

# Interns' Policy Report

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATION ACTION PLAN ON GENDER EQUALITY  
2007-2012 IN THE AREA OF WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT IN MACEDONIA:  
WHAT CHANCES DO WOMEN HAVE ON THE MACEDONIAN LABOR MARKET?



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**List of Abbreviations**

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
EU	European Union
NAPGE	National Action Plan on Gender Equality
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

## Introduction

Empowerment of women has become one of the main foreign policy issues in everyday global politics. According to US administration, solving something once called „women issue“, whose priority was placed on political margins, became crucial for solving most pressing world's economic and political issues, equally influencing lives of both women and men.<sup>1</sup> The goal of global empowerment of women was setback in 1995, when the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing marked the first global consensus for the need of creating the Platform for Action and adopting action-oriented recommendations.<sup>2</sup> Understanding women's empowerment as a goal, and not as a foreign policy strategy, the Platform detected twelve strategic objectives in which the action need to take place, including matters as Women and Poverty, Education and Training of Women, Women and the Economy, Women in Power and Decision-making, and Human Rights of Women.<sup>3</sup> Besides these efforts, the UN adopted the Millennium Declaration in 2000, committing its nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. One of the Millennium Development Goals within the Declaration is promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.<sup>4</sup>

In the European Union, equality between women and men is one of the fundamental principles of Community Law. The EU has adopted a two-way approach to this issue, combining special measures with overall gender mainstreaming. The objective of such policies is to ensure equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women and to combat any form of discrimination on the grounds of gender.<sup>5</sup> The basic document that has set a ground for the EU gender equality policy was the Framework strategy for equality between men and women 2001-2005, after which followed the Roadmap for equality 2006-2010.<sup>6</sup> The roadmap outlines six priority areas, namely Equal economic independence for women and men, the Reconciliation of private and professional life, Equal representation in decision-making, the Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence, the Elimination of gender stereotypes and the Promotion of gender equality in third countries. This final priority area functions under the framework of enlargement process, according to which accession, candidate or potential candidate countries are committed to implement is the community *acquis* concerning gender equality.<sup>7</sup>

As a candidate country for the EU membership since 2005 and an UN member since 1993, Republic of Macedonia is obliged to implement international obligations aiming towards gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women, which resulted in the Government's adoption of

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<sup>1</sup>Melanne Verveer. „Why women are the foreign policy issue?“ in *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2012.

<sup>2</sup>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Beijing and its Follow-up. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/> (accessed 30.6.2012.)

<sup>3</sup>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Fourth World Conference on Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html> (accessed 30.6.2012.)

<sup>4</sup>The United Nations, Millennium Development Goals. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml> (accessed 1.7.2012.)

<sup>5</sup>Europa. Equality between men and women. [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/c10404\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/c10404_en.htm) (accessed 1.7.2012.)

<sup>6</sup>Europa. Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010)

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/c10404\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/c10404_en.htm) (accessed 1.7.2012.)

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

two successive National Action Plans on Gender Equality. Following provisions from the Beijing conference, CEDAW, Millennium Development Goals, as well as the obligations deriving from the process of European integration and approach of Republic of Macedonia towards the EU, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> NAPGE for the period from 2007 to 2012, there are defined ten strategic areas for action, namely: Women and Human Rights, Women and Decision-making Process, Women and Health, Women and Social Care, Women and Education, Women and Employment, Women and Violence, Women and the Media, Women and the Environment and Women and Peacekeeping Activities.<sup>8</sup>

However despite the obligations for Macedonia to implement the Action plan, it seems that the country is lagging behind. One of the facts which verify this conclusion is shown in the area of Women and Employment. Employment of women is one of the key elements of women's empowerment as a prerequisite for their exercise of citizenship on equal basis as men. The importance of women's employment has yet another dimension, which focus is raising overall competitiveness and economic performance of the country. According to the Labor force study, participation rate<sup>9</sup> of Macedonian women in labor market in 2000 was 51%, Roma 36% and Albanian 11%, which is a consequence of traditional role of women in the society, especially among women from ethnic minorities. Furthermore, in 2006 the activity rate<sup>10</sup> of women in urban areas (49%) was bigger than the activity rate of women from rural areas (36%)<sup>11</sup>, while the most important reason for female inactivity were and still are household responsibilities.<sup>12</sup> Thus, according to the Plan, the main indicator of the progress within the Strategic area Women and Employment was to reach the 38% of women's employment by 2012, in contrast to 30.1% in 2005.<sup>13</sup> However, according to the Statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia, the percentage of employed women in 2011 was only 30.9%,<sup>14</sup> which shows underachievement of the defined goal. Due to this clear indicator, the scope of this policy paper will be the NAPGE's Strategic area Women and Employment and its four strategic objectives. The task of the analysis will be to detect what activities have been done according to the Plan, and what are the shortcomings that need to be addressed, in order for stakeholders to meet their objectives within the respective area.

