

Women's Voice

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announcements

Next KWN Meeting, HCIC.....
.....Sept 3, 11:00

Conference: Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Kosova
.....Sept

"Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-making", Grand Hotel
.....July 13, 9.30

Contact us to share your upcoming events with the network!

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KOSOVA WOMENS NETWORK

www.womensnetwork.org

Conference Lends Strategies for