

#FEMINISTS  
WANT **SYSTEM  
CHANGE**



**GENERATION  
EQUALITY**



## SUMMARY OF WESTERN BALKANS CONSULTATION MEETING

9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

*For feminists and women's civil society organisations in times of Generation Equality, COVID-19 and the decade of action*



# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Summary of consultation .....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| Purpose and expected results for the meeting by Alia El-Yassir, UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia..... | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Context Setting .....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| Xenia Kellner, Young Feminist Europe, leader for the Action Coalition on feminist movements and leadership: .....           | 2         |
| Aleksandra Petric, United Women Banja Luca, preparatory committee: .....  | 3         |
| <b>Partnerships, Consultations and Visibility .....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| Meaningful participation & inclusion of Women Civil Society Organizations in decision making .....                          | 3         |
| Visibility, recognition, and acknowledgement of WCSOs expertise and contributions .....                                     | 4         |
| Feedback from UN Women: .....   | 4         |
| <b>Funding the feminist movement .....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| Feedback by UN Women and take-aways: .....  | 6         |
| <b>Annex 1: Presentation Slides .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Annex 2: Inputs from one of the groups received afterwards (submitted on 14 June) .....</b>                              | <b>20</b> |

## Summary of consultation

### Purpose and expected results for the meeting by Alia El-Yassir, UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia

- Partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs) is considered critical and at this time calls for a revitalized, collaborative strategy based on principles of feminist leadership and power sharing;
- A positive, generative, and productive relationship is possible if the terms of the partnership are clarified, this being based on the specific context and situation in the Western Balkans;
- This includes a more strategic way of ensuring longer term supportive relationships that deal directly with issues of power, inclusion, and transformation to reach common targets and objectives.
- Constant dialogue is important to be able to jointly discuss and address limits for the quality of partnerships, mutual understanding, and impact of the work. Issues of trust, transparency and accountability require a space and a commitment to explore and discuss jointly.
- The demands of women's CSOs (WCSOs) to play a larger role in UN Women's decision of priorities and strategies at country, regional and global levels have yet to be fulfilled.
- The Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs) could be applied to support a strategic partnership with civil society, with a focus on expanding the space for CSOs voice, power, and safety to advance their agendas.
- Feminist principles of engagement need to be articulated and put in place. UN Women will take leadership in facilitating dialogue to develop a set of feminist principles of engagement between UN and women's civil society organizations. These principles need to be used as the standards for creating the conditions for joint action for advancing gender equality and women's rights.
- We expect this from the Generation Equality Forum, to push for a clarification of issues of power, accountability and capacity for gender equality work and results. This needs to be localized further at the regional and country levels.
- There is a need for the strategic shift away from focusing on bilateral implementing partnerships towards movement-building in a way that addresses genuine concerns over insecure resources, overstretched capacity and reducing political space for action.
- Clear understanding and political savvy are needed to navigate these complexities to advance the most visionary and courageous actions for the gender equality promotion, particularly in contexts where anti-feminist movements are growing.
- We are ready to facilitate engagement with UN senior management at the regional and country levels to determine the engagement with WCSO experiences, not depending on the individual or leadership at a particular time.

### Context Setting

#### Xenia Kellner, Young Feminist Europe, leader for the Action Coalition on feminist movements and leadership:

- More information about the Action Coalition on feminist movement and leadership can be found [here](#).
- One of the most important actions suggested by the Action Coalition is funding the feminist movements and among other important topics to be discussed are internal changes such as the application of feminist principles and addressing power share.
- Demands from commitment makers and regional organizations are going to be discussed in the Paris Forum and revised by you and regional participants.
- An important part of the Action Coalition are the commitment makers that will be part of the transformative journey of a community of practice.

- To become a commitment maker, register [here](#) before June 18<sup>th</sup>
- Register for the Generation Equality Forum [here](#) before 27 June

#### Aleksandra Petric, United Women Banja Luka, preparatory committee:

- Outlined the key messages of the letter sent by all sent on 30 October 2020 WCSOs to UN Agencies, as well as highlighting the work of the preparatory committee in setting up the conference. The letter is available [here](#)
- These messages are included into the written submission by the WCOs that participated in the meeting (see Annex 2)

### Partnerships, Consultations and Visibility

#### **Questions discussed:**

How to secure a space for women's' civil society organizations to meaningfully and equally participate and contribute to policy dialogues?

What priority topics should there be for regular consultation with UN Women?

- When do these need to take place?
- At which level should they be undertaken, regional and/or national?