In order to detect those activities and shortcomings, two-stage analysis will be conducted. On the first stage, the quality of the overall NAPGE document as a ground point for further action within the area of Women and Employment will be briefly analyzed. The information for the

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<sup>8</sup>National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012, Skopje, May 2007

<sup>9</sup>The participation rate refers to the number of people who are either employed or are actively looking for work. Source: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/participationrate.asp#ixzz2GBTCTxnI>

<sup>10</sup>The activity rate is the ratio between the number of active persons (occupied labor force and the unemployed) and the corresponding total population. Source: <http://www.insee.fr/en/methodes/default.asp?page=definitions/taux-activite.htm>

<sup>11</sup>Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of Republic of Macedonia – ESE and Akcija Zdruzenska: REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, Shadow report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2012., p.39.

<sup>12</sup>Mojsoska-Blazevski, Nikica; Najdova, Jasna; Stojkov, Aleksandar; Asenov, Ljiljana: „Labor Market in Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia“, a Study for European Commission, October 2009., p48.

<sup>13</sup>National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012, Skopje, 2007, p.35.

<sup>14</sup> State Office for Statistics, [http://www.stat.gov.mk/Default\\_en.aspx](http://www.stat.gov.mk/Default_en.aspx) (accessed 5.7.2012.)

analysis will be gathered from existing reports conducted by civil sector servants, as well as by other experts. On the second stage, the implementation of activities envisaged in NAPGE's Strategic area Women and Employment will be analyzed. The information needed for such assessment will be gathered from respective governmental institutions, in accordance to the Law on Free Access on Information from Public Character. Concerning specific statistical data this paper will rely on the State Statistical Office.

### Stage 1 - National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2007-2012

The NAPGE 2007-2012 is the second document of the kind, and opposite of praxis that action plan comes after preparation of a strategy, represents the basic document on gender equality in Republic of Macedonia.<sup>15</sup> The Plan sets a framework for further action which is to be implemented through annual Operation plans. It was designed in cooperation with the governmental institutions, non-governmental sector and international organizations. General Objective of the NAPGE is the „advancement of the equality between genders and incorporating the gender perspective in the policies, programs and projects in different areas of social action at national and local levels.“<sup>16</sup> This advancement is envisaged to be achieved through actions in ten strategic areas (listed in the introduction), while within each of these areas further strategic objectives have been defined and activities prescribed. The realization of the implementation of the overall plan is under responsibility of Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, its Sector for Equal Opportunities, respective Ministries<sup>17</sup> and local governments. Sector for Equal opportunity is responsible for monitoring and coordination of the process of NAPGE implementation, covering all ten strategic objectives of women empowerment, as well as the process of gender mainstreaming of all the policies and practices of public institutions. The same Sector is responsible for creation of annual reports on realization of objectives anticipated in the NAPGE.<sup>18</sup> The Sector operates in cooperation with the appointed coordinators within the Ministries, whose task is to inform the Sector about conducted activities within their institutions, annual plans, achievements, as well as about violations of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men.<sup>19</sup>

However, there are shortcomings detected on several levels of this mechanism. On the level of implementation, shortcomings can be detected in the fact that there is no time frame set for specific measures, stating only that the concrete activities are proposed for “short and medium term.”<sup>20</sup> Likewise, NAPGE does not provide the budget for specific measures, which “will be prepared in accordance and coordination with the current

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<sup>15</sup>Friškić, Jasminka. “Nacionalen plan za akciju rodovarnopravnost – razmisli i vidovanja” in Mitev Gerovska Maja, ed. *Revijazasocijalnapolitika*, god 1., br.1., str. 1-94, Skopje, Juni 2008, p.77.

<sup>16</sup>National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012, Skopje, May 2007. p.8.

<sup>17</sup>According to study for European Commission „Labor Market in FYROM“, all Ministries except Ministry for Transport and Communications and Ministry for Information Technology are included.

<sup>18</sup>National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012, Skopje, May 2007. p.47.

