

COMMENTARY

Gender Analysis of the 2025 Draft Budget with Recommendations for the Assembly of Kosovo

Introduction

[Draft law no. 08/L-332 on budget allocations for the Budget of the Republic of Kosovo for the year 2025](#) was approved by the Government of Kosovo on 31 October 2024. However, after its approval, the draft law was not made available for public consultation in accordance with [Regulation No. 17/2024 of the Work of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo](#). As a result, only now do citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs) have the opportunity to analyse the budget and provide recommendations for it. According to the [Law on Gender Equality](#) (LGE), gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is the “implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in the budgetary process”, including the “restructuring of income and expenditure” to promote equality among women and men.¹ Gender mainstreaming is defined as the inclusion of a gender perspective in “planning, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies or programs and budgets, in all political, economic and social areas”.² The Law requires the GRB include gender analysis to address the needs of women and men, informing all public expenditures, since these expenditures are financed by citizens’ taxes. GRB must be in line with legal obligations and international best practices, including the LGE, the [Supplementary Framework for the Evaluation of Gender Responsive Public Finance Management](#) (PEFA GRPFM), and United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) [Target 5.c.1](#). Based on a gender analysis of the draft 2025 Budget published on the parliament’s website, this commentary aims to inform the parliament in finalising the 2025 Budget, including attention to meeting the key needs of women, men, girls, and boys in public spending. While the budget can affect gender equality in several ways, and thus GRB should be applied throughout the budget, this commentary highlights **four** key issues that should be addressed in the budget by parliament to advance gender equality.

Further gender equality

In accordance with PEFA GRPFM and SDG 5.C.1, the draft law on the Budget of Kosovo does not include a GRB annex, and there is no Gender Statement. Without these or any gender analysis, it is unclear how the budget will contribute to gender equality. The 2025 Budget does not include any analysis of the potentially different needs of women and men, including of different ages, ethnicities, abilities, and geographic locations. It is therefore difficult to understand the various needs that the budget intends to address and how it will contribute to advancing gender equality.

An important budget line related to gender equality concerns funding for the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), which totals €380,230, compared to €368,912 in 2024 (a 3% increase) in the expenditure category of salaries and wages. However, there is no increase in the number of workers. Also, the position of an Officer for Gender Equality, under the line for salaries and wages in each municipality, is important for ensuring adequate human resources for implementing obligations related to reviewing policies at the municipal level from a gender perspective, increasing knowledge about gender equality locally, and implementing other legal obligations in the [Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality](#) and action plans towards gender equality at national and local levels. A budget line for “Gender Issues” is in the budget of only 45% of municipalities. This budget line has increased 10% compared to last year, averaging €19,947 per municipality. However, all municipalities (38) should allocate a budget for “Gender Issues”, which would amount to €757,986 in total.

¹ Article 3, paragraph 1.17.

² Article 3, paragraph 1.16.

Address gender-based violence

In the draft law, the budget for Basic Expenses for Domestic Violence Shelters has increased by 67%, which is €2,500,000, and the budget for the Unit for Protection and Victims' Assistance is €542,146, an increase of 31% compared to last year. The increased budget for these two budget lines is positive. However, there are additional expenses that must be included in the budget, based on the [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) (the Istanbul Convention):

- There is no budget for a Rape Crisis Center for treating survivors of sexual violence.
- Regarding the draft [Administrative Instruction \(QRK\) - No. xx/2024 for the National Emergency Telephone Line for Victims of Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence](#), and the [State Protocol for Treating Cases of Sexual Violence](#), in the draft budget it is unclear in which expense category financing for the required SOS hotline has been established.
- Based on the [State Protocol for Treating Cases of Sexual Violence](#) and in accordance with institutional responsibilities in [Law no. 08/I-185 on prevention and protection from domestic violence, violence against women and gender-based violence](#), and the [National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women](#), all municipalities must allocate a budget for the Centers for Social Work (CSW) in the Salaries and Wages category as part of the Government's Social Services Grant to employ two more social workers specifically tasked with treating cases of gender-based violence. These positions are essential for the implementation of the new legal framework, the prevention of violence and the protection of survivors, mainly women and children. This obligation has not been implemented in the draft budget. The additional cost of employing two social workers in each municipality to treat cases of gender-based violence, including sexual and domestic violence, would amount to approximately €514,800 per year for the Government of Kosovo, calculated on the basis of the average salary. Specifically, it would be €13,200 per municipality for 37 municipalities and €26,400 for Pristina.
- The budget for the Free Legal Aid Agency has increased by 5% compared to last year, but there is no increase in the number of human resources. The Kosovo Prosecutorial Council should ensure that the human resources budget for Victim Advocates finances sufficient staff, with fair compensation, and adequate training for effectively supporting victims and promoting gender equality. Currently, there are not enough Victim Advocates to fulfill their responsibilities to adequately protect survivors of gender-based violence.
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should improve protection for survivors of gender-based violence and prevent recidivist violence by allocating funds for the purchase and maintenance of electronic monitoring systems, including electronic bracelets. These are important for monitoring perpetrators of violence and ensuring they comply with protection orders, towards security for survivors.

