

Women's Voice

what's inside

- 2 MaestraPeace Mural Honors Igo Rogova
- 2 "Voters' Voice": Citizens Demand 24-hour Water
- "Medica Kosova" Hosts Women Activists from Liberia, Afghanistan and Congo
- 3 KWN to Release New Research on Access to Justice for Domestic Violence Victims
- 4 KWN Receives Record On-line Donations following Birthday Party

announcements

Book Release
 "Women's Side of War"
12 October
11:00am
Hotel Prishtina

KWN Members Meeting
9 November
11:00am
Hotel Prishtina



Motrat Qiriazhi Association Celebrates 20th Anniversary

In 1989, the people of Kosovo lost political representation within Yugoslavia. Kosovar Albanians in particular lost their jobs, access to education in their own language and the right to art and culture. However, the citizens of Kosovo did not give up. During the decade of collective resistance that followed, Kosovar Albanians started their own underground schools, political system, health-care system, social aid and cultural events. Among these efforts was the initiative to form the first women-led nongovernmental organization in Kosovo.

In 1989, as opposition political parties were formed in Kosovo, two sisters, Safete and Igballë Rogova, together with the famous theatre personality, Nuredin Loxha, founded the Motrat Qiriazhi Association.

For years, the Serbo-Yugoslavian hegemonic system had proclaimed a commitment to women's education. However, the effort to educate Albanian women was insincere and Albanian women remained among the most marginalized within the former Yugoslavia in relation to education, employment and

political decision-making. Women in rural areas like Has, Drenica, Anamorava, Shala and Buzëdrini were forgotten by the political institutions of the time. Twenty years ago, the women's education association Motrat Qiriazhi was founded to address these needs.

The collective national resistance of the nineties was enriched by the visionary activities of the Motrat Qiriazhi Association, which brought to the forefront women's right to be equal, to participate in designing creatively her own future, to be a decision maker within her family and to promote her values even in international relations. Among the first steps was identifying strategies through which families could support higher education for girls and women, as well as addressing illiteracy among older women in rural areas. For this purpose, branches with dozens of volunteers were established in locations throughout Kosovo where hundreds of women and girls were able to further their education with support from their families.

Then, from 1994 to 1995, the Association turned its focus to

the mountainous region of Has, holding numerous meetings with girls and women about women's emancipation and rights. Through the commitment of local people and donations from members of the Diaspora living abroad, new schools were built, secondary schools opened and underground libraries established – all at a time when Kosovar Albanians were forbidden from learning in their own language and when Albanian books were being burned by the Serb authorities. At the same time, women and girls attended courses to learn the English language, hairdressing, healthcare and driving.

Motrat Qiriazhi brought local leaders' attention of problems of infrastructure like inadequate water supply. Soon, roads in the area were paved, drinking water supply systems established and health clinics opened.

At first, the work of Motrat Qiriazhi received little notice, but then its activities became increasingly prevalent: publishing "To Be a Woman" magazine; producing movies and documentaries about women's issues; cooperating with other activists to organize protests against the massacres occurring throughout Kosovo in 1998, such as "Kosovo is my cradle" and "In Reçak, a voice is calling"; and supporting the publishing and free distribution of books like the monograph "Motrat Qiriazhi" by Dhimitër Dishnica, poetry by Shqipe Malushi "For You" and poetry by Flora Brovina "Kosovo Call". Motrat Qiriazhi also distributed audio cassettes with social mes-

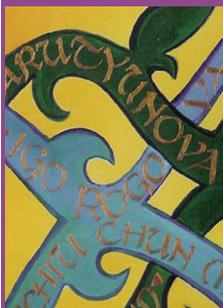


MaestraPeace Mural Honors Igo Rogova

In July 2009, the name of KWN Executive Director Igo Rogova was added to the world-famous MaestraPeace mural on The Women's Building in San Francisco, following her nomination by Marta Drury and Kerry Lobel. She will now be part of this unique and lasting tribute to many special women from around the world.