<sup>19</sup>*Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men*, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, entered into force 6 June 2006, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/44b26f664.html> (accessed 13 July 2012),

<sup>20</sup>National Action Plan for Gender Equality, p.4.

process of strategic planning and with budget planning for annual and triennial level.<sup>21</sup> This provision leaves space for non transparent process for allocation of assets. Further, annual operation plans should provide detailed fiscal implications for current year, however, documents that are accessible to public only target responsible agents, without specific budget. Former analysis conducted by civil sector organizations additionally detected several more shortcomings: the lack of de facto transformation of gender equality principles into creation of specific policies as a prerequisite for successful implementation of operational plans, lack of procedure for consulting all relevant agents prior to designing annual plans, limited expertise and capacity of gender equality coordinators in respective institutions and the lack of executive jurisdiction of Sector for Equal opportunities over responsibility for NAPGE and operational plans' implementation.<sup>22</sup>

On the level of monitoring, the Sector for Equal Opportunities is responsible for overall ten different and broad strategic objectives but without clear mandate, as stated above. This clearly implies overload of tasks and understaffing problem of the Sector. Additionally, there is no defined procedure or methodology for conducting the analysis of the implementation, which raises doubts on effective detection of progress or regress. The report, as the final annual document on progress, is presented to Government of Republic of Macedonia as „general information on executed activities” and thus without transparency towards the public.<sup>23</sup> Such praxis prevents critical inputs from experts.

Overall, the system as such shows many vulnerable spots, which indicates the lack of political will to approach the issue of women's economic empowerment in more comprehensive manner. From such notion we can deduce the first obstacle for underachievement of stated goal in the area of Women and Employment. After this brief detection of problems within the NAPGE itself, the analysis will shift towards the respective area and its strategic objectives.

## **Stage 2 - Strategic objectives of Women and Employment Area**

Within the Strategic area Women and Employment, NAPGE defines four strategic objectives. Those are:

1. Strategic Objective I - Increasing the Employment Rate for Women in the Total Rate of Employment;
2. Strategic Objective II - Improvement, Promotion and Empowering of the Economic Status of Women;
3. Strategic Objective III - Support of the Process of Transition from Informal into Formal Economy in the Service Sector (Care for Children, Care for Elderly People, Hygiene, etc.);
4. Strategic Objective IV - Increased Level of Employment of Women in Rural Areas.

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<sup>21</sup>National Action Plan for Gender Equality, p.9.

<sup>22</sup>Akcija Zdruzenska, "Report on policies of gender equality monitoring in Republic of Macedonia." Skopje, December 2010. p.14-15.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, p.15.



- No distinction between goals and activities
- Activities defined too broad
- Imprecise indicators for measuring progress of implementing activities
- Unclear jurisdiction and responsibility of stakeholders prescribed to conduct activities

However, the brief analysis of the mechanism for achieving stated objectives within the area of Women and Employment shows characteristics that question the expertise of the document on the respective topic, and thus efficiency of its implementation.

First, there is no understanding between setting goals and activities, which leaves very broad space what can be considered as implementation of the activities. The example for this is activity called “Removing inequality and promotion of equal opportunities for men and women,” which, if intended to be achieved, clearly should be set only as a goal. Second, activities which are supposed to be implemented are set too broad and are sometimes (at least partially) overlapping across the strategic objectives. In that sense, the activity „Support of women's entrepreneurship (..)“

under the SO I is overlapping with activity „Undertaking measures for stimulating the participation of women in the national economy“ under the SO III. Such assessment is based on a fact that the Ministry of labor reports conducting the same measures under SO III activity as the Employment Agency under SO I. This situation reveals not only to confusion within respective stakeholders, but questions validity of designed strategic objectives. Third, indicators for successful implementation are imprecise and do not offer benchmarks of progress. The only numeric indicator set in this strategic area is percentage of women's employment that ought to be achieved by 2012. Although indicators should not necessarily be numeric, it is not clear how some progresses are supposed to be assessed. Particularly, this is the case with the indicator “Increased level of information about entrepreneurship and conditions for women.” Fourth, stakeholders responsible for implementations of specific activity are only denominated without claiming their jurisdiction. The scope of those stakeholders include the Government of Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Local Self-government, Employment Agency, The Agency for Foreign Investments, the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia, centers for social work and civil sector. While for sure all of them are included in conducting activities in their respective areas, according to analysis it is not clear who is responsible for which activity, how do they coordinate in planning and implementation, and how do they report progress and shortcomings. This suspicion was raised after both Ministry of Labor and Employment Agency provided same answers on the questions what measures did they undertake in accordance with specific activities, as well as they mentioned the same activities conducting towards achieving different strategic objectives, as it will be shown in further text.