#### Meaningful participation & inclusion of Women Civil Society Organizations in decision making

#### **Secure a space for women's' civil society organizations to meaningfully and equally participate and contribute to policy dialogues:**

- NGOs should discuss how to influence public policies of states and how to achieve results. However, when NGOs participate in working bodies, this influence is conditioned by the support they get.
- A major obstacle for WCSOs is the discrepancy in values and beliefs, which is a reason why they hesitate to sit down with governments. UN Women can support by making clear statements, siding with feminist NGO's and women's human rights values.
- Inputs by CSOs should be considered with the same or even higher regard as those of the political parties governing. CSOs need to be recognized as experts and included into all consultation processes in a democratic way. UN agencies should serve as mediators between CSOs and governments.
- CSOs should not be excluded from discussions based on unsolicited unexpected behavior. Here, UN Women can support CSOs being heard. An official communication channel for CSOs can facilitate this inclusion.
- Engagement of WCSOs should be institutionalized and not depend on the invitation by governments. This could be done within a frame of UN cooperation agreements with the host governments where parameters for partnership and engagement are agreed with a clear role of engaged parties.
- The quality of the engagement with NGOs/CSOs should be assessed on a regular basis.
- Utilize OECD gender markers and Gender Action Plan III, implying formal inclusion of the gender perspective in all actions and projects and offering new space for WCSOs to get involved as partners.

#### **Priority topics in regular consultations with UN Women:**

- WCSOs should be invited to the planning phase, discuss amongst each other, and reconcile views. Implement a 'bottom-up approach' and adequately consult, include, and listen to WCSOs during the initial design of all new programs in the Western Balkans.

- Priority topics suggested are Gender Equality, gender leadership and participation in decision-making processes (the perspective of the Balkans as post-conflict Region), transitional justice concepts at a national and regional levels; GBV, GRB, Menstrual poverty (GTD), Roma women, women from rural areas, WCD, and freedom of expression.

- Meetings need to be regular and information about these publicly accessible. The priority topics at the country level need to be decided by CSO and the consultations are suggested every 3 months. At the regional level, the consultations with CSOs are suggested every 6 months.

### Visibility, recognition, and acknowledgement of WCSOs expertise and contributions

Questions raised:

How can the visibility of the work and results of organizations working on gender equality and human rights be aided by UN Women?

### Support by UN Women to increase visibility of work and results of organizations:

- Set up a regional platform for Women CSOs for sharing results, activities, and know-how actions.
- More flexibility from UN Women country offices to cooperate with CSOs on implementing activities and giving credit and recognition to the national CSOs contributions in these.
- Include and highlight the expertise and experience of WCSOs when initiating/leading policy processes with governments.
- Work to avoid unfriendly relations between CSOs that appear due to a perception of selectiveness by UN Women agencies.
- Information on the projects and CSOs that UN Women finances should be made available.
- Regular meetings with other UN agencies to talk about the real needs from the field.
- CSOs need capacity building with regards to women's participation, GBV, Istanbul Convention etc. Also, CSOs need capacity building in communication and work to establish partnerships with gender-sensitive media, academic and cultural institutions is needed.

### Feedback from UN Women:

- There is a general sense that WCSOs experience is not being heard adequately.
- We should bring focus to ways of strengthening all the voices of WCSOs.
- When we talk about UN Women, we also talk about the UN more broadly.
- You are looking for more consulting on a country level.
- You are also asking for flexibility; it is important to define this.
- Effort is needed to ensure that organizations do not feel excluded.
- There is no intension of exclusion of colleagues.
- National gender and WCSOs need increased funding. The monitoring and accountability framework for the Acton Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership 6 is expected to enable assessment of implementation of commitments and reaching planned targets for CSOs' support and funding.

## Funding the feminist movement

### Questions raised:

How can we advocate for more funding to gender equality and human rights work from the international development partners in general for Western Balkans WCSOs?

What is missing, at the moment, in terms of funding modalities and processes? What can the international development partners (UN, donors, etc.) do better?

How can we jointly advocate for increased funding especially for local groups and networks? What should be the key principles for this work?

How can we ensure that funding coming through GEF can reach our region?

- What can be done on the part of UN Women to support this joint advocacy?
- What can be done by civil society organizations working on gender equality and human rights to support this?

### **Advocate for more funding to gender equality and women's human rights work from the international development partners:**

- Conduct consultations with WCSOs before the design programs and deciding on financing.
- Increase visibility of WCSOs towards donors, through regular virtual meetings or visits to the project field.
- Consider recruitment of external experts and exclusion of local experts and organizations.
- Implement clear categorization of funds for WCSOs to increase their capacity and support their operations.
- Jointly lobby for funding for WCSOs due to specific characteristic as a post-conflict region.
- Target messaging, work for cooperation of WCSOs across the region to identify ways of demanding more funding; provide evidence-based messages to international donors.
- Focus on strengthening already established networks.

