

# EQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING IN THE POLOG REGION

# 1

## THE QUOTAS ARE NECESSARY, YET INSUFFICIENT

The legal requirements for nomination and representation of women on the candidate lists have been met; however, their inclusion in decision-making drops significantly as we go up the institutional hierarchy.

Final outcome →

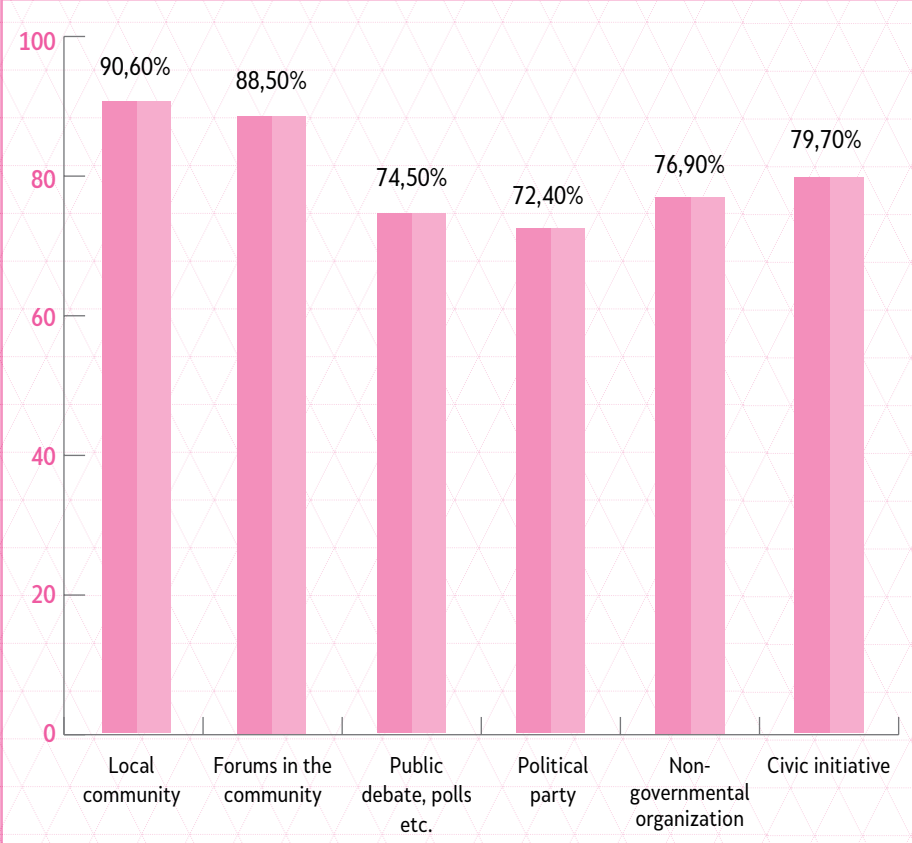
One female mayor  
One chairwoman of a municipal council

### Citizens are insufficiently involved...

About 1/5 of the citizens have been involved in the decision-making processes.

### Female citizens even less

Percentage of women that have never been included in the decision-making processes



### Presence does not guarantee influence

“What is important is that women are present in the political parties, but they somehow do not insist on presenting their ideas and goals, it is as if they got in the party program officially and then they melted gradually, their names are there, as figures, but they are nowhere to be found when a decision is to be made. I mind that too!”

