



**REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË  
BASHKIA LEZHË**

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## PROJECT PROPOSAL:

### “MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN THE REGION OF LEZHA”

September 2012

Submitted to: UNDP Albania

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Name of the Applicant: Municipality of Lezha

Project title: “Mainstreaming gender into local development plans in the region of Lezha”.

Information on agency/organization: State Local Authority

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Starting date of the project: 15 September 2012

Termination date: 15 September 2013

Total cost of the project: 3,326,566 ALL (in cash and in supply form)

Funds claimed from UNDP under LoA: 2,543,460 ALL

Funding from other sources: Municipality: 568,106 ALL  
UNDP additional to this LoA: 215,000 ALL

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Signature of the project director

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Date

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Our goal under this project will be to contribute for mainstreaming gender into local development plans in the region of Lezha.

We believe that gender, although a crosscutting issue usually remains outside these kinds of development plans so we think that it's time to intervene in order to mainstream gender in all documents that the Municipality of Lezha is going to prepare in the frame of the new Regional Strategy for Economic Development. Gender mainstreaming is a very important step which should be taken and led by the Municipality, based also on the Law for Gender Equality<sup>1</sup>, the National Strategy on Gender Equality and against Gender-Based and Domestic Violence (2011-2015) as well as its action plan.

Our intervention will be based on the idea that every actor has particular, separate responsibilities in mainstreaming gender into policy level. However these actors often have duties that are interconnected with those of other institutions/organizations and therefore the final outcome of their work will very much be interdependent on the action/inaction of other structures. So, one of the main challenges under this initiative, will be the creation of a common and well understanding among all actors, by considering the gender action plan not as an added duty requested by the Municipality, but rather a method of carrying out successfully their existing legal duties.

A very important step that the Municipality will try to successfully achieve will be related with the gender responsive budgeting processes. The Municipality for the first time will try to gather women's opinion in different kinds of investments planned to be realized and reflected in the new budgeting process for the year 2013.

## **II. PROJECT CONTEXT, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.**

### **Background Information:**

Lezha region has a total surface of 275 ha where the city itself is composed of 5 neighborhoods (Skenderbeg, Beselidhja, Gurra, Spitali, Nene Tereza). The neighborhood Mother Teresa is relatively new and inhabited by migrants from remote villages or Northern area like Puka. While Skenderbeg neighborhood is populated among others from Roma & Egyptian communities. The women and young girls of the both mentioned neighborhoods are very easily influenced by all the negative phenomena faced in a long process of transition of our society.

The whole population registered is in the number of 29532 inhabitants. The demographic movement of earlier '90 has influenced a bit in the composition of the population, some citizens have moved in the capital of Albania, while many others from villages have moved in the city. The level of unemployment is 2843 or 9.8%, most of them are women and young people.

Starting from the year 2010, Lezha is being piloted from the Network against Gender Based Violence and Trafficking in order to establish the Coordinated Community Response system against VAW/DV. This project is supported by UN Trust Fund and some direct support provided to the municipality are: the salary for a local coordinator (DV Specialists); the creation of both mechanisms - at decision making level (the Referral Committee) and the Technical Working Group (Multidisciplinary Team for dealing with VAW/DV cases on a daily bases); training of DV Specialist on DV Legislation and CCR philosophy; a computer and the electronic data base system to track the DV cases and avoid double counting, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> New Law approved on 2008

**Problem statement:**

The issue of women's rights and gender equality has received increased visibility in Albania in these past 20 years. Notwithstanding, it continues to remain a matter of concern. At a first instance responsible for gender inequality and domestic violence in Albania are the traditional gender-related stereotypes and the patriarchal mentality which are deeply ingrained and manifested not only in the active refusal to the concept of gender equality, but also in the absence of expectations that there should be gender equality, or lack of appreciation of what it truly means in a person's everyday life.

The effect of the patriarchal mentality is further compounded by the transition changes Albania has been going through since 1990. These have led to a disruption of the gender balance in the Albanian society, and a situation where women and men have not been benefiting equally from the freedoms and rights gained. The transition changes have also burdened the condition of women with the aberration of human trafficking, the increased severity of domestic violence, and a deepening divide between those who benefit from them and those who are left behind, a divide often along urban vs. small town/rural lines. At the same time, for women, issues related to poverty, unemployment, discrimination in the workforce, barriers to the education and access to health services, as well insufficient representation in the decision-making process, have been exacerbated.

With women traditionally being the backbone of a family's well-being, and in more recent years with the increase in the number of female heads of households, including widows, divorced women, or those whose husbands have emigrated, these phenomena are framing the question of gender inequality both as a violation of women's rights and as a serious obstacle to speeding up poverty reduction in Albania, and short-changing its full potential for development.

Gender awareness is still low among community members and local leadership. Gender stereotypes are so deep, that impede progress on gender issues. Any progress noted is thanks to the efforts and work done by National and international organizations at all levels in our country.

The project will aim to create a more specialized staff for social issues, a proper place for organizing sessions and meetings, as well as will try to introduce the first concepts of gender mainstreaming at local development plans. It will be an additional component for improving also the intervention in the frame of the establishment of CCR. The Municipality will hire a new person to be in the position of Gender Focal Point and she will work very closely with the DV Specialist in order to better deal with GE&DV issues.

The project will also influence on improving the infrastructure of the Municipality. The space that will be dedicated in the Municipality premises as the office for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence will be equipped with chairs, tables, shelves as well as with a computer, to be used by the Gender Focal Point.

Women pensioners are still not considered as a good volunteer resource to encourage social progress. This project will work also on changing the mentality among them regarding the thinking that pension is the end of life. Through the project implantation women of all ages will be in a very friendly atmosphere and it will lead to an increased self-assessment.