### **Improve funding modalities & processes:**

- The UN vetting process is complicated, time-consuming and requires capacity that not all organizations have and excludes smaller CSOs. This, together with lacking consideration of women's labour rights in UN procedures needs to be addressed.
- Simplify bureaucratic procedures, enable application in local languages, provide capacity building and mentor support for local WCSOs in preparing funding applications and project writing.
- Integrate gender equality into the official development assistance.
- Consider allowing partnerships between small and big capacity CSOs applying for funding.
- Provide more open calls on women's issues.
- Base project design on CSOs research and expertise on the needs.
- Review and adapt the existing practices of established cooperation with other UN institutions to secure sustainable funding.
- Enable an environment for WCSOs collaboration rather than competitiveness.
- The IPA funds regarding their request from CSOs to participate by 15% amount of the total value project – to consult with the EU to bring other donors to allocate/cover 15% of the projects' funding. This will enable WCSO to get the funding from the IPA.
- The fundraising could be done jointly with UN agencies. The joint meetings with the donors could be undertaken, even virtually - virtual mission/visit of the donors from their capital to the project fields, etc.



- An institutional and mentor support for local WCSOs is needed. WCSOs need to be supported to develop capacity for project writing and fundraising.
- Develop and introduce special programs where networks and think-tank organizations will apply for funding;
- Transparency of the funding opportunity and of decisions need to be ensured (Indicator 5.C.1 SDGs)

#### **Jointly advocate for increased funding especially for local groups and networks:**

- Raise awareness of the status of women in the Western Balkans to demonstrate challenges and gaps to be addressed.
- Enlist allies, such as high-profile people with credibility to amplify a cause they care about and give it visibility.
- Focus on long-term funding commitments - institutional funding ensures sustainability in long term from donors and governments, and recognize the value of capacity building funding
- Push for accountability and the responsibility of governments to finance WCSOs.
- Categorize the funds for WCSOs to reach more broadly.
- Contract WCSOs instead of individual experts, which strengthens visibility and sustainability of results.

#### **Priority topics in regular consultations with UN Women:**

- Local WCSOs struggle with funding. UN Women offices ought to finance more CSOs, especially those working for marginalized groups and discontinue the practice of financing a few CSOs repeatedly.
- WCSOs, especially the smaller ones, need more core- and long-term funding, especially WCSOs in conflict and post-conflict zones.

#### **Ensure that funding coming through GEF can reach our region by joint advocacy:**

- Advocate before IPA to include funding for cross-border cooperation and emphasize the cross-cutting nature of gender equality issues.
- Regular and meaningful coordination meetings with Women country offices.
- Avoid the creation of monopolies, with regular rotation of the staff of the UN agencies.
- Develop a strategy together with local women NGOs, consult with WCSOs as implementing partners and advocate that UN agencies design projects that support women's organizations and other organizations working with vulnerable groups.
- Enable talks between international donors and WCSO's from the Western Balkans for knowledge exchange.

#### **Feedback by UN Women and take-aways:**

- Having regular and strategic meetings on regional and country level will help this process to improve.
- We must put pressure on state officials for a transparent and inclusive policy making process.
- Securing the sufficient funding that goes directly to organizations is a problem that we are aware of. Our core budget has not been increased by states that created UN Women. Canada, Gates and Ford Foundations have increased financing and support these issues. These funds are also expected to be used for funding in the Western Balkans region.
- Funding and granting issues as well as needs of easing bureaucratic processes will be conveyed to UN Women headquarters.
- UN Women will consult with the Regional CSAG on experiences and lessons learnt from WCSOs engagement and funding issues.
- There are several agendas and processes ongoing regards political relations of the UN, in case of reaching any agreement in this area, planning can be started as soon as possible in post conflict areas.

- We have taken all factors regarding the Western Balkans in consideration and steps that will be taken can be discussed in another session.
- Upcoming consultations will focus on new priority areas for gender equality programming:
  - Consultations with WCSOs in the Western Balkans on a **new UN Women Regional Strategic Note for 2022-2025** are suggested to discuss and lead to agreement on priorities for the sub-region and joint actions.
  - **Gender and Digitalization** as a development priority for the sub-region: this is identified as a high priority area for the pandemic recovery and building back better. A regional programme on Gender and Digitalization is planned;
  - **Women, Peace and Security in Western Balkans** for a joint engagement through exploring a regional application for the eligibility to access the long-term window of the UN Peacebuilding Fund; looking at gaps and needs in support of transitional justice and other related areas critical to underpinning trust-building, dialogue and reconciliation in the region; addressing trust-building, constructive dialogue and reconciliation related challenges; etc. **Women issues and climate change** as an important step to take in further periods.
- UN Women regional office will continue engagement of members of its CSAG to follow-up on the agreed steps and prepare for the next consultations.