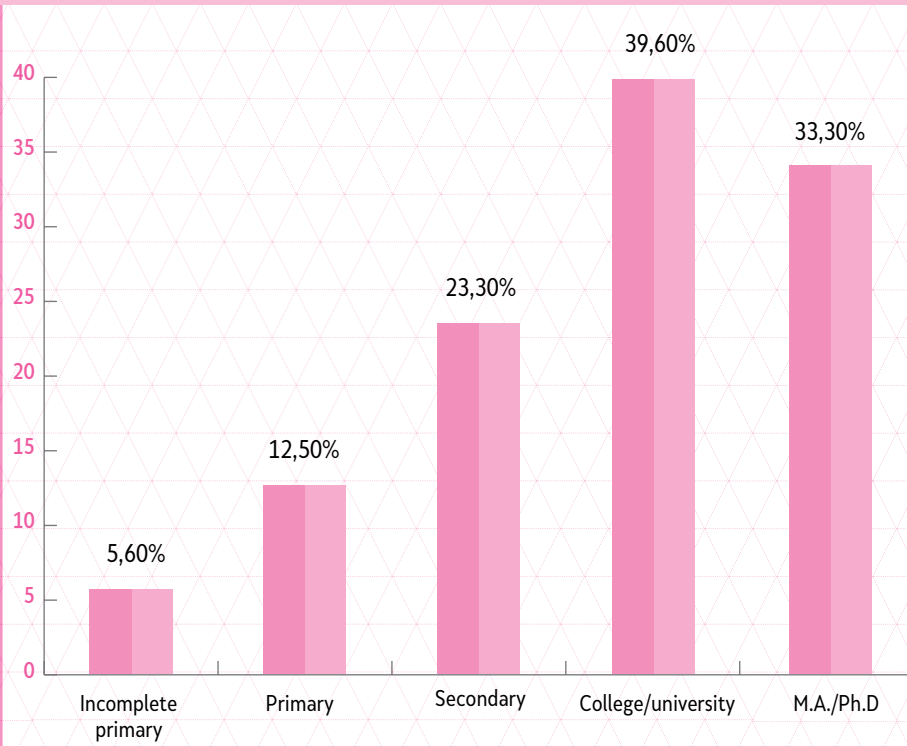
### “A special treatment” of the politically active women

“Women in the political parties, who are perhaps successful and achieve so high a level, regardless of how much they work, will be ultimately characterized as: She only has empty words. “She has left her kids and gone there“

If a woman becomes prominent, there is immediately the following characterization “Look, she is playing politics now... She’s forgotten her family, her husband, she only goes to hairdressers, beauty salons, television...this is the comment of women themselves“.

## PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING OPPORTUNITIES – A PRIVILEGE OF EDUCATED, URBAN WOMEN?

Percentage of women who have been involved in the decision-making process organized by the municipality, according to their level of education



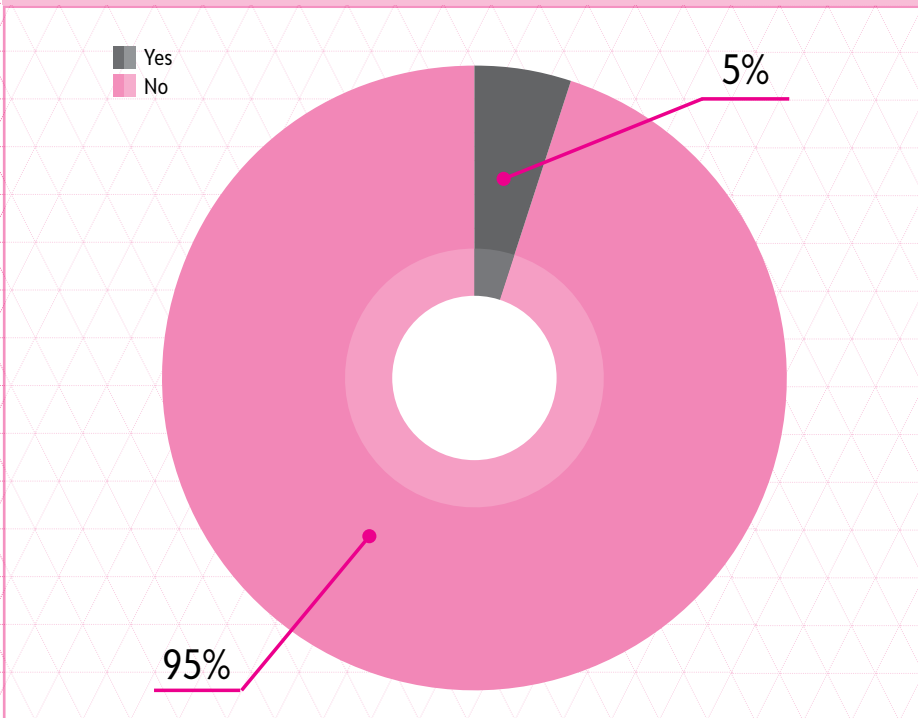
### Rare initiatives – a discouraging outcome