### **III. PROJECT'S GOAL AND OBJECTIVES.**

**Main goal:**

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to mainstream gender into local development plans.

**Specific objectives:**

- ❑ Local duty-bearers have the capacity to mainstream gender into local plans, provide gender aware services to citizens, to implement the GE legislation professionally and in coordination with each-other.
- ❑ The awareness of the community is increased and dialogue on gender-related issues between municipality and the community is promoted.
- ❑ New practices on gender responsive budgeting introduced and piloted for a better planning of the resources in order to meet the needs of the community.

#### **IV. ULTIMATE BENEFICIARIES, ACTIVITY TARGET GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.**

The *ultimate beneficiaries* of the project are *all community members*. The holistic, sustainable and replicable model which this project is trying to put in place, will entail the creation of a local support system for involving more men and women in the development of local action plans, as well as for mainstreaming gender into local level policies.

In order to achieve the desired impact, the Municipality of Lezha believes it is essential to engage all key actors. The guiding principle is targeted inclusion, which refers to an all-inclusive approach implemented through a process that, in the first place, carefully identifies activity target groups-whose behavior we intend to modify, partners-with whom the Municipality will work, and community stakeholders-who will give their support, and subsequently engages them through customized messages and prompts to action.

The Municipality's *partners* are *human rights organizations, as well as the local government. Religious leaders, media, youth, private businesses* make up the group of community *stakeholders*. The division reflects the different scale of legal responsibilities for each member and is useful in terms of assigning roles within the model we intend to build. Otherwise, it goes without saying that these groups are neither exclusive nor interchangeable.

#### **V. PROJECT ACTIVITIES.**

Below is presented the description of all steps needed and activities that the Municipality will organize, in order to achieve the above mentioned goal and specific objectives.

##### **1. Empowering the Gender Equality section in the Municipality by hiring a new specialist as Gender Focal Point.**

The Municipality will hire a new specialist who will be in the position of gender Focal Point. She will work very closely with the DV Specialist and practically they will work in the same working space (office). The Gender Focal point will be responsible not only for the implementation of the proper legislative basis but also for undertaking specific actions in order to improve the local action plans. She will be trained and will be responsible for implementing specific project components related with meetings in the community, gathering women's opinion and prioritizing their needs during the Municipal' Budgeting Process for the year 2013, etc. The salary of the GE Focal Point will be covered from UNDP under this LoA and during the year 2013 she will be part of Municipality's staff, fully paid by Municipality own funds.

##### **2. Improving the capacity of local duty bearers on GM&GRB.**

A two-day training on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting will be developed with the Municipality staff members, in order to improve their capacities and prepare them for the new budgeting process for the year 2013. The idea is to create a better understanding of these concepts as well as to introduce the needed steps for implementing them into practice. This training will be helpful

also for identifying further needs for capacity development of the Municipal' staff members especially related with gender equality issues. The idea is to create a pull of specialists who will further easily influence on making Municipal documents, policies, plans, actions more gender sensitive.

**3. Preparation of an action plan on gender mainstreaming, as part of the Regional Strategy on Economic Development**

The Municipality of Lezha is under the process of drafting the Regional Strategy on Economic Development a very important strategic document which will be used in future as the main guiding principle in terms of investment for meeting the community' needs. In this frame, the Municipal staff will work in close collaboration with the National Coordinator in order to prepare an action plan with specific steps for mainstreaming gender into the local development activities. This document will be attached to the RSED as its annex. The document will be shared with the team who has been engaged on drafting the RSED and the final version will be translated also in English and published for internal use as well as for sharing experiences among Municipalities where similar experiences are happening.

**4. Piloting the new initiative of gender responsive budgeting process**

The Municipality will start piloting the Gender Responsive Budgeting process. During the budgeting process for the year 2013, the Municipality will try to gather and prioritize women's needs, by organizing specific meetings with them, at least in six neighborhoods of Lezha. The idea is to make women's voice stronger, to start explaining them the importance of being involved in such kinds of processes as well as of prioritizing their needs. A preliminary preparation process is needed in this regard. The New Gender Focal Point will play a very active role for this aim. All efforts on this direction will be followed by public awareness raising, TV emissions, leaflets and posters.

**5. Mobilizing elderly women in order to promote gender equality policies.**

There are a lot of elderly women who may be mobilized in order to promote gender equality policies. These women may be used to promote different actions in the community, to support young mothers or students, to be volunteers in organizing different community campaigns on topics such as: enhancing the quality of life such as city cleaning, "how to recycle at your home", offering service at elderly homes at the same encouraging elder women to frequent these homes and be promoters of applying new services there. Lezha Municipality will consider them as good community recourse to raise community reaction towards negative phenomena.

**6. Gender Equality and Domestic Violence Office' infrastructure will be supported.**

A Gender Equality and Domestic Violence office space will be provided to this section very soon inside the Municipality premises. In this regard, we seek UNDP support for the full infrastructure of this office (with additional funds as they are presented in the budget attached to the project proposal) by equipping it with the needed equipments such as computer, printer, desk, shelves, chairs, etc. At the same time, we request your assistance in training and coaching the Gender Focal Point who will be hired in the Municipality, according to her needs. Through these interventions we hope she will be empowered to become a reference point and a resource person to diverse colleagues of the Municipality and advocate as well as provide specialized advice in all strategizing, planning, recruiting, legal drafting and budgeting processes of the Municipality of Lezha. The Municipality commits to duly include the Gender Equality Specialist in any such working groups, with a view to make sure that gender equality concerns are given adequate space and attention.

## **V. BUDGET**

Please refer to the Excel file attached.