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announcements

Next KWN Meeting at HCIC.....May 3, 11

The Lilja 4-Ever Campaign on Anti-trafficking was launched Feb. 26. More Lilja events to come.....

Contact us to share your upcoming events with the network!

RRJETI I GRUPEVE TË GRAVE TË KOSOVËS



KOSOVA WOMENS NETWORK

www.womensnetwork.org

Civil Society Ad-Hoc Coalition Responds to Violence



Hundreds of people gathered in support of peace at a demonstration on March 24.

More than 50 NGOs met to discuss Kosovo's situation on March 19. An ad-hoc group was formed, which wrote a declaration and organized a peaceful demonstration. This included a petition to be signed citizens throughout Kosovo.

Joint Declaration of Kosovar Civil Society

1. *As representatives of Kosovar civil society, we are united in condemning all acts of violence of the last few days. We ask all citizens to immediately halt all protests and violent acts. Your grievances should not and can not be addressed through the destruction of Kosovo.*
2. *We ask the responsible institutions to work actively and effectively on raising the level of the security for all citizens of Kosovo, especially for the Serb population in Central Kosovo and Albanian population on the north of Ibër/Ibar River.*
3. *We ask Kosovar institutions and UNMIK to end mutual accusations. Your immediate responsibility is for the security and the life of citizens of Kosova. As members of civil society we pledge to do our utmost to support the KPS, CIVPOL, and KFOR.*
4. *We express our deepest and most sincere condolences to all the families of the victims of disturbances of the last few days. We are aware that our words cannot substitute the loss of your loved ones. However, we hope that you know that your pain is felt by the entire civil society of Kosova.*
5. *In this meeting, a special "ad-hoc" group has been created by the representatives of 15 organizations and non-governmental networks, in order to coordinate and plan the emergency activities of civil society. The information about the next planned activities will be available after the first meeting of this coordinating body.*

KWN, Coalition Pressure Election System Reform

A coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from across Kosovo including Reform 2004, Kosova Women's Lobby and KWN organized a series of protests throughout Kosovo to demand that the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, UNMIK, reform the protectorate's electoral system.

Despite advocacy work, awareness-raising, media campaigns and demonstrations, Special Representative Harry Holkeri recently signed into effect a system other than that requested by the coalition.

"We are offended," Rogova said. "We thought that this was a democracy. This just shows who really runs this country."

Even so, Holkeri's decision has not deterred activists.

"We will continue with the goal of saying he made the wrong decision; he broke the first standard: democracy," Ig-balle Rogova, Executive Director of KWN said, referring to the standards that Kosovo

must achieve before international governing bodies will discuss Kosovo's final status.

KWN, with support from the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI), produced tv spots and printed posters informing citizens regarding the proposed changes to the election system: open lists, creating seven voting districts and a gender quota.

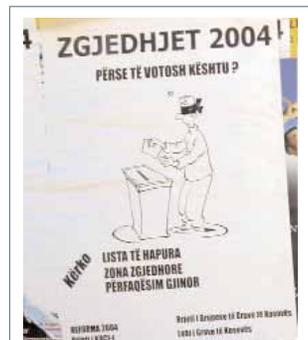
The earlier mentioned coalition wrote letters to Holkeri, the five diplomatic offices in Pristina, the European Union and the UN in New York; held media discussions involving citizens; and asked famous Kosovars to give televised personal messages in support of election system reform. These televised discussions successfully involved citizens, who called in to state their opinions.

While the Reform 2004 campaign has not yet succeeded in changing the electoral system, civil society representatives believe that campaign has successfully educated Kosovars

who previously knew little about the electoral system.

"No one explained the system to the people. [International governing bodies] just wanted us to vote blindfolded," Rogova said. "We educated the people," she said in reference to the Reform 2004 campaign.

For more information, see an article published on IWPR: http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr3/bcr3_200403_48_3_3_eng.txt.



Posters such as this were displayed informing the public as to the proposed changes to the electoral system.

KWN Campaign Involves Women in Politics

News Brief!

On February 18, the Kosovo Parliament signed the Gender Equality Law. Now only Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) Harry Holkeri's signature is needed for the law to take effect.

KWN Holds First Annual Membership Meeting

Kosovo Women's Network organized the first Annual Membership Meeting in Prishtina on December 9th 2003. Fifty-two women representing more than 40 NGO Network members, and members of the donor community attended the meeting. At the meeting, KWN presented an analysis of its work over the last two years and its plans for 2004. The first annual KTW board elections took place at this meeting. A seven member board comprised of experienced and well-known women committed to gender equality will lead KWN's work for the next three years.

The Annual Membership Meeting was an important step towards establishing a process of accountability and transparency, as well as developing democratic procedures for decision-making within KWN.

Star Network of World Learning and UNIFEM supported the event.