“I can now recall an initiative, a written request, three years ago, by three mothers. Our children go to the kindergarten in Jegunovce, we enjoy the benefit of being able to accommodate our children. But, that kindergarten where we take our children is so ruined, it is scary. We, three women, took our petition personally to the mayor to give us the premises that the municipality had received as a donation, space that had stayed closed and unused for 4-5 years. The mayor received us and told us that the premises were planned strictly for a doctor’s dispensary. A few months later, the Public Communal Enterprise was accommodated in that facility, so there has not been a dispensary to this very day, and our children still go to that ruined facility. We called the media, Alfa TV and our local media too last year, we went public with our problem, but in vain... We had some kind of an initiative, but it stopped. It’s no use trying...”

**The participation of women neither guarantees nor provides for gender sensitive budgeting. Budget planning lacks gender sensitivity, that is, it does not take into account gender inequality and the specific women’s needs.**

## PUBLIC FINANCES – A PROHIBITED ZONE?

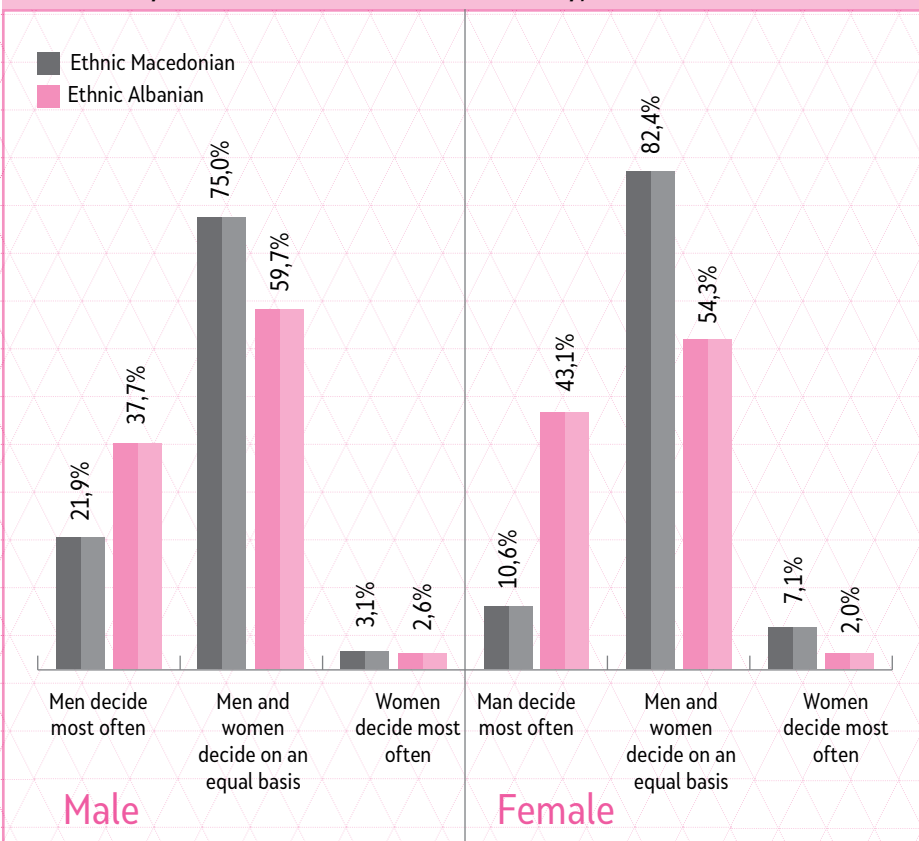
Women who have been involved in the municipal budget planning process



## HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE AT HOME?

Seemingly equal in decision making

In what way are decisions made in the family/household



**How much are women really free to make decisions at home?**

“Here, you can have some influence, you can make your man give you any right.... but the people... Oh, look at her, her husband lets her! You know, what still matters is what people say. People are still influenced by that, maybe not everywhere, but some places it is still like that.”