Her name was part of the beautiful new addition to the mural, carried out this past summer and will always remain part of The Women's Building.

More than 200 women have been honored in the new addition to the MaestraPeace Mural. Other famous personalities recognized in this Mural include: Mother Teresa, Angela Davis, Mother Jones, Queen Califa, Joan of Arc, Alice Walker, Emma Goldman, Ella Fitzgerald, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Aung San Suu Kyi, among others. The MaestraPeace Mural is both an educational tool and an inspiration to future women leaders. Further, through art, it recognizes the courageous contributions of women worldwide throughout diverse periods of time. For more information, please visit: www.womensbuilding.org.



www.womensnetwork.org

sages to villages and libraries, such as "Fairytales for Children", "The inextinguishable candle", "Poetry and benediction" to mark the first anniversary of Mother Teresa's passing, "Bridges' arches", "Poetess verses", "Kosovo Scream", "Our stories" and "Know Your Rights".

A vast amount of work toward accomplishing these activities was carried out by actress Safete Rogova, who had a special voice in promoting the arts. From fall 1999 to spring 2000, immediately after the war, she worked to produce a drama about Mother Teresa, "The Mother prays for us" by Abdullah Zeneli on the TV show "Revival", based on a novel by Margitë Markaj.



The climate created among women displaced to Shipol and elsewhere following the barbarian massacres instigated by Serb authorities in 1998 cannot be forgotten. The Motrat Qiriaz Association continued its work even in the morbid circumstances of the Bllaca border zone where Kosovars were forcibly deported and left to starve in the cold spring rain, and even after that in Çegrane, Neproshten and Tetova refugee camps in Macedonia (FYROM). Although they also suffered from trauma and pain, Motrat Qiriaz activists committed themselves to assisting those most in need of help and support. Whilst in refugee camps, activists showed courage and offered comfort to others, easing their pain, empowering them to take

hold of their futures, enabling them to read books, supporting children with toys, notebooks and paper, and organizing exhibitions for children.

A new chapter was opened in the history of Motrat Qiriaz after the war. Activists found support from sister associations in Europe and the United States, who helped revive

the traumatized souls of Albanian women. International relations were maintained by the tireless Igabille Rogova, who had courageously and routinely transported illegal books and medical supplies through hundreds of police checkpoint during the nineties. Even after the war, she never stopped protesting unjust treatment by the authorities, turning her gaze from Serb oppressors to the failures of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo to involve women in the decisions being made after the war.

Throughout the past 20 years, Motrat Qiriaz has been committed to ensuring the advancement of women's rights, but also to furthering awareness among the general population about gender equality. Still today, the work of the Motrat Qiriaz Association continues as more and more girls attend university, schools are opened in rural areas and the cultural traditions of Kosovar Albanians are preserved. The Association persistently seeks to preserve the dignity of the shining figures of the two sisters for which the Association was named. Sevasti and Parashqevi Qiriaz who opened the first school for girls in Korça, Albanian in 1892 and who initiated many other developments nationwide.

"Voters' Voice": Citizens Demand 24-hour Water

On 24 August, the "No WATER, no VOTE" campaign involving the signing of a petition throughout Kosovo was launched at a press conference in the Grand Hotel, Prishtina. Since September 2008, through the "Voters' Voice" initiative, led by KWN, citizens have expressed their dissatisfaction with the government at the municipal and national levels. Among the more than 1,600 calls KWN received to its toll-free hotline (0800 201 401), the lack of 24-hour drinking water and inadequate sewage treatment systems were among the main complaints.

In the midst of continuous

water cuts this summer, KWN in cooperation with other organizations initiated the signing of a petition that contains two demands: 24-hour drinking water and improved sewage treatment systems. Citizens are threatening not to vote in the municipal elections this November if their demands are not addressed. Continuous water and improved canalization were two of the most often made campaign promises by politicians before the last election, but they have since paid little attention to these serious issues.

