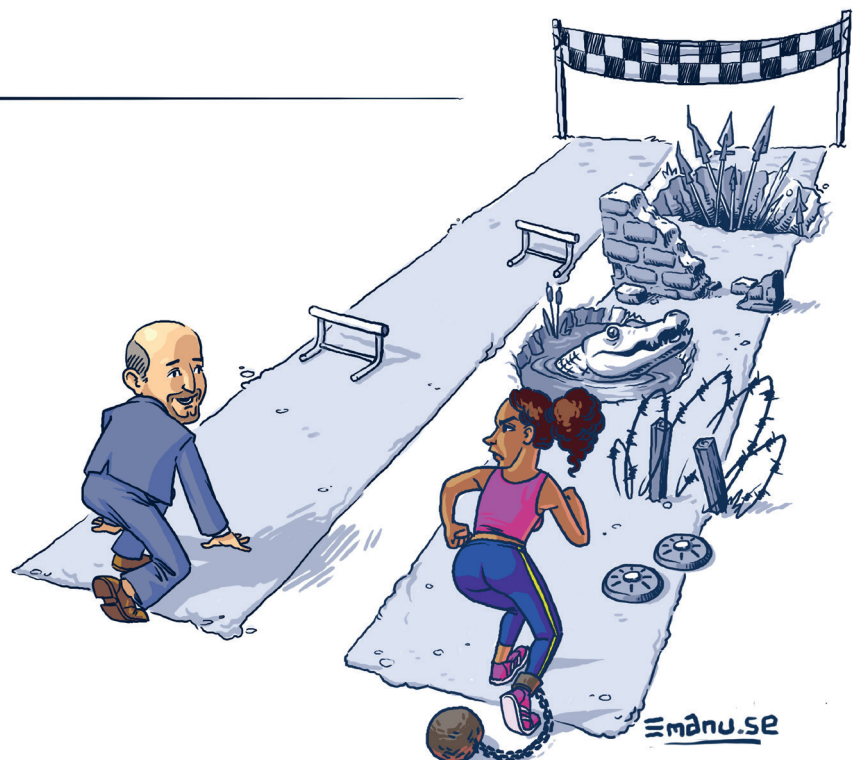
- Local Gender Action Plans
- Disaggregating municipal data by gender
- Municipal Council Committees for gender equality

### The tools least utilised or effective:

- Women representation in decision-making
- Implementing SDG#5
- Gender responsive budgeting

### Gender tools are not always implemented:

- There is irregular monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Action Plans
- Although some gender disaggregated data is available, it rarely contributes to the municipal development planning processes
- Committees sometimes complete the whole four-year mandate without meeting



“What’s the matter?  
It’s the same distance!”

## Recommendations: a toolbox for implementing SDG#5



1.

**“A gender-responsive budget is a budget that works for everyone – women and men, girls and boys – by ensuring gender-equitable distribution of resources and by contributing to equal opportunities for all”**

(Oxfam, 2018)

### Institutional mechanisms

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality are a guarantee that targets set out by SDG#5 will become part of government programmes and services, and not only on an ad hoc project-based topic. However, the danger in institutional mechanisms is also that once they are established, they can become empty vessels that do not make concrete contributions to the improvement of the status of gender equality.

The success of gender equality policies is strongly linked to the use of the following tool groups: awareness raising, gender mainstreaming know-how, support and political will to promote gender equality, adequate funding, and sharing of knowledge and resources among institutional and organisational partners. The following five tools ensure that gender is institutionalised in the legislative and executive bodies; there are sufficient funds to promote gender equality; and women have equal access to resources and decision-making processes:

1. Commission on gender equality to meet regularly
2. Appoint a gender focal person with responsibility for SDG#5
3. Develop a Local Gender Action Plan that includes SDG#5 targets
4. Ensure gender responsive budgeting to address SDG#5 targets
5. Women representation in decision-making



2.