These overall findings are further analyzed in details through detection of specific measures and actions conducted within each of four stated strategic objectives.

### Strategic Objective I – Increasing the employment Rate for Women in Total Rate of Employment

Measures that are envisaged for meeting the first strategic objective are mainly based on training and education of women. The analysis has shown that a number of trainings were conducted in the period between 2007 and 2012.<sup>24</sup> However, as it will be shown in the following tables, majority of them were aimed for overall population, meaning men and women, and not specifically for women as a target group whose percentage of employment within the overall employment rate in Macedonia is aimed to be raised for almost 8 percentage points between the period of 2007 and 2012.

**Table 1. Activities and indicators under Strategic objective I**

Activities	Indicators
Support of women's entrepreneurship with measures of financial and non-financial support for a) making the access to loans easier, and b) developing solidarity schemes	38% employed women until the year 2012 with special inclusion of the ethnic groups; Increased number of women entrepreneurs; Increased empowering of women
Implementing programmes for entrepreneurship of the Government for training managers and managerial counseling	Increased inclusion of women in trainings for managers and managerial counseling
Implementing activities for additional education, vocational training, learning new skills for the unemployed women	Increased participation of women in realized trainings, learning new skills and additional education; Increased rate of women entrepreneurs
Developing campaigns for increasing conscience about women's entrepreneurship	Increased level of information about entrepreneurship and conditions for women

Source: National Action Plan for Gender Equality, p.36.

For the support of **women's entrepreneurship**, the Employment Agency conducted education program for self-employment, project for self-employment and crediting and program for formalization of existing business.<sup>25</sup> It is important to notice that targeted percentage of employed

<sup>24</sup>Since data for 2012 are still not complete, most of the mentioned activities refer to 2011 as the last year of analysis.

<sup>25</sup>Data gathered from the Employment Agency, according to Law on Free access to information of public character.

women as an indicator for one of the activities is the same targeted percentage as an aim of all “Women and Employment” area of women’s empowerment. Furthermore, it is not clear which year (the mentioned are 2010 and 2012) should serve as a benchmark for measuring progress.

**The education program for self-employment** started in 2007, and by 2011 overall 3142 people received the education, out of which 36% are women. It included education in entrepreneurship, business plans development, help with registration of new businesses and subventions for business startup. The data shows increase of women’s participation, especially between 2007 and 2008 when the NAPGE was launched. Still, between 2008 and 2011, the number of women’s participants in education was mostly steady, which might indicate that other measures besides education need to be conducted in order for women to be encouraged for self-employment.

However, even though it is a part of the strategy for increasing the number of overall women’s employment, the program is designated to those who are registered as unemployed, which means that inactive women are not targeted.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the program does not represent active employment policy explicitly for women, but for overall population.

Year	Total	Women
2007	559	142 (25.4%)
2008	529	203 (38%)
2009	654	254 (38%)
2010	700	280 (40%)
2011	700	276 (39%)

**Table 2. Participants in the educational program for self employment**

Source: the Employment Agency

**The project for self-employment and crediting** was launched in 2008 and is still ongoing (from available data it is not clear why was it skipped in 2011). It envisages allocation of credits under favorable conditions for legalization of existing businesses and business startups. Over the course of three years, 28% of women out of the total number applied for the crediting and 30% of women out of the total number received the assets. Progressive increase of participation of women is noticeable in both categories, which indicates the existence of willingness and social

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<sup>26</sup> A person is economically inactive if he or she is not engaged with the labor market, i.e. not in employment or classed as unemployed. Economically inactive can be split in three groups: those seeking work but not available to start, those who want work but are not actively seeking it and those who do not want work. On the contrast, unemployed person is one who is without work, but currently available for work and seeking for employment. Source: <http://www.swo.org.uk/state-of-the-south-west-2011/labour-market/labour-supply/economic-inactivity/>

capital among women for self-employment. However, the project targets registered unemployed population, leaving inactive population, especially women, inactive and out of the scope.