The petition started in municipalities where water problems are more evident: Prishtina, Vushtrri, Obiliq, Ferizaj, Ma-

mushe, Kaçanik and Shtërpce.

Aided by the Kosovo Red Cross and other organizations and individuals, the petition will continue to circulate until the end of September. Then the petition will be forwarded to municipal mayors, the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning and the National Assembly of Kosovo. Citizens can sign the petition at desks located in city centers as well as during the door-to-door action.

With the motto "No WATER, no VOTE," citizens are demanding that the institutions responsible accomplish what they promised in the last elections.

"Medica Kosova" Hosts Women Activists from Liberia, Afghanistan and Congo

As part of the "Building Peace" project, implemented by the founding organization medica mondiale in Germany, Medica Kosova organized a weeklong meeting with representatives from medica mondiale sister projects in Liberia, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

During their visit to Kosovo, representatives from these countries together with their colleagues from Germany and a representative from ISIS Europe met with KWN in Prishtina, represented by Executive Director Igballe Rogova and Chair of the Board Beti Muharremi.

The meeting aimed to introduce the women rights activists from Africa and Afghanistan to KWN. The experience of KWN in founding and running its inter-ethnic network after the war was also presented.

The KWN Executive Director spoke about women's power and will to build strong networks. She emphasized the importance of women activists



refusing to allow donors to interfere politically and of activists' ability to operate outside ethnic and religious boundaries. Ms. Rogova offered examples from KWN's experience with various campaigns and advocacy efforts.

The participants were inspired and encouraged by KWN's experience, especially immediately after the war, and the numerous challenges that the Network has overcome.

KWN offered additional information from the network's website and looks forward to future networking with these sister organizations in Africa and Afghanistan.

On September, Medica Kosova, with a Summary Roundtable, marked its 10th anniversary of its commitment and work with war traumatized women and girls in Gjakova and rural areas.

KWN to Release New Research on Access to Justice for Domestic Violence Victims

From June to September, KWN with financial backing from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Women's Safety and Security Initiative (WSSI) and support from the Agency for Gender Equality in the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo (AGE) carried out research on access to justice for domestic violence victims. The research aimed to support the Government of Kosovo and policymakers in preparing and implementing the National Action Plan against Domestic Violence (NAP-DV) and Law against Domestic Violence (LDV), both of which were in the process of being drafted. The goal of the research was to establish

"a comprehensive understanding of the judicial system in Kosovo pertaining to the implementation of legislation on domestic violence." The publication resulting from the research, to be released in fall 2009, summarizes research findings as well as suggests concrete recommendations for the LDV, NAP-DV and institutions involved in ensuring access to justice for domestic violence victims.

Due to the lack of sufficient data currently available in Kosovo, the research team employed a mixed methodology that involved a review of existing information and statistics; analysis of the current legal outface; interviews with

96 women and men domestic violence victims across Kosovo who offered their very personal experiences with the justice system; and interviews with representatives of institutions and non-governmental organizations involved in ensuring access to justice, such as the Kosovo Police (KP), Centers for Social Work (CSW), the Victims Advocacy and Assistance Division in the Ministry of Justice (VAAD), prosecutors, lawyers, judges, presidents of courts, Legal Aid Officers, shelters and women's organizations. KWN also consulted with other stakeholders via interviews or questionnaires, including EULEX, the Organization for Security and

continued "KWN Research"

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UNIFEM and UNDP.

The resulting first draft of the report was presented to all stakeholders and some research participants during a workshop on "Access to Justice for Domestic Violence Victims" at Villa Gërmia in Prishtina on 22 September. The workshop was organized by KWN and UNDP with support from the Agency for Gender Equality in the Office of the Prime Minister. More than 70 people attended this workshop, which involved officials from CSWs, shelters, courts, Kosovo Police, VAAD, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, among others. Participants were divided into three working groups to review the first draft of the report, entitled "The Response of Justice Providers to Domestic Violence in Kosovo" and to provide recommendations. The groups were: 1. Protection against Domestic Violence, 2. The Kosovo Police, and 3. Safeguarding Victims' Rights and Access to Justice.