## Annex 1: Presentation Slides

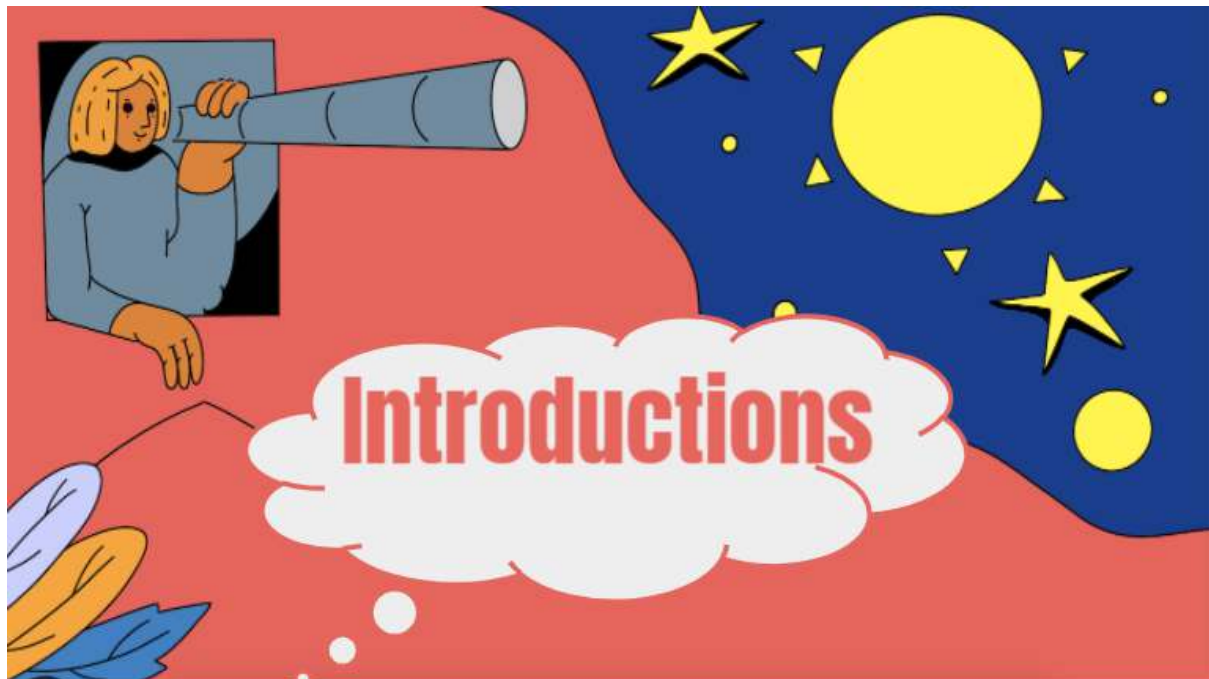


### Solidarity principles

- Make equal space and take space
- Be open and constructive to someone else speaking their truth
- Value the process and look for results
- This is a safe space for all, we do not tolerate discrimination of any kind, including on the basis of race, origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, work, age, among others
- No recording, only general summaries from the notes in this presentation

Image description:  
illustration of four people protesting with their arms up in the air, with two big flags. One person in a wheelchair, one younger person.





## Agenda

**9:00 Introductions and Technical Explanation**

**9.10 Opening remarks, purpose and expected results for the meeting, Alla El-Yassir UN Women**

**9.25 Context Setting**

Xenia Kellner, Young Feminist Europe  
Aleksandra Petric, United Women Banja Luka, preparatory committee

**9:40 Partnerships, consultations and visibility**

- ◆ Discussion in **break out groups (30 mins)**
- ◆ Report back and Identification of next steps
- ◆ *UN Women reflections*

**10:40 Break (10 mins)**

**10:50 Feminist Funding:**

- ◆ Discussion in **break out groups (30 mins)**
- ◆ Report back and Identification of next steps
- ◆ *UN Women reflections*

**11:40 – 12:00 Take-aways on the discussion and next steps**

# Opening Remarks



**ALIA EL-YASSIR**

UN Women Regional Director  
for Europe and Central Asia

## Context Setting

### Global Perspective

**Xenia Kellner**

Young Feminist Europe, co-lead for action coalition six  
on strengthening feminist movements and leadership

### Western Balkan Perspective

**Alexandra Petric**

United Women Banja Luca, preparatory committee

# Partnerships, Consultations and Visibility

## Guiding Questions

- How to secure a space for women's civil society organizations to meaningfully and equally participate and contribute to policy dialogues?
- What priority topics should there be for regular consultation with UN Women?
  - ◆ When do these need to take place?
  - ◆ At which level should they be undertaken, regional and/or national?
- How can the visibility of the work and results of organizations working on gender equality and human rights be aided by UN Women?