Crediting	Total applied	Women	Total received	Women
2008	5594	1461 (26.12%)	2491	684 (27.46%)
2009	1123	351 (31.26%)	591	193 (32.66%)
2010	1408	503 (35.72%)	552	223 (40.40%)

**Table 3. Participants in the project self-employment and crediting**

Source: The Employment Agency

**The program for formalization of existing businesses** started in 2008 and by 2011 it had 863 participants, out of which 26% of women. The activity includes help with registration of existing businesses and subventions for businesses for persons with business experience. The number of women's participants decreased over the years, with the highest peak in 2008 (31%) and the lowest peak in 2011 (23%). This indicates that the number of women who led un-formalized businesses is significantly lower than those led by men. Thus, this might mean that the activity is reaching its limitations when tackling women's employment and it increased number of women participants in the program should not necessarily be the only indicator for its success. However, again, it is important to emphasize that the program is targeting both women and men, already registered as unemployed. In that sense, inactive women are not affected by this measure.

Year	Total	Women
2008	113	35 (31%)
2009	250	74 (30%)
2010	250	62 (25%)
2011	250	58 (23%)

**Table 4. Participants in the program for formalization of existing businesses**

Source: The Employment Agency

Besides activities taken by the Employment agency, the Ministry of Economy in 2012 launched the Program for financial support for women entrepreneurs. The program consists of subventions for enterprises under women's management and envisages co-financing (75%) of costs for office material, office space or child nursing in the period of one year from opening of the business. However, there are still no data on number of women who applied for this program.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Data gathered from the Ministry of Economy, according to the Law on Free access to information of public character.

The second measure of **implementing programmes for entrepreneurship of the Government for training managers and managerial counseling** that has been envisaged within this strategic objective, has not, according to the available data, been accomplished. Following the information gathered from the Government of Republic of Macedonia, which was supposed to implement this measure among its ranks, the General Secretary of the Government has no knowledge about the status of the implementation and existence of trainings for the governmental managerial staff. This indicates that the respective measure towards achieving the strategic objective of increasing the employment rate of women within the total rate of employment has been neglected by the Macedonian Government itself.

In accordance with measure **of implementing activities for additional education, vocational training and learning new skills for the unemployed women**, Ministry of Labour and social policies have conducted a number of trainings.<sup>28</sup> Percentage of women in overall trainings varied from very high to low, however, even here those trainings are meant for those who registered as unemployed. Inactive women again are out of the scope.

**Table 5. Trainings and education for the unemployed women**

Activity	Year	Total no.	Women	Comment
Training, cross-qualification and additional qualification for existing employer	2008-2011	3123	2460 (78%)	Percentage of women participants in this training reaches even 88% in 2011.
Support Practicum for first employment of young people	2008 - 2011	685	405 (59%)	In 2007 600 people participated, while in all other years together 685, which represents a great fall. Participation of young women reaches up to 62% in 2011, which indicates their difficulties for accessing labor market
Training for deficit avocations	2011 - 2012	377	141 (37%)	The training started in 2008, but until 2011 there was no gender disaggregated data. There is a slight fall in percentage of women's participants (39 to 37%)
Education for business startup	2008 - 2012	4952	1122 (22%)	Data missing for women for years 2009 and 2010, but overall there is a rise in women applied for the education.
Pilot training for IT skills	2010 - 2011	254	55 (21%)	The training started in 2010. While the number of overall participants doubled in 2011 (75 to 179), the number of women rises in relative

<sup>28</sup>Data gathered from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, according to the Law on Free access to information of public character.

				numbers (17 to 38), but falls in absolute numbers (23% to 21%)
Training for languages and computer skills	2007 - 2011	10113	6949 (68%)	Although overall number of participants is decreasing during the years, percentage of women is always 67% or more. Since education is very short (36-42 hours) this might indicate that women prefer or are able to conduct education which is not time consuming.

Source: the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

Besides activities conducted by the Ministry, the Employment Agency launched two more programs, targeting vulnerable population.<sup>29</sup> Project for employment of young people, long-term unemployed and unemployed women under Operative Program for Human Resources Development, IPA component 4b, offered education for high number of women's participants. However, from existing data it is unclear to which of targeted groups do they belong, or how the target group of women was differently approached than the other two target groups.