The active and valuable contribution of workshop participants has helped in making final changes to the draft report, as well as to ensure the validity of the research findings.

The final draft is currently being revised based on recommendations made by workshop participants. The report will be released later this fall and will then be made available on the KWN website.

continued on column

Kosova Women's Network

info@womensnetwork.org

038 245 850

Hajdar Dushi C-2, II/8

10 000 Prishtina,

Republic of Kosova

www.womensnetwork.org

KWN Staff

Igballo Rogova

Executive Director

igorogova@yahoo.com

Besa Shehu

Finance Manger

besa_shehu@yahoo.com

Alba Loxha

Information & Outreach

Manager

albaloxha@yahoo.com

Nicole Farnsworth

Consultant & Researcher

nicole.farnsworth@gmail.com

Project Staff:

Adelina Berisha

Mimoza Gashi

KWN Board

Belgjzare Muharremi

Chair of the Board

Ariana Qosaj - Mustafa

Arjeta Rexhaj

Behar Selimi

Nazlije Bala

Shukrije Gashi

Veporre Shehu

Advisory Board:

Besim M. Kajtazi

Delina Fico

Marte Prenkpalaj

Rachel Wareham

Vjosa Dobruna

"Kosovar Women's Voice"
was written and designed by
Alba Loxha.

www.womensnetwork.org

KWN Receives Record Online Donations following Birthday Party



In lieu of gifts, Guido Pieraccini from Rome, Italy asked his friends and family members to make a donation to KWN for his 40th birthday party a few months ago. The donation set a record for KWN's new online fundraising program, amounting to \$400. KWN's new fundraising page is powered by [Change.org](http://www.change.org) (www.change.org/womensnetwork) with technical support from the Advocacy Project in Washington D.C.

Following his great contribution, KWN interviewed Guido Pieraccini. For more than 12 years he has worked as an independent consultant on a wide range of national and international projects in the field of statistics, computer training, database management applications and statistical analysis. From 2006 to 2008 he was involved in a technical project supporting the preparation of the Population Census in Kosovo. He is married and has a 3 year old child.

What made you decide to make a donation instead of receiving gifts for your birthday?

We all mark our birthday in one way or another and this time I decided to have a big party to celebrate my 40th birthday, which is something I usually wouldn't do. Then I thought about it, and I realized that a number of people would come with some kind of gift. I am basically against this pervasive idea. Maybe it's because I come from a family that never had this attitude or maybe it's because I think that the level of consumerism in our society is growing too much. This led me to the idea to ask my friends to put their money in a money box instead of bringing gifts and to collect funds for an organization that is working on issues I truly believe in.

Why KWN?

I always thought that our society is very conservative and

that one effective way to make it more open is to support non-governmental organizations that work in specific fields, [particularly] organizations that deal with human rights issues. Moreover, the issue of gender equality is very important for me since it concerns more than half of the population that work and struggle in this world. I should add that in my opinion this issue is one of the most ignored from the political class that run countries. Indeed, in one way or another, this issue [of gender inequality] is present in every single country in this world.

Then: why Kosovo and why KWN? Having the opportunity to work in Kosovo for a long period, I found that the issue of gender [in]equality pervades in many aspects of social life. Then I had the opportunity to get in touch with some people who worked with or were supporters of KWN. I also had the opportunity to learn about the work your organization is doing in Kosovo and to read some of the research papers that you published. I was impressed by the work that KWN is doing in Kosovo, and I had a very high opinion of it. It is my pleasure to be one of your supporters and I hope this will lead others to continue and support the work you are doing.

Anyone who wishes to donate to KWN, can visit: www.change.org/womensnetwork.

THANK YOU
Guido