## Notes from break out group 1 - Srpski

-Nametnuti tematske sednice - iskustvo iz Bosne o ženama Romkinjama Česta gostovanja u medijima o temi RZ nasilja - Indira iz BiH

-Da li se pitanje odnosi na politike vlada ili UN agencija? Marija iz Srbije referiše na UN agencije - i kako da se glas CSO čuje u okviru UN - ženska udruženja bi morala da učestvuju u samoj fazi planiranja UN Women, proces planiranja nam nije poznat, ali nedostaju konstruktivni inputi ženskih specijalističkih organizacija U Srbiji bi valjalo da MŽPN učestvuju u ovom procesu.

-Marina kaže da kao ženski pokret treba da učestvujemo i saradujemo sa UN Women. Organizacije treba da budu iskrene i među sobom razgovaraju i usklade stavove.

-Biljana Zeković - misli da se samo poslednje pitanje odnosi na UN Women. Misli da su javne politike država tema o kojoj bismo trebale da razgovaramo, uticaj na izgradnju javnih politika i na koji način to postizemo u svojim državama. U CG su ženske org uključene na različite načine, država je uvela sistem na koji način se ž.org. uključuju, učešće u radnim telima je uslovljeno brojem podrške za članice koje predstavljaju u telima, nisu zadovoljne takvim načinom, ali je to jedan od načina na koji ž. Org. mogu da obezbede podršku svojim članicama (po dve predstavnice u strategijama, a u zakonima maksimum jedna predstavnica). Imaju utisak da se znanje i ekspertize ž. Aktivistkinja zloupotrebljavaju, sav teret izrade različitih dokumenata pada na ž. Org. ali je njima interes da budu tu. UN agencije - planiranje aktivnosti - glas org. bi trebalo više da se čuje u CG je UNDP obično implementator, i nekada su u situaciji da se ne slažu sa stavovima UN Women koji plasira UNDP

- Nada Golubović - misli da bi trebalo pomiriti dva stava o tome o čemu govorimo - misli da treba da budemo uključene u proces strateškog planiranja ali i implementiranje UN Women programa

- Indira - redovne sastanke sa UN agencijama, svaka tri meseca, njima reći šta su stvarne potrebe sa terena; trebalo bi da podrže malo više organizacije u core troškovima

- Na svim nivoima bi trebalo da se konsultujemo



## Notes from break out group 2 - Македонски

- The local UN Women agency Skopje should regularly invite all the interested CSOs in meetings regarding women's rights without selecting only particular CSOs to take part.
- The local UN Women agency should finance more CSOs. The practice by now is financing repeatedly only few CSOs.
- The local agency should be more flexible and allow CSOs to work and implement activities on the same topics as the ones the agency works on
- The voice of the CSOs should be taken with the same or higher value/importance than the voice of the political parties governing. They should be first partners of the CSOs not to the political party governing.
- The agency should collaborate or finance at the same time more than one CSO that works with the same group of marginalised people, especially Roma women
- The agency should give credit to the national CSOs when collaborating on a campaign or project instead of taking all the credit for the work.
- The selective approach of the UN Women agency creates unfriendly relations between the CSOs
- Available public mapping of the projects and CSOs that the agency finances
- Priority topics: GBV, GRB, Menstrual poverty (GTD), Roma women, women from rural areas, WCD, freedom of expression (especially in the agency) ,

## Notes from break out group 3 - Shqip

- Good cooperation with UN Women.
- NGO's in Albania are heard, especially those working on GBV.
- Flexibility in project implementation.
- Visibility: main method increase of capacities of CSO on communication.
- Sharing experiences.
- Continue consultation with UN Women, as we did previously in Kosovo.
- For RAE communities it has increased the trust in WCSO through UN Women support.
- Capacity building in increasing women participation, GBV, Istanbul Convention etc.

## Notes from break out group 4 - English pt. 1

- Meetings with CSOs should be periodic and information should be public
- UNW should support us and recognize us as experts
- To include CSOs in the consultation processes
- To find proper mechanisms to include CSOs
- The consultation should be inclusive all CSOs and carried out in a democratic way
- Networking between CSOs is also very important
- Un Agencies should be a regulatory body and serve as mediators between CSOs and governments
- The communication should be permanent and non-discriminatory
- CSOs shouldn't be excluded from the discussion only because they don't comply to a behavior that is expected from them
- UNW should push forward the process and make possible that CSOs voice is heard
- UN agencies need to include us whenever governments reach to them, which demands an official communication channel to be established at permanent basis