**Table 6 and 7. Programs for vulnerable population**

Year	Activity	Participants total	Women
2011-2012	Praxis as support for first employment	436	294 (67.43%)
	General skills (language, computer)	4430	3083 (69.59%)
	Specific deficitary skills on labor market	506	219 (43.28%)

Source: the Employment Agency

**Pilot project economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence has started in 2010.**

	Self-employment		Subventions		Training for deficitary avocations		
	Plan	Realization	Plan	Realization	Plan	Realization	
2010-2011	90	33 (36%)	70	21 (30%)	30	1 (3%)	In overall, the number of planned participants is reduced for all three actions. Number of participants for subventions has risen in second year (8 to 13), while vice versa for self-employment (20 to 13), which might indicate that women victims of domestic violence are in need of financial assets for eventual self-employment. Yet the overall project underachieved the plan.

Source: the Employment Agency

<sup>29</sup>Data gathered from the Employment Agency, according to the Law on Free access to information of public character.

Unfortunately, gathered data on conducted trainings and education do not give information about implications of those activities on employment of women participants.

As its fourth activity, Strategic objective I envisages **developing campaigns** for increasing conscience about women's entrepreneurship. According to the Ministry of Labor and the Employment Agency, in five years of validity of NAPGE no public campaigns were organized for awareness raising. As a mean of informing, the Ministry of Economy developed several projects in cooperation with local business centers, however gathered information provide no data on number of women informed or included in the projects. The projects include Interactive advanced training for women entrepreneurs who have formed their own businesses in last three years (Kumanovo 2010), Prosperity for community through initiatives for women (Ohrid 2010), Promotion of entrepreneurship for potential women entrepreneurs with secondary and high education (Bitola 2011) and Promotion, stimulation, support and development of women entrepreneurs (Strumica 2011).<sup>30</sup> It is not known how and if responsible agents communicate to wider population of unemployed women and how and if they inform inactive women about possibilities of (self)employment if they join the labor market.

### **Strategic Objective II - Improvement, Promotion and Empowering of the Economic Status of Women**

Activities predicted for meeting Strategic objective II clearly show the shortcomings of the action plan for the area of women and employment as such on at least two levels. First, making analysis about status of women in the national economy by gender and ethnic background should be the main prerequisite for creation of realistic, valid and effective action plan for employment of women. Second, improvement of economic status of women focuses on women's position as workers through organising and providing them with access to support services.<sup>31</sup> It also includes, but not exclusively, stipulating gender division of care work, sharing family responsibilities<sup>32</sup> and flexible working hours.<sup>33</sup> In that sense, since there is a lack of wider understanding of economic empowerment, it is hard to follow how predicted measures influence economic empowerment of women.

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<sup>30</sup>Data gathered from the Ministry of Economy, according to the Law on Free access to information of public character.

<sup>31</sup>Bisnath, Savitri: Poverty in a globalizing world at different stages of women's life cycle, United Nations. "Empowerment of women throughout the life cycle as a transformative strategy for poverty eradication" 26 – 29 November 2001, New Delhi, India. P 24.

<sup>32</sup>Špehar, Andrea: The EU as a Gender Policy Promoter in Western Balkans "Facade Democracies": Achievements, Gaps and Challenges, p.3.

<sup>33</sup>Europa. Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006 -2010)

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/c10404\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/c10404_en.htm) (accessed 1.7.2012.)

**Table 8. Activities and indicators under Strategic objective II**

Activities	Indicators
Making analysis about the status of women in the national economy (labour market, market of capital, special investment policies, participation of women in GDP) by gender and ethnic background	Prepared analyses and established problems and disadvantages
Implementing analysis of sector policies regarding position of women	Prepared analyses and established problems and disadvantages
Undertaking measures for stimulating the participation of women in the national economy	Increasing the participation of women in the managing teams of the public enterprises

Source: National Action Plan for Gender Equality, p.36.

However, when it comes to implementation, the Ministry of Labor stated that “analysis of sector policies has been undertaken in cooperation with Sector for equal opportunities.” This policy analysis is short on data about outcomes of analysis of sector policies, and it seeks further research.

Under measures for stimulating the participation of women in national economy, the Ministry of Labor listed its Program for employment subventions. From 2008 until 2011 the program covered 3310 participants, out of which 45% were women. The program is targeted for registered unemployed persons.<sup>34</sup> However, it is not clear how this activity goes under scope of stated measure, or even more, how is it connected with the progress indicator “Increasing the participation of women in the managing teams of the public enterprises.”

**Strategic Objective III - Support of the Process of Transition from Informal into Formal Economy in the Service Sector (Care for Children, Care for Elderly People, Hygiene, etc.)**

Measures envisaged within this strategic objective mainly focus on legal framework and financial support that would encourage transition into formal economy through self-employment.