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Women discuss the "Political Parties Work for Women" campaign, which KWN hopes will influence political platforms for the fall 2004 national election.

From November 2003 to February 2004 KWN organized the advocacy campaign "Political parties work for women" with support from the OSCE Democratization Department.

The campaign focused on identifying women's and girls' issues and concerns as well as their proposed solutions to these problems. The campaign's goal was to incorporate women's problems and ideas for political parties' electoral platforms for the national election this fall.

Thanks to the efforts of the campaign coordinator--Shqipe Pantina, 37 local coordinators and campaign moderators, KWN organized meetings with women from all of Kosovo's 30 municipalities. This included women from various sectors of

society such as politicians, civil society members, businesswomen, heads of families, women with disabilities, students and pensioners. A total of 1160 women and men from all ethnic communities in Kosovo took part in these meetings to identify the main political, economic, social and cultural problems that women face. Participants also proposed solutions.

Unemployment, which concerns all of Kosovar society, affects women in particular. Women have proposed that local and national government facilitate employment for women by offering trainings on professional capacity building; providing low interest loans; and giving tax breaks for women who want to open new businesses. Women suggested that the government actively seek additional ways to encourage the participation of women in the private sector.

Education issues also concern women. Many girls have recently stopped attending schooling for reasons such as bad economic conditions and the lack of transport from rural areas. Women proposed that the government either offer scholarships for girls from villages, enabling them to stay in town during school time or resolve transportation issues.

Another problem that concerns women and espe-

cially new mothers is the short maternity leave, which forces many women to quit their jobs to care for their children. Few municipalities have a kindergarten, and if they do, the small capacity or the schedule does not fit with the mothers' working hours. The women requested that the government draft policies and programs that allow for a longer maternity leave and a revitalization of the childcare system.

There are plenty of other problems that concern women in Kosova, such as bad infrastructure; gender inequality; few women in decision-making positions; violence and discrimination at home and in the work place; few if any youth centers; drug abuse among youth; prostitution; insufficient care for widows and orphans; discrimination against women regarding inheritance; and non-transparent, corrupt public institutions.

At the end of these meetings, an Advocacy Women's Group was formed in each municipality. Each group will lobby for local and national political parties to make the problems and solutions identified by women part of their electoral programs for the fall 2004 elections.

Serbian, Bosnian and Albanian women from NGOs and political parties were involved with organizing and implementing the campaign. STAR Network of World Learning and UNIFEM provided technical support. Both local and national electronic and printed media widely covered the campaign. RTV 21 covered almost every meeting and produced three documentaries.

KWN presented the campaign's results at a roundtable in Prishtina, as well as in a document entitled "Women Propose." This document will be used to advocate for heads of political parties and people involved in drafting the election platform to address women's concerns. This successful KWN campaign has mobilized women to become more active in political parties.

KWN and Serbian Network Host Workshops

KWN and Serbian Women's Network "Zora" organized the first of six workshops, entitled "Managing NGOs in a New Legal Environment", on February 20 and 21 at the Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC). This project is part of the USAID-funded program on women's political and economic empowerment, implemented by STAR Network of World Learning.

These workshops aim to provide Albanian and Serbian women with the opportunity to meet and discuss common concerns and ways to benefit from each other's work and experience. Workshop topics in-

clude: legal framework for NGO work in Kosovo, services to victims of domestic violence, women's political participation, women's economic empowerment, organizing and networking. Four workshops will be held in Kosovo and two in Belgrade over the course of 2004.

Gjylieta Mushkolaj, a lawyer from the Kosovar Institute for NGO Law (IKDO) led the workshop. On the first day, participants discussed NGO Association and Foundation registration, something with which many NGOs have struggled. In the past, many NGOs simply followed the model presented in trainings, without tai-

loring it to their own mission or needs. At the workshop, participants were advised on how to revise their statutes.

Participants also discussed the Board of Directors' responsibilities; membership in organizations and associations; and organizations without members - foundations.

On the second day, Ms. Mushkolaj presented the public benefit status of NGOs. Marcy Ries, Head of the US Office in Prishtina, also visited the group. She was introduced to the participants and spoke briefly with the trainer. She was invited to attend the next workshop in Mitrovica.

KWN Influences National Action Plan on Gender

KWN largely contributed to the development of a National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP). Throughout the ten month process, five KWN members provided their expertise on economics, education and human rights. NGOs were invited to give their comments on the first draft of NAP, and Wenny Kusoma compiled the various recommendations for the final draft.

With UNIFEM's collaboration and support, KWN made huge strides in advocating for NAP implementation in the local and central government. At the same time, this process strengthened links between women's NGOs and institutional gender mechanisms.

The NAP working group selected a group of women comprised of three deputies of parliament and representatives from the government, UNIFEM and KWN. This group met with Kosovo's Prime Minister, Bajram Rexhepi on 21 January. He was supportive throughout the NAP development process.