“We hinder ourselves, even if you wanted to start something – wait, what will the neighbors say, it is a shame, it’s a shame to wear this, it’s a shame to go there, it’s a shame to socialize with these people and you will stuck yourself in the house, not being able to go anywhere..And, even if we start something, they won’t listen to us. “

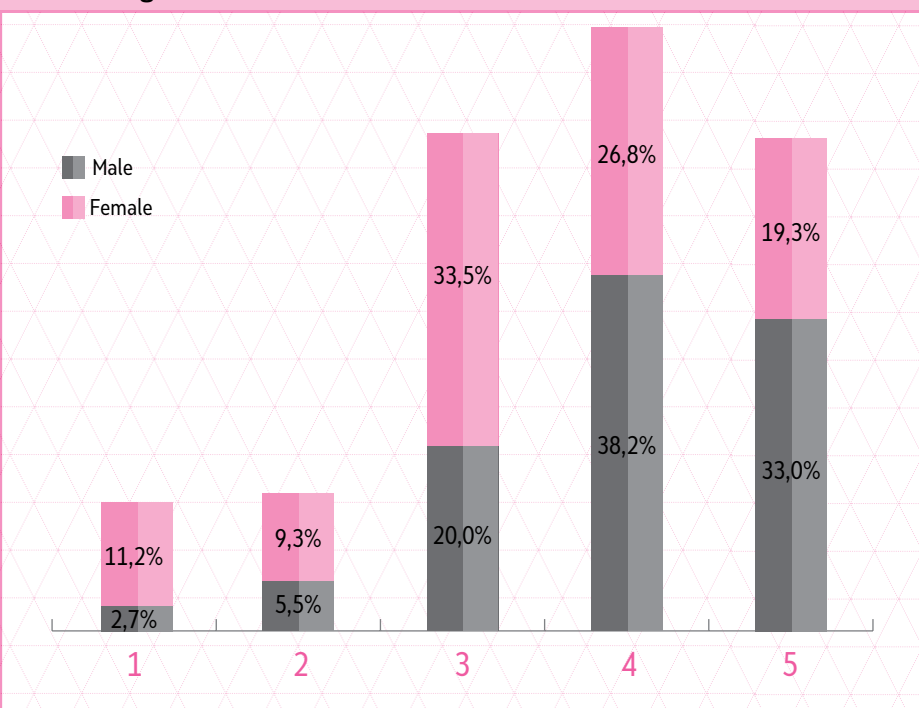
“It’s our fault, he lets me go to work, but doesn’t let me go anywhere else, how come? If it’s ok to make money at work, it should be ok for other things too.”

“There are villages where women are not allowed to leave the house on their own”.

“In Tearce women have more freedom, they should of course just let him know that they are going some place.”

“There are cases when the woman wants to get a job, and the husband does not let her. There are such cases.”

How do you assess your independence in spending money from the home budget



**20.5 % OF WOMEN, VERSUS 8 % OF MEN ASSESS THE INDEPENDENCE IN SPENDING MONEY FROM THE HOME BUDGET WITH THE LOWEST GRADES**



## CONCLUSIONS

- The inclusion of citizens, especially women, in the decision making processes is very low;
- The insufficient inclusion of women in the decision making processes is a result of the weak democratic capacities of the citizens and institutions; the existence of strong patriarchal values that determine the position of the woman in the household, but not in public life;
- The low level of awareness and recognition of the unequal status of men and women in society limits not only women's participation, but also their influence towards gender equality and it implies gender neutrality of the institutional policies and budget.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is necessary to establish programs for citizen empowerment, especially for women inclusion and application of democratic inclusion mechanisms in the decision-making processes in the local community;
- Providing functionality of the mechanisms for inclusion of women from different social strata in the decision-making and policy creation processes by the local authorities;
- Education and enhancement of the capacities of the municipal administration for gender mainstreaming within the program and budget planning processes;
- NGO projects advocating the specific needs of women for being entitled to the social services right, in view of increasing women's access to social services and infrastructural conditions;
- The local self-government units should introduce special measures for ensuring access to the basic social services and for prioritizing the infrastructural services of interest to the women from the rural areas and the marginalized groups.

### Project: Equality and Gender Mainstreaming Across Borders



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