GenProcure

Koszalin, Poland
104.872 inhabitans

Challenge

In Poland traditional gender roles still tend to dominate public life and gender equality is often downplayed. Our challenge was to raise awareness about gender inequality and create a more equitable community through public procurement, where public money works for everyone — women and men alike.

Local heroes

Public institutions, academia, business and an entrepreneurship support organisation joined forces to turn gender equality into everyday procurement practice and use public spending strategically to promote fairness.



Lessons learnt

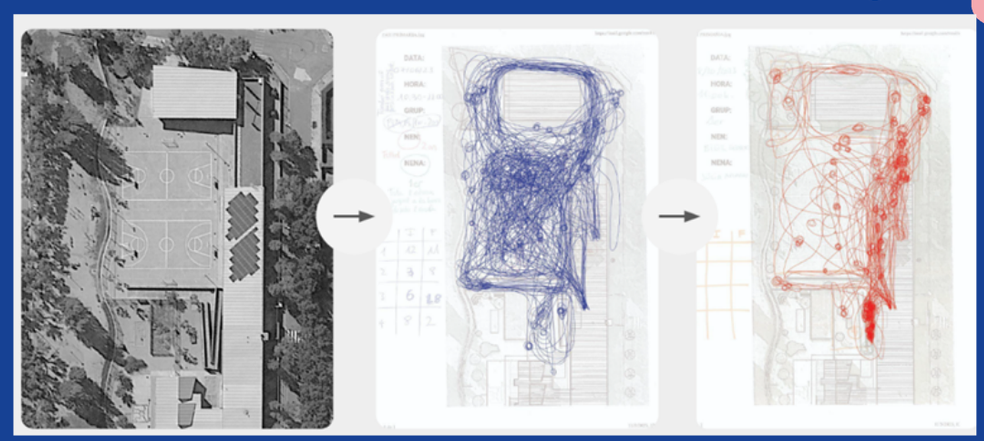
- **Public procurement is a powerful policy lever - not just an administrative function.**
- **Awareness is the first barrier - capacity building is essential.**
- **Start with feasible measures - incremental change works.**
- **Gender equality and local economic development reinforce each other.**

Solution

"Designing inclusive public spaces for all"

During the visit in Umeå, we explored practical examples of gender-mainstreamed public space design, showing how gender perspectives can improve safety, accessibility, and inclusion. The visit also led us to Ewelina Jaskulska, a Polish architect (Architektoniczki group), whose research shows that football-centred playgrounds often limit girls' participation by concentrating space around competitive, male-dominated games. Her widely shared proposals promote more balanced layouts and diverse activity zones. Inspired by both the Umeå examples and Jaskulska's work, a primary school in Koszalin is now considering a gender-inclusive multisport playground to support equitable access and more diverse play for all students.

Traditional sports field



Multi-use games area

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KOSZALIN
Centre of Pomerania

GenProcure

Messina, Italy
216.473 inhabitants

Challenge

Institutional & Cultural Barriers:

- Limited awareness among public employees about Gender Responsive Public Procurement (GRPP).
- Perception that gender equality is a “social policy” issue rather than a cross-cutting administrative responsibility.
- Resistance to change in established procurement routines.

Technical & Procedural Gaps:

- Lack of practical tools to translate gender equality principles into tender documents.
- Limited expertise in drafting gender-sensitive award criteria and contract clauses.
- Uncertainty about how to monitor gender impact within procurement procedures.

Capacity & Coordination Issues:

- Fragmentation between departments (procurement, social services, equal opportunities).
- Need to align local procurement practices with EU gender equality frameworks and national regulations.



Lessons learnt

- Awareness Is the First Step, but Not Enough
- Leadership Commitment Is Essential
- Gender Procurement Requires Interdisciplinary Work
- Institutional Change Is Gradual

Solution

The Municipality of Messina implemented a structured training and capacity-building programme for public employees.

Targeted Training Activities

- Workshops and seminars introducing gender mainstreaming concepts in procurement.
- Practical sessions on how to integrate gender criteria into calls for tender.

Cross-Departmental Engagement

- Creation of interdepartmental working groups.
- Involvement of Equal Opportunities officers and procurement staff together.

Monitoring & Institutionalization

- Introduction of mechanisms to track gender-related criteria in procurement processes.
- Gradual integration of gender equality objectives into strategic municipal planning documents.

Through these actions, training moved from theoretical awareness to applied administrative practice.



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GenProcure

Satu Mare County, Romania
329.079 inhabitants

Challenge

The analysis of public procurement has shown that due to lack of expertise and examples of best practices, the inclusion of gender, social and environmental criteria in public procurement is not a usual practice but rather an exception.