<sup>34</sup>Data gathered from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, according to the Law on Free access to information of public character.



**Table 9. Activities and indicators of Strategic objective III**

Activities	Indicators
Creating legal framework for minimum tax and other duties for individuals	Prepared and adopted legal and fiscal framework
Providing financial support with nonrefundable means for self-employment of women	Number of approved non-refundable means for self-employment of women; Increase employment and balanced gender representation in the labour market

Source: National Action Plan for Gender Equality, p.37.

For the **activity of creating the legal framework for minimum tax** and other duties for individuals, the Ministry of Finance referred to the Law on Personal Income Tax. According to the Article 30-j of the Law, those individuals who are starting their self-employed activities for the first time pay 50% less income tax in the first year.<sup>35</sup> Besides that provision, the Law does not encourage transition from informal to formal economy in service sector by any other means.

When it comes to the **activities for providing financial support** with nonrefundable means for self-employment of women, both the Ministry of Labor and the Employment Agency reported conducting the same activities as for Strategic Objective I, imposing that again there is a lack of coordination between Strategic objectives, activities under them and benchmarks for recognizing achievements. As for data, the Agency reported the amount of 609.301.711,00*denars* spent between 2007 and 2011 for programs for self-employment. The budget progressively increased by more than 100% from 2007 to 2011, however, this amount was spent for both women and men. Since there is no clear data that tell us differently, per capita calculations reveal that only 36% of that amount was spent on stimulating women's self-employment over the course of years. Likewise, within the program of formalization of existing businesses the total amount reached 159.136.500 *denars* between 2008 and 2011, out of which only 26% was spent on women, if the same calculation is applied.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Zakon za personalniot danok na dohod, "Sl.vesnik na R Makedonija" br.80/93, 3/94, 70/94,71/96,28/97, 8/2001, 52/2001, 2/2002 i 44/02.

<sup>36</sup>Data gathered from the Employment Agency, according to the Law on Free access to information of public charater.

As the result, the self-employment in Macedonia rose for more than 70% between 2005 and 2010 (from 53.508 to 91.095 self-employed).<sup>37</sup> However, researches from 2010 show that 86% of those self-employed are (older) men, in comparison to the EU average of 69.6% in 2009.<sup>38</sup>

**Strategic Objective IV - Increased Level of Employment of Women in Rural Areas**

One of the key stakeholders for increasing the level of employment of women in rural areas is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply. The Ministry reported several activities that were conducted in past few years which indicate that some improvement has occurred when it comes to the recognition of the need for positive actions towards rural women’s employment. Besides this, it was to be expected that the Ministry of Local Self-government would have the significant role in implementing respected activities, however, unfortunately, the Ministry failed to respond to the question imposed to it as a part of this policy research, disobeying the Law on the Free Access to the Information of the Public Character. Likewise, it is interesting to note that the Employment Agency reported how in the period between 2007 and 2012 it did not provide any training or education for rural women.

**Table 10. Activities and indicators of Strategic objective IV**

Activities	Indicators
Removing inequality and promotion of equal opportunities for men and women, especially by supporting projects initiated by women	Number of projects initiated and realized by women in rural areas; Enacted and adopted legal and sub-legal acts for stimulating tax policy
Regulating the working and legal status and status of agricultural worker of the woman in agriculture	Number of registered women with regulated working and legal status through registering activity in the rural area
Stimulating the woman as holder of business activities in rural areas (programmes and projects, renting of farming land)	Increased number of submitted requests, programmes and initiatives for rent by women
Additional education, vocational training, learning new skills for women in rural areas	Increased level of participation of women in realized trainings for learning new skills, additional education; Increased information and knowledge and skills among women from rural areas

<sup>37</sup>Garvanlieva, Vesna; Andonov, Vlatko; Nikolov, Marjan. „Shadow Economy in Macedonia“, *Centar for Economic Analysis*, Skopje, April 2012, p.5.

<sup>38</sup>European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. „Self-employment in Europe 2010“, *European Employment Observatory Review*, September 2010, p.7.

Education for applying, preparation of projects and implementation of projects for using programmes and projects	Increased level of skills and information and training for preparation and application of projects; Number of submitted applications and awarded projects
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Source: National Action Plan for Gender Equality, p.37.

