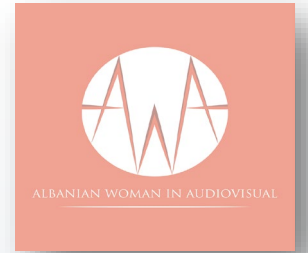




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IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY



How have we changed due to adopting the role of the FSTP implementor?

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Initial Steps:

- ▶ TACSO training served as **our cornerstone** for FSTP methodology development
- ▶ **Internal Coordination Phase**
 - The foundation of our program was built through intensive *internal coordination*:
 - Established a rigorous schedule of daily staff meetings (!!!!!!!)
 - Created *alignment on program objectives and implementation methodology*
 - Developed preliminary frameworks for support distribution
 - Identified key challenges and potential solutions through collaborative discussions



► EXPERT INTEGRATION PROCESS!

- To enhance our operational capacity, we underwent a comprehensive process to bring in external expertise:
- Conducted thorough negotiations to secure a qualified external consultant
- Focused on finding experts who could bridge theoretical knowledge with practical implementation
- Successfully onboarded an experienced professional to guide our initiative

► Knowledge Transfer & Capacity Building

- Following the expert integration, we implemented a structured learning program:
- Organized specialized training sessions for all stakeholders
- Conducted masterclasses focusing on our core operational areas
- Provided in-depth exposure to our priority sectors and focus areas



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Ensured participants gained a comprehensive understanding of:

- Our strategic objectives
- Target beneficiary profiles
- Support mechanisms
- Implementation methodologies
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Key Organizational Changes:

GROWING FROM SMALL TO STRONG

- We began as a compact organization with limited resources but big ambitions
- Had to rethink how we worked and what we could achieve
- Pushed through major growing pains to build something bigger than ourselves
- Learned to handle much bigger responsibilities than we initially thought possible

BUILDING BETTER LEADERSHIP

- Our management team stepped up to guide this big change
- Put real resources behind our plans, even when it was challenging
- Made sure everyone knew where we were heading and why
- Worked hard to turn our vision into reality despite limited experience



Strategic Level

➤ Changing How We Work

- Created new teams specifically for handling FSTP
- Made it clear who was responsible for what
- Set up simpler ways to make decisions and approve grants

➤ Mentors!!!!

➤ Operational Level

- Strengthened financial management capabilities
- Built new competencies in mentoring and support

➤ Managing Our Resources Better

- Had to be smart about using our limited people and money!!!!
- Carefully planned our budget to make the most of what we had
- Invested in basic but essential tools to help us work better
- Made sure every resource we had went where it was needed most (constant consultations with our financial manager)
- Regularly checked if our work was making a real difference
- Set up simple but effective ways to catch and fix problems



Challenge 1: Youth Engagement

- **Initial Challenge:** Limited experience in youth-specific grant-making
- **Solution:** Developed youth-friendly application processes & Created peer review mechanisms & Implemented mentorship programs

➤ Challenge 3: Context Adaptation

- **Initial Challenge:** Standard methodologies didn't fit local realities
- **Solution:** Regular methodology reviews and updates & Context-specific criteria development & Flexible support mechanisms

Challenge 2: Gender Equality & Inclusion

- **Initial Challenge:** Gender gaps in application rates and project leadership
- **Solution:** Implemented gender-responsive budgeting & Created targeted outreach strategies for women-led organizations & Developed gender-sensitive evaluation criteria

➤ Transparency



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Current Best Practices

Dynamic Assessment:

Review of methodology & Continuous feedback integration & Context-sensitive evaluation

Support Structure:

Multi-tier mentoring system & Technical assistance hub

Quality Assurance:

Structured monitoring processes & Impact measurement frameworks & Regular grantee consultations



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KEY LEARNINGS:

- Solid training (e.g., TACSO) / “Safe Key”
- Transformation is continuous
- Youth engagement requires flexibility
- Context matters more than we expect
- Building internal capacity is crucial
- Regular methodology updates are essential and feedback mechanisms are fundamental