**“before we did not have the case of people reporting domestic violence, because both women and men thought that this violence was part of married life. People have become significantly aware and have access to information and knowledge”**

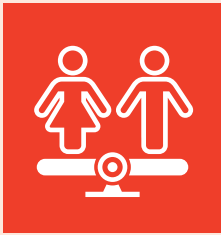
(East Ilidža, 25.12.17)

### Tools to change perceptions and behaviour

Gender equality is a concept that can be new to emerging local democracies and raising awareness can be a lengthy and challenging process. It is in particular true for societies in which traditional and patriarchal norms present some of the most difficult hurdles in promoting gender equality. These tools should be seen as ongoing continuous processes, and not one-off events, and are crucial not only in creating an enabling environment for institutional tools to function, but also as a resource for knowledge and skills for gender mainstreaming.

1. Gender awareness raising through campaigns to challenge values and gender norms by explaining how they influence and limit the opinions taken into consideration and decision-making. Gender training
2. Gender sensitive language applied in all official internal documents and public documentation and communications to public, use non-sexist words and language promoted, budget gender proofreading<sup>6</sup>
3. Visibility of gender equality issues
4. Promotion of equal rights and opportunities for men and women, by promoting peace, just and equal societies and institutions, responding to specific needs of women and girls, putting these issues on priorities of local authorities' policies and programmes

<sup>6</sup> For instance the EU Inter-institutional Style Guide <http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-4100600en.htm>



3.

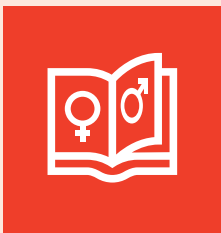
**“We do not have specific gender mainstreaming guidelines or checklists, as we mainly deal with technical issues, infrastructure projects and water works. However, for instance when planning the next step in the repair and reconstruction of water works, we decided to include the location of Čekrčići, because it is mostly occupied by internally displaced women (from Srebrenica) who have started some entrepreneurship that highly relies on access to water...”**

(Visoko, 06.10.17)

## Tools to mainstream process

Implementation of institutional mechanisms, legal and policy frameworks requires tools to mainstream the process that ensure they are executed. Data and information on the status of women and men, their access to resources and decision making, and grass root initiatives for gender equality, are all inputs for development of municipal programmes and strategies. Evaluation on the enactment of these municipal policies and extent to which they have an impact on women and men in society is another source of information for the development of plans and programmes from a gender equality perspective.

1. Gender disaggregated data to map challenges to gender equality
2. Analysis of the state of gender equality in municipality and proposition of measures
3. Monitoring and periodical assessment of progress towards gender equality
4. Gender mainstream proposals and strategic documents passed by the municipal council
5. Review citizens’ initiatives for promotion of gender equality



4.

**Municipal authorities need guidelines and support from other levels in the government on how gender can be mainstreamed within government structures**

## Cooperation for gender equality

Local authorities need to have open cooperation channels with NGOs, particularly women’s organisations, which can be a crucial source of grassroots information on gender equality, and also act as service providers for interventions that go beyond the human resource capacities of municipalities. Sharing experiences between national, regional and international frameworks is vital for sustainably mainstreaming gender equality, as best practices and lessons learned are models that can be replicated globally.

1. Cooperation with institutional gender mainstreaming mechanisms at all levels of government, through existing gender coordination mechanisms, or if none available, through meetings, requests for information, and exchange of knowledge
2. Cooperation with other government institutions on gender equality by providing and demanding gender disaggregated information, gender impact assessments, and sharing specific gender issues faced at local level
3. Cooperation with NGOs on gender equality, by involving them in planning and decision-making processes, seeking their grass-root knowledge and information

## Conclusion

Summarising the main policy-relevant findings, we conclude that that gender sensitive policies and gender equality are key elements of democratic governance, necessary for stable development and security in any community. The toolbox developed in this report provides knowledge, strategies and inspiration on how to operationalise gender equality at the local level.

**What are the obstacles to implement SDG#5 in your municipality?**

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**In your opinion, what are the most effective tools to implement SDG#5?**

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## Contact details

Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy

Visiting address Söderväg 1D, 621 58 Visby  
Telephone +46 498-29 91 00  
E-mail info@icld.se  
Web www.icld.se

