



## Course description: INTRODUCTION TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT LOCAL LEVEL

### The purpose of the course:

Gender equality issues are relevant for each individual in the society. Each of us has a gender identity in the core of his or her personality. It influences our opportunities and obstacles in the society regardless if we are aware of it or not. Gender is not biologically determined, but a socially constructed way of how a person looks, acts, what kind of behaviour is allowed, what is expected of a person, how he or she chooses an occupation, what positions/roles are available to her or him in an organization, etc. Society sculpts different roles and norms for men and women, boys and girls, and this later on results in different inequalities in most spheres of life: economic, political, and social. In contrast, gender equality represents equal representation, empowerment, responsibility and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. It also grants an equal access to, and distribution of resources between women and men. Finally, it means accepting and equally valuing the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in a society.

The contemporary concept of gender equality has roots in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and it is one of the core values of the European Union since its founding. The struggle for reaching gender equality has quite a long history, dating back to the women's suffrage movement and even before that. After years of struggle, we now have legal basis for gender equality adopted officially in most European countries, but nevertheless, inequalities still exist in all spheres of life. Research shows that gender equality is not reached even in the most developed and the most gender equal countries in the world. Therefore, at the UN's Beijing Conference in 1995 a global consensus was reached, claiming that the new strategy for achieving gender equality should be more comprehensive, and it was defined as gender mainstreaming – which implies considering gender issues in all phases of policy creation, implementation and evaluation, at all levels of governance. As citizens we fulfil most of our everyday needs at local level: housing, work, travel/mobility, childcare, health care, leisure, culture, etc. The local level of governance, as the one closest to the citizens, needs to take action in order to contribute to reaching gender equality goals. This approach is needed for the reason of both respecting human rights, and, as many examples show, for achieving better efficiency of services provided at local level.

This course will provide sufficient knowledge to its participants, with which they could embrace the idea of local governance working for gender equality and how to achieve it.



### Course objectives:

The main goal is to enable participants to act both as **individuals**, and representatives of **organizations** working for gender equality.

By the end of the course, participants will understand that gender is not only **personal**, but an **institutional and structural issue**, and therefore should be considered in local policies. Participants will also be familiar with the international legal framework for gender equality and they will gain an awareness on the existence of national policies created to contribute to gender equality, as it is recommended in the global or European standards of governance. Participants will be trained to recognize different strategies and approaches overcoming gender inequality and they will be introduced with the basic tools and methods to avoid gender blind policy making, implementation and evaluation. Having in mind that the budget is the most important policy created and implemented on each level, it is important for the participants to understand that if it is created and allocated in gender sensitive manner the budget can contribute to a more gender equal society. By the end of the course, participants from Local Government Associations (LGAs) should have increased awareness of their potential to promote and contribute to achieving the goals of gender equality.

### Target groups:

Local level decision makers and administration, as well as staff of LGAs.

### Structure:

The course is organized in four modules.

### Module 1: Gender Equality at Local Level

This module is an introduction to the topic. It explains why gender issues are relevant for everyone and in which way they are relevant for policies at local level. In this module the international framework is presented and the transition from global, to European, national and local level is explained. The three most recognizable strategies for reaching gender equality (equality in law, advancing women and gender mainstreaming through positive measures) are comprehensively presented. Gender budgeting as a methodology is also introduced as a tool for applying gender mainstreaming strategy in the budgeting process.



### **Module 2: Gender Responsive Budgeting at Local Level**

This module thoroughly explains the gender sensitive budgeting methodology. It will respond to the following questions: What is a Gender Responsive Budget (GRB)? What is the rationale behind GRB? What steps/stages are needed towards a Gender Responsive Budget at local level, with practical examples, showcases and best practice examples, presented by UN Women, the UN Agency for gender equality and advancement of women, that provides support for introduction of this strategy in official government institutions worldwide and in the SEE region.

### **Module 3: Local Government Associations as promoters of gender equality at local level**

This module deals with the role of LGAs, and the potential support these organisations could provide to their members, the local governments. Here is where the experiences of CEMR, NALAS, CALM, SCTM and SALAR are presented. Participants will be challenged to use their experiences, critically analyze them and shape their own approach.

### **Module 4: Best Practices in Promoting Gender Equality at Local Level**

In this module the experience in gender responsive budgeting of the municipality of Elbasan from Albania is presented. This experience was awarded as the best practice by NALAS in 2015, at the GENIYOUTH competition. Participants should use this example as an illustration for the Module 2.

#### **Learning requirements:**

Each module has a set of questions that should be answered correctly by the participant. Only successful candidates (more than 90% correct answers) can progress to the next module.

The course provides basic knowledge. No entry level knowledge is required.

#### **Key tasks for participants:**

Participants should read or listen to the presentations carefully and read the required reading material. After obtaining basic knowledge, at the end of each module they will be tested. Also, participants should take part in the discussion forums for each module, by responding to a set of questions/issues/challenges.

#### **Evaluation of performance:**

After successfully responding to over 90% of the tasks, participants will be granted a certificate for having successfully completed the course.