## Notes from break out group 4 - English pt. 2

- Actions should not be Ad-hoc, rather they should be institutionalised
- In the Cooperation Agreements that Un Agencies have with country governments CSOs or Ministries have already defined roles
- UN agencies should recognise the CSOs with already strong advocacy positions as partners , not the competition
- The quality of the engagement with NGOs/CSOs should be assessed as well
- While the partnership with UN Agencies is good, the cooperation with state institutions is lacking in Albania
- One of the major reasons/obstacles why women's organizations don't want to sit down with governments is because we don't share the same values and beliefs; UNW can help out by making clear statements that they share the same values as women's NGOs.
- the priority topics, should be decided on national level, by CSO and have consultation with unwomen every 1- 3 months
- once every 6 months or 1 a year with regional un women
- Unwomen can serve as mediators, and shares experience across countries

## Notes from break out group 5 - English

Women CSOs to be treated as equal partners and adequately participate  
Promote and support regional cooperation and Women CSOs regional networking  
Gender-sensitive media  
Create partnership and promote women in academic institutions, art, etc  
Dialogue between Women CSOs, Politics and Government  
Working groups and regularly meetings between Women CSOs, Governments and politicians  
Ensure core financial support and multi-year funding for Women CSOs  
Ensure gender-sensitive political interventions  
Implement 'bottom up approach'  
Adequately consult, include and listen to WCSOs during the initial design of all new programs in the WB  
Priority topics - gender Equality and Gender leadership and participation in decision-making processes (perspective as Balkan as post-conflict Region)

- Transitional justice concepts
- National and Regional level

Visibility - Regional platform for Women CSOs - sharing results, activities and know-how actions

## Partnerships, Consultations and Visibility

### Report Back and Next Steps

- **Bottom up approach**
- **Regional space for sharing activities etc to increase visibility**
- **Institutionalised action, not ad-hoc and regular meetings which are public**
- **Permanent non discriminatory communication**
- **Priority topics should be decided on and then consultations between UNwomen and WCSOs**
- **Better 3 way communication between governments, WCSOs and UNwomen**
- **Voices of WCSOs and their work should be promoted and properly credited**





# Reflections on partnerships consultations and visibility



**ALIA EL-YASSIR**

UN Women Regional Director  
for Europe and Central Asia

## Feminist Funding - Guiding Questions

- How can we advocate for more funding to gender equality and human rights work from the international development partners in general for Western Balkans WCSOs?
- What is missing, at the moment, in terms of funding modalities and processes? What can the international development partners (UN, donors, etc.) do better?
- How can we jointly advocate for increased funding especially for local groups and networks? What should be the key principles for this work?
- How can we ensure that funding coming through GEF can reach our region?
  - ◆ What can be done on the part of UN Women to support this joint advocacy?
  - ◆ What can be done by civil society organizations working on gender equality and human rights to support this joint advocacy?



## Notes Break out group 1 - srpski

Un Agencije bi trebalo obavezno da sprovedu konsultacije pre finansiranja tj. Poziva, radi poznavanja situacije na terenu, potreba i već pokrenutih programa . Po principu na koji radi Kvinna till Kvinna fondacija, koja sa ženskim organizacijama ima konsultacije - odozdo prema gore. Najpre treba sprovesti ovaj krug konsultacija i one treba da budu češće.

Važno je i da male organizacije budu uključene u programe finansiranja koje raspisuje UN Women. Angažovanje ekspertkinja od strane UN agencija znači i isključivanje organizacija tj. Stavljanje organizacija u drugi plan.

Finansiranje Mreža organizacija, posebno obezbediti sredstva za rad organizacija. Bilo bi lepo da UN agencije promoviše rad organizacija, i ne preuzima rezultate rada organizacija.

UN Women bi trebalo da podrži rad organizacija, koje jedva opstaju - posebno specijalističke za rad sa žrtvama nasilja. Treba proveriti na koji način su potrošena sredstva za socijalne usluge iz lokalnih budžeta.

Trebalo bi da UN Women da podrška u saopštenjima i zahtevima NGO prema državi. Ako UN Women sarađuje sa vlašću, onda bi trebalo da traže da i programi za žene budu definisani za finansiranje. Ali, stiče se utisak da UN Women u Srbiji ne posmatra kritički rad srpske vlasti, odnosno UN Women bi mogle da zagovaraju da država finansira ženska specijalistička udruženja. Zagovaranje od strane UN Women bi trebalo da ide u smeru domaćih i međunarodnih fondova - da jasno traže i od država i Evropske komisije da se sredstva usmeravaju prema ženskim organizacijama, ne možemo istovremeno i mi i UN agencije da apliciramo na EU fondove, jer se na taj način istiskuju ženske NVO.