At this meeting, KWN presented on its experience supporting women in politics. KWN advocated for the inclusion of an objective on empowering women within political parties and increasing women's political involvement. KWN's strong relationship with international and local governmental and

NGOs was highlighted. Then the following occurred:

- The delegation introduced the Prime Minister to the NAP's achievements;
- The Prime Minister's Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunity and Gender Issues, built their strategy based on NAP and established an inter-ministerial committee for gender issues.
- The OSCE Democratization Sector built a two year strategy based on NAP.
- KWN organized an advocacy campaign, "Political Parties Work for Women" with support from UNIFEM and Star Network and funding from OSCE. Political parties will be asked to incorporate NAP in their electoral programs and campaigns.
- Twelve gender committees

were established using NAP as a guide for their work.

- National and international NGOs developed their activities under the umbrella of NAP.
- The Swiss Cooperation Office based their strategic plan on NAP.
- The UNDP in Baghdad, Iraq asked to use NAP as a model for Iraqi women.
- NAP was submitted to several countries in Europe, Africa, Commonwealth of Independent States, and to the United States upon their request.
- NAP proposed the drafting and implementation of a Gender Equality Law.
- Skenderaj Municipality asked for assistance in designing a five year strategy for gender issues to implement NAP.



The National Action Plan working group met in Tirana, Albania to finalize the draft law before presenting it.

Anti-trafficking Film "Lilja Forever" Starts Tour in Kosovo

Swedish director Lukas Moodysson's movie "Lilja Forever" started its tour in Kosovo. The film tells the story of Lilja, a young woman living in the former Soviet Union, who becomes a victim of sex trafficking. The film has deeply affected viewers throughout Europe. The film was shown with Albanian subtitles on February 26th at ABC cinema in Prishtina.

The Swedish Liaison Office in Prishtina organized the event in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Kosovo Police Service School, the International Organization for Migration, the Center for the protection of Women and Children, KWN, the Serbian Women's Network "Zora", and the Centre to Protect Victims and Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Swedish Liaison Office organized a panel discussion after the film to answer questions and discuss issues related to trafficking in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo. Representatives from all sectors of society participated.

The film was screened for an international audience at OSCE that evening. The Serbian screening was postponed due to technical problems.

This project is part of an effort to increase awareness of the sex trade among politicians, police officers, authorities, social workers, journalists and the public.

The second phase of this project is to show the film in five other municipalities in Kosovo.



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*"Kosovar Women's Voice"
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Kosova Women's Network Opens New Office

Kosova Women's Network (KWN) opened its office in Prishtina in January 2004 with support from Star Network of World Learning, Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) and the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Kosova Local Initiative Program (KLIP). KWN has entered into a period of institutional building to better serve its members in implementing their projects. KWN during 2004 will implement, but will not be limited to the following activities:

- Develop a multi-dimensional three-year strategic plan for the network's progress and sustainable development
- Develop an Information Dissemination System as a tool

for empowering Kosovar women's NGOs. This includes regularly updating the KWN website, producing a bi-monthly e-newsletter, and maintaining a database of resources available to women's NGOs in Kosovo.



In January the Kosova Women's Network opened their new office at Agim Ramadani St. A2, No. 26 in Prishtina.

- Develop the Network's policies and procedures, including: criteria for membership, a conflict of interest policy, and a code of ethics
- Campaign to increase women's participation in poli-

tics

- Implement an anti-trafficking project through the film "Lilja Forever"
- Hold joint workshops between the KWN and the Serbian Women's Network "Zora"

About Kosovo Women's Network

Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) is a leading network of more than 40 women's NGOs and groups from all over Kosovo. The Network includes women's groups from various ethnic groups, and KWN has provided support and mentoring to networks of Roma women's NGOs and to the Network of Serbian Women's Groups of Kosovo. Since its inception in 2000, KWN has become a key advocacy network on behalf of Kosovo women on a regional and an international

level.

The Network's bimonthly meetings provide an effective forum for Kosovar and international NGOs that work on issues of gender equality to meet, exchange information, provide support for each others' programs and initiate joint public education and advocacy campaigns.

KWN Objectives

- To insure equal, active and effective participation, of women and girls in political,

economic and social development

- To advocate for the rights of girls and women in all spheres of life
- To empower the movement of women and girls in Kosova through solidarity and mutual support
- To achieve participation of Kosovar women's groups in regional and international initiatives in the field of promotion of women's human rights

Mission

The Kosovo Women's Network's (KWN) mission is to support, protect and promote the rights and the interests of women and girls throughout Kosova, regardless of their political beliefs, religion, age, level of education, sexual orientation and ability. KWN fulfills its mission through the exchange of experience and information, partnership and networking, research, advocacy and service.