The Ministry of Agriculture stated that the improvement of gender disaggregated statistical data have been achieved within the Ministry, as a prerequisite for establishing the mechanism for financial support for agricultural workers. Still, from the information gathered, it is not clear what data is being assessed for this purpose. Furthermore, the Ministry reported its inclusion in a working group for creating strategy for gender budgeting, comprised of the members of other Ministries, as well as UNIFEM. Likewise, the Ministry and the UN WOMEN cooperate in establishing of pilot-tools for gender responsible budgeting.

In addition, in order to achieve the stated strategic objective, the Ministry reported that in period 2007-2012 it planned and implemented activities which include elimination of inequalities and promotion of equal opportunities between women and men, regulation of legal status of female farmers and their registration, stimulation of women as a holders of agricultural activities and education of women for application for financial support within the program of agricultural support. However, there are no clear explanations what these activities were exactly comprised of and what the indicators of their successful implementation are.

In terms of numbers, the Ministry reported that within the given five year period 148 women registered as agricultural workers, while in year 2010 out of 1570 applicants for financial support for competitiveness, 282 of them were women. Although there are no benchmarks for comparison of achievements in relative numbers, absolute numbers show that women in rural areas still fall behind when it comes to their employment. According to the CEDAW shadow report, lack of possession of property on their own name is the second most recent obstacle for women to participate in economic activities, right after the obstacle of traditional values.<sup>39</sup> Property is a guarantee for getting the loan from the financial institutions; however, since 55% of women in Macedonia do not possess anything in their own name, and more than one third states that they do not even have common ownership,<sup>40</sup> it is clear that women face different problems than men in the process of realization of their self-employment.

<sup>39</sup>Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of Republic of Macedonia – ESE and Akcija Zdruzenska: REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, *Shadow report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 2012, p.56.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The objective of this policy analysis was to detect good practices and shortcomings in the implementation of NAPGE within the area of Women and Employment. Although responsible agents conducted various measures in the range from education and trainings to financial support, the paper must conclude that difficulties in implementation of NAPGE are far more emphasized than its successful outcomes. NAPGE itself in the area of women and employment sets broad strategic goals, followed by imprecise and often overlapping activities that need to be conducted in order to empower women, improve their economic status and raise their overall employment in total employment. Although these activities are envisaged to be clearly defined in annual operational plans, this research have shown poor results when it comes to improvement of position of women in Macedonian society. There are several reasons for that. The stakeholders failed to recognize different needs and capabilities of women and men, thus failing to create measures specifically addressing women as a form of positive discrimination. Likewise, the stakeholders failed to recognize the intersectionality of differences, treating women in Macedonia as a coherent group, thus failing to recognize how different forms of discrimination overlap and intersect and on that way create different starting positions for women of different ethnical and/or social background. On technical level, the overlapping of reported activities under different strategic objectives reveals that the administration responsible for the implementation of NAPGE and its operational plans lack coordination between their actions. Likewise, the failure of some institutions to report what activities have been done to educate and include more women in their managerial teams and their instruction to address the Ministry of Labor for the answers, shows that institutions and their administrations also lack sufficient knowledge about the mechanism of the NAPGE implementation. Thus, besides the need to revise the NAPGE as an overall document, the recommendations for achieving the goals set within the area of women and employment are as follows:

- Collecting and producing gender disaggregated data in all (state) institutions as a prerequisite for creation of any further activities;
- Creating tailor made activities and measures for employment and economic empowerment of women;
- Creating tailor made activities and measures that would attract inactive women's population to join the market;
- Creating employment and economic empowerment activities and measures tailored for women of different ethnical background;
- Enabling (women)access to loans not based on property as a prerequisite;
- Providing IT and project management education and training for rural women;
- Securing available (public) facilities for child care in both urban and rural areas, and adjusting their working hours to the needs of parents;
- Launching public awareness campaign on importance of equality of women and men in all sectors;
- Creating incentives for redistribution of power relations between the private sphere by incenting distribution of care work between women and men;

- Close coordination of activities towards women's employment with women's education, social care, decision making, and especially domestic violence (these areas are parts of NAPGE, but the results of the research raised doubts about comprehension of their intersectionality);
- Providing education for public administration to raise awareness about gender issues among stakeholders responsible for implementation of the NAPGE;
- Introducing follow up on the effects of the activities and measures conducted;
- Introducing clear and punctual benchmarks for the assessment of success towards reaching the objectives concerning women's employment.

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# Interns' Policy Report

**“Implementation of the Nation Action Plan on Gender Equality 2007-2012 in the area of Women and Employment in Macedonia: What chances do women have on the Macedonian labor market?”**

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