## Notes Break out group 2 - Македонски

- Smaller CSOs when applying for funds should have a more simple application process when applying for smaller funds since they do not have annual Audit reports
- Increase the financing of national and local(women) networks
- Create more open calls on women issues-the projects should be created based on CSOs research and the needs of the public (increase funding of services not only researches)
- There is a lack of mode for institutional and mentor support for local women organizations
- Forming special programs where networks and think-tank organisations will apply for fundings (since they will always have advantage regarding local/smaller NGOs)
- Need of transparency of the funding (Indicator 5.C.1 SDGs)
- Regular and meaningful coordination meetings between the local UN Women agency and the CSOs (every three months) in order to identify the needs
- Regular change of the staff of the UN agencies (not more than two mandates) to avoid the creation of monopolies
- Regular meetings on a regional level (every three months)

## Notes Break out group 3 - shqip

1. Te bejme strategji se bashku me OJQte e grave vendore per tu koordinuar me mire;
2. OJQte e grave te konsultohen si partnere implementuese;
3. Te avokohet te agjencite tjera te UN te dizajnojne porjekte qe mbeshtetin organizatat e grave;
4. Procedura me te lehta jo byrokratike.
5. Te dizajnohen projekte qe nuk i vejne ne konkurrence OJQte e grave;
6. Te financohen direkt OJQte e grave, te jepet mbeshtejte afatgjate, me shume mbeshtejte per rjetet dhe fondet e grave.
7. Te mbeshteten organizatat e grave per ngritje te kapacitetve per shkrim te mire te projekteve.
8. Te vazhdohet te mbeshtetn organizatat qe punojne me grupe te marginalizuara sic jane grate RAE.
9. Te mbeshteten organizatat qe punojne me LGBTI.

## Notes Break out group 4 - English

- Need sustainability of funding, short periods, related to gender equality,
- Problem: major budget by foreign donors, small funds by governments
- need long term funding commitments: recognize value of capacity building funding, funding for direct services short term, institutional funding ensures sustainability in long term
- to do categorization of the funds for the Women CSO in order to reach all women CSO and increase also capacity within women CSO
- government to take responsibility for financing GBV support groups-CSOs
- UN agencies to consider procedure change in funding applications- allow partnerships among small and big capacity CSO (encourage capacity building of small CSOs, challenging administration for small CSOs to apply for funding)
- UNW to involve WCSO in budget design
- increase visibility towards donors- couple of times/year UN Women to organize WCSOs present to other donors - this could be done even virtually. Virtual mission/visit of the donors from their capital to the project fields,
- ensuring contracting WCSOs instead of individual experts, because it strengthens also visibility and sustainability of results
- Albania CSO network established cooperation through UN Women to continue advocating through other UN institutions to secure sustainable funding
- to consider a decrease in funding of UNW administration, and an increase of core funding of WCSOs and their core activities
- UN vetting process is complicated, time-consuming, not have capacities, which excludes smaller CSO
- open space for women CSOs to be more friendly less competitive
- women's working rights not considered enough in UN procedures (dignities of salaries in women CSOs eg.)

## Notes Break out group 5 - English

- How can we advocate for more funding to gender equality and human rights work from the international development partners in general for Western Balkans WCSOs?
  - Need for core, multi-year support and funding for WCSO in the Western Balkans area
  - Joint Western Balkan WCSO's Lobbying for more funding due to specific characteristic as a post-conflict region
  - Target messaging: WCSO's across the region should cooperate in order to identify ways how to demand more funding; provide evidence-based messages to international donors
- What is missing, at the moment, in terms of funding modalities and processes? What can the international development partners (UN, donors, etc.) do better?
  - Simplifying of bureaucratic procedures and enable applying in local/domestic language; provide capacity building for preparing applications
  - Add Gender value
- How can we jointly advocate for increased funding especially for local groups and networks? What should be the key principles for this work?
  - Raise awareness for status of women in WB countries
  - Enlist allies - high-profile people with credibility amplify a cause they care about and give it visibility; to speak about the challenges of women in WB
  - Mentorship support in applying and implementing project activities and sub-granting
- How can we ensure that funding coming through GEF can reach our region?
  - ♦ What can be done on the part of UN Women to support this joint advocacy?
  - ♦ What can be done by civil society organizations working on gender equality and human rights to support this joint advocacy?
  - Advocate before IPA to include funding for cross-border cooperation; emphasize the gender equality issues as a cross-cutting issue
  - UN Women should organize between international donors and WCSO's from the WB area; to exchange and learn from each other

## Feminist Funding - Report Back and Next steps

- Including WCSOs in the consultation process before publishing a call for funding
- Simplifying bureaucratic procedures; clearly delineate different funding pathways
- More friendly and open space for WCSOs so it feels less competitive
- Projects and funding should be sustainable
- UN women and WCSOs to work in harmony with budget design and funding priorities so as to reduce competition





# Reflections on feminist funding



**ALIA EL-YASSIR**

UN Women Regional Director  
for Europe and Central Asia

## Annex 2: Inputs from one of the groups received afterwards (submitted on 14 June 2021)

Notes prepared by Autonomous Women's Centre, Belgrade and Association of Women Fenomena, Kraljevo on behalf of the participants of the Serbian language speaking group at the meeting with UN Women Regional office.