Adequately fund the Personal Assistants Scheme

The 2025 draft budget does not consider the [minimum wage and the actual time required of personal assistants who help people with disabilities](#). This contributes to a violation of their labour rights. There is a need to increase the budget allocated for personal assistants of paraplegic and tetraplegic persons (PTP) with a current amount of €150 and for blind persons with a current amount of €125, to match at least the minimum wage (currently €350) or ideally the average salary (€521). Personal assistants often work more than eight hours a day to provide care and are not paid a pension. This constitutes a violation of their labour rights under the Labour Law. Women tend to be overrepresented among personal assistants, so addressing these issues can contribute to improving their lives and the lives of persons with disabilities. Considering that in 2024 there were 3,021 PTP people and 1,849 blind people, this would cost around €18.5 million in 2025, based on the minimum wage, which is roughly double the current estimated costs. Meanwhile, budgeting based on the average gross salary would cost approximately €30.4 million.

Adequately fund care services

The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) should invest directly and encourage municipalities to plan effectively to establish more public childcare centers and kindergartens. [By setting concrete goals and budget allocations based on comprehensive needs assessments, municipalities can address high levels of unemployment and inactivity.](#) KWN has estimated that expanding childcare options could create [approximately 9,899 new jobs in this field.](#) Additionally, this would enable more women to work and improve educational outcomes in line with the [EU's Barcelona Objectives.](#) Planning a budget to increase the availability of affordable care services, [especially in rural areas, is crucial to transform unpaid caregiving work into paid employment, engage more women in the labor market, and support gender-responsive education from an early age.](#) According to the [National Development Strategy,](#) the Government has a legal obligation to make these investments, for which budget allocations are necessary. While the Government has relied on international donations to improve childcare availability, including funds from the European Union's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), we urge MESTI to allocate more such funds and strongly encourage municipalities to do the same. We hope to reduce reliance on external funding to secure sufficient and sustainable budget resources for this important national development priority. It is unclear whether there is any such increase planned in the draft budget for this purpose.

Recommendations for the Kosovo Assembly

- [Further gender equality:](#) Ensure that every municipality has a budget for salaries and wages for the Gender Equality Officer so that they can fulfill their legal duties.
- [Address gender-based violence:](#)
 - The Ministry of Justice should allocate appropriate resources for a Rape Crisis Center, treating survivors of all forms of sexual violence, and an SOS hotline in line with the Istanbul Convention.
 - Increase the allocated budget for Centers for Social Work in the category of Salaries and Wages to hire two additional social workers in each municipality, and four in Prishtina, specifically tasked with handling gender-based violence cases. The additional cost is approximately €514,800.
 - The Ministry of Internal Affairs should improve the protection of survivors of gender-based violence and prevent repeated cases of such violence by allocating funds for purchasing and maintaining electronic monitoring systems.
- [Adequately fund the Personal Assistants Scheme:](#) Increase this budget line based on the actual hours required by personal assistants to support persons with disabilities, addressing labour rights violations affecting personal assistants. This would cost approximately €18.5 million in 2025, based on the minimum wage. Budgeting based on the average gross wage would cost approximately €30.4 million.
- [Adequately fund care services:](#) MESTI and municipalities should fund the establishment of childcare centers to increase women's employment and improve educational outcomes, ensuring sustainable and independent budget support without reliance on donations.
- The government should publish a Gender Budget Statement in line with PEFA and SDG 5.c.1. commitments, showing how the budget will contribute to advancing gender equality in Kosovo.
- The government should publish all gender budget annexes required by budget circulars online for transparency, as these must be submitted by budget organizations.

We, the undersigned, support these recommendations and call on the Parliament of Kosovo to include them in the 2025 draft budget without delay.

GAP Institute

Kosovar Gender Studies Center

Kosovar Stability Initiative

Kosovo Women's Network (142 diverse women's rights organizations)

Riinvest Institute

SIT- Center for Counseling, Social Services and Research

UN Women
Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Kosovo
Women for Women Kosovo