Local heroes

The action relied on the collaboration between public procurement officers in Satu Mare County, organizaton representing the business community, Lead partner and Lead expert of the network that joined together for a training on using social, environmental and gender criteria in public procurement.

- Bulleted list
- Bulleted list



Lessons learnt

- **Building capacity of public procurement officers is essential in making baby steps towards an innovative public procurement system;**
- **Practical exercises and best practices increase the confidence of public procurement officers in changing their working style;**
- **There is a real need to further implement capacity building activities for public procurement officers in Satu Mare County.**

Solution

"Workshop for public procurement officers"

On February 4-5, 2025, 13 representatives of public institutions and of business organization in Satu Mare County participated at a two days workshop to improve their knowledge and expertise. The workshop was moderated by the Lead expert of the network and a representative of the Lead partner of the network and focused on the topic of embedding social, environmental and gender considerations into a specific procurement, through practical exercises and presentations of best practices from all over Europe. The workshop has proved to be a useful tool for streghtening the expertise of public procurement officers.



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Asociația de Dezvoltarea Intercomunitară
JUDEȚUL SATU MARE

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Újfehértó, Hungary
13.000 inhabitants

Challenge

The municipality has so far used public procurement as a necessary tool; however, the expenditures have not supported causes such as improving gender equality, supporting local businesses, engaging the community, or integrating environmental and social considerations.

Local heroes

Our hero is the ingenious Odysseus, who, although not born in Újfehértó, would certainly, with his creative ideas, have established in today's world a micro-regional economic ecosystem that - through broad community involvement - would integrate community, environmental, and equal opportunity considerations into the management of shared local public affairs.

Lessons learnt

Through the Action Plan, we are rethinking municipal spending – not just as procurement, but as a powerful tool to drive positive social, economic, and environmental change. Why does it matter? Because a city is not built only from iron and concrete, but from the strength of its collaborating communities!

Solution

"Creation of a dinamic database of local SME'"

In 2024 december, with the involvement of 20 local businesses operating in the town and the micro-region, the municipality initiated the development of a closer partnership by establishing a kind of business club.
Following the first business breakfast, these enterprises have continued to meet regularly in 2025 in order to:

- Conduct prior market consultations on the municipality's annual public procurement plan;
- Create a dynamic database , and beyond price and quality, it prioritizes social value: giving preference to local SMEs, businesses with women in leadership, and those contributing to sustainability;
- Ensure that businesses are informed about the municipality's plans in a transparent manner;



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Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal
136.704 inhabitants

Challenge

With public procurement assuming an increasingly significant role within the European Union, it is time to reflect on how we can use procurement as a lever to influence the behaviour of our stakeholders and the local population towards strategic public procurement.

Local heroes

This change is only possible with the support of different municipal departments — Procurement, Equality and Communication — which were actively involved in GenProcure and work on a daily basis with local stakeholders to ensure that the message is effectively conveyed.



Solution

Awareness sessions for public buyers

Based on the data collected through a diagnostic questionnaire (Test Action), we found that public buyers require clear guidance on how to incorporate strategic public procurement into their procedures — 64% have never done so. Even among the remaining respondents, the inclusion of gender and social clauses is extremely rare.

Raising awareness on gender equality and equal opportunities is essential to transforming the role of public procurement in our cities. We expect that, following the sessions, gender, social and environmental clauses will be integrated into future procedures, leading this change by example and enhancing their relevance within the local business fabric.



Lessons learnt

- **With specific training and awareness campaigns, it is possible to change the way public procurement is carried out, despite the limitations imposed by national legal frameworks.**
- **Structural changes take time to materialise; it is therefore essential to define achievable and time-bound objectives.**
- **A "gender lens" must be applied throughout the entire Public Procurement Cycle.**

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Famalicão CITY COUNCIL

GenProcure

Umeå, Sweden
134.249 inhabitants

Challenge

Through URBACT, we took on the challenge of strengthening gender equality in public procurement, building on Umeå's long-standing commitment to gender equality. The project enabled us to examine how procurement processes impact residents, identify gaps and promote an even more inclusive society.

Local heroes

The action focused on strengthening knowledge of Gender Equality in Public Procurement through targeted training, coordinated practices, and close collaboration across the municipality's procurement department and purchasing units. This work was further enabled by the ULG group - composed of representatives from municipal companies the Chamber of Commerce, the university, SMEs, and external networks - whose joint dialogue and knowledge exchange enhanced awareness and strengthened the capacity to integrate gender equality requirements into procurement processes.