We call on UN agencies and funders which work on issues of gender equality, prevention and suppression of male violence against women to include women's non-governmental organizations in planning and implementation of programs and grant schemes. This would create synergy between funders and organizations that have common goals, and the likelihood of finding the best possible solutions would be increased. Additionally, this would help avert duplication of activities, wasting of resources, time and experience. Women's organizations, which provide specialized support services, play unique role and have unique expert knowledge on strengthening women who have survived violence, and as such can give a valuable contribution to planning and implementing relevant programs and funds – more so than any other group.

We call on UN agencies and funders to advocate for and make space for the inclusion of women's organizations in relation to drafting documents, public discussions and gatherings where institutional measures pertaining to the advancement of the status of women are being discussed, or public policies are being adopted. Women's organization's refusal to take part in developing public policies pertaining to gender equality and prevention and suppression of male violence against women is an act that should prompt UN agencies and funders to gain deeper understanding because the cause of such a rejection of cooperation most often lies in the lack of respect and recognition given by decision makers to the work done by women's organizations. If the case should be that women's organizations do participate in the aforementioned processes, UN agencies and funders should – in a spirit of solidarity and partnership – give support them and distinguish their knowledge and experience. UN agencies and funders should not make an alliance with the government if women's non-governmental organizations point out the possible harm posed by such cooperation – whether it harms women or women's organizations.

UN agencies and funders should not condition their support to women's organizations by forcing them to cooperate with decision makers – precisely because of the aforementioned lack of recognition afforded to women's organizations' expert level of knowledge and dedication by decision makers. UN agencies and funders should treat women's organizations the same as all other actors they cooperate with (professionals in institutions or decision makers). When it comes to consultations about public policies pertaining to gender equality and prevention and suppression of male violence against women, women's networks must be included in this process, but so should organizations that are not part of any network; likewise, women's organizations that are financed by UN agencies or funders must be included, but so should those that are not. UN agencies and funders financially support these public processes and are therefore uniquely positioned to include said organizations to this process.

We call on UN Women to show solidarity and support in regards to the process of applying for grants. A state of affairs where UN Women applies for funds intended for women's organizations does not reflect well on UN Women, and considering the difference in capacities it hits women's organizations even harder. Essentially, it undermines the strength and credibility of both.

It is vital that UN agencies and funders which finance state institutions monitor and regularly evaluate the results of project implementation and finance management in the same way that they do with women's organizations. In alignment with that same goal, UN agencies and funders should support women's organizations projects that include monitoring of public policies and practices. Transparency of work and

legality, independence and integrity of institutions have not yet been fully established in Serbia so this type of “watchdog” activity is still necessary. Additionally, we believe that UN agencies and funders which finance state institutions, must have a critical stance towards governments that have not yet implemented measures they have agreed to, or that violate international treaties they have signed.

Financial support programs intended for women’s organizations must be created on the basis of recommendations provided by fieldwork experts – those being women’s organizations. We call on UN agencies and funders to allocate financial resources (in GBV programs) precisely to those issues defined as priorities by women who use the services provided by women’s organizations.

Grants should be allocated to women’s networks, women’s organizations, but also to so called “grassroots” groups (organizations with either few or no full-time employees, unofficial groups, and feminist initiatives). The application, implementation and reporting processes should accommodate the groups’ capacities, and should be such that administrative work does not take too much time. Experience of women’s groups points to the fact that implementing UN projects and projects financed by other funders requires that attention, time and other resources required for administrative tasks take priority, so that little time and creativity is left for implementing activities. Another necessity are projects which provide long-term, general support to women’s organizations because they guarantee an organization’s growth and development, and they strengthen of the overall women’s movement. It is also necessary to guarantee the visibility of results produced by women’s organizations in projects implemented by UN agencies, because the work of women’s organizations must not be made invisible, nor should the credit for it be taken by other actors.

We are fully aware of and acknowledge the value of expert work. At the same time, we have to recognize what needs to be done to sustain women’s groups and the whole movement. With this in mind, we call on UN agencies and funders which work on issues of gender equality, prevention and suppression of male violence against women, to enlist the work organizations which are experts in their field. Whenever it is possible, UN agencies should advocate for cooperation between women’s organizations and local municipal governments (for example, through local partners as those in SCTM – Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities), and should support local municipal governments to finance specialized social protection services, as those provided by women’s organizations.

We especially call on UN agencies and funders who have for years financed the work of Local Gender Mechanism bodies to assess the effects produced by these investments and what results they have achieved. The general impression one may be left with is that there is a discrepancy between the (considerable) investments allocated to the Local Gender Mechanism bodies, and the relatively meager results they achieved. As well as that something should be done in this regard, of course.