Lessons learnt

Ensuring equal treatment and equal value for all - regardless of who they are - is fundamental to a fair and inclusive society. Public procurement can support this by generating meaningful social impact at both societal and individual levels. By setting relevant and effective requirements in procurement processes, municipalities can actively promote equality and strengthen conditions for greater equity.

Solution

Public Procurement as a driver of equality: Achievements

Umeå advanced its gender-equality work in public procurement in 2025 through training for the Procurement Department on 10 February and 31 March, strengthening internal capacity to integrate equality perspectives. On 13 February and 15 April, the city also held workshops for SMEs and women entrepreneurs, together with the Business Department, to improve understanding of procurement processes. Continuing this outreach, a Tender School will be held in February 2026, with invitations sent to SMEs and women-led businesses to broaden participation, lower barriers, and promote equal opportunities in public procurement



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UMEÅ KOMMUN

GenProcure

Zagreb, Croatia
767.131 inhabitants

Challenge

With 900 public procurement procedures carried out annually - 70% of which are for works - the real challenge is finding effective ways to integrate gender-responsive, social, and green criteria into these contracts.

Local heroes

This initiative is the result of a successful collaboration between local residents, the local committee, and key city departments, including those responsible for public procurement, construction, social welfare, human rights, and EU funds.



Lessons learnt

- **Involve in-house training of employees on integrating gender equality criteria into public procurement procedures.**
- **Ensure clear communication inside the city structure about the importance of gender equality.**
- **A participatory approach increases motivation and encourages more frequent use of these spaces, fostering active and engaged urban life.**

Solution

"Integrating gender equality, social, and green criteria into public procurement for a landscape design"

As part of our gender-responsive planning, we have incorporated enhanced lighting and multiple entry and exit points to improve the sense of security, particularly for women. Our green criteria focus exclusively on non-toxic planting, while the social component includes the installation of discreet yet well-lit benches specifically designed for breastfeeding.



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CITY OF ZAGREB

GenProcure

Zenica-Doboj Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 355.000 inhabitants

Challenge

The key local challenge in Zenica-Doboj Canton lies in the insufficient awareness and understanding of gender-responsive public procurement practices among procurement officers and other stakeholders.

Local heroes

This action will rely on collaboration between local universities and training institutes, the Chamber of Economy of Zenica-Doboj Canton, relevant NGOs, and SMEs to jointly design and deliver workshops that raise awareness and build practical capacity for gender-responsive public procurement.



Lessons learnt

- **Awareness of gender-responsive public procurement will be increased as a tool for inclusive local development.**
- **Capacity to apply gender considerations in procurement processes will be strengthened.**
- **Cooperation among public authorities, SMEs, NGOs, and academia will be reinforced to support more inclusive procurement practices.**

Solution

Workshops on Gender-Responsive Public Procurement

Designed to address gaps in awareness and institutional capacity for gender-responsive public procurement through the organisation of targeted workshops and seminars involving public authorities, SMEs, academic institutions, and civil society organisations. As a result, structured training materials will be developed and approved, capacity-building events will be delivered with diverse stakeholder participation, and lessons learned will be documented. Evidence of increased understanding and strengthened capacity will be ensured through participant feedback, evaluation results, and follow-up materials supporting the application of gender-responsive approaches in public procurement.



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GenProcure

Alcoi, Spain
61.468 inhabitants

Challenge

Since 2023, Alcoi has integrated gender clauses into public contracts. The next step is moving beyond the "paperwork" to evaluate real-world impact. Our challenge is to bridge the current data gap and ensure these legal tools drive measurable, systemic equality within our local labour market.

Local heroes

A strategic alliance led by Alcoi's Procurement and Equality departments, supported by the Mayor's Office and local SMEs. This cross-sector synergy ensures that our gender-responsive policies are not only legally robust and politically aligned but also practically achievable for the businesses driving our city's progress.



Lessons learnt

- **Identifying Friction Points: Understanding the practical challenges local businesses face when implementing gender-responsive requirements.**
- **Impact over Bureaucracy: Learning which specific criteria yield the highest social return to prioritise efficiency over administrative complexity.**
- **Continuous Improvement: Developing a practical monitoring model to refine our own internal processes and share progress with our URBACT partners.**

Solution

"From administrative compliance to measurable social transformation"

Under our Integrated Action Plan, we will launch a comprehensive review of all municipal contracts signed since 2023. This solution involves mapping current implementation, analyzing the impact on hiring practices, and developing a "Gold Standard" toolkit to ensure the seamless and systematic integration of gender criteria in all future procedures.



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Ajuntament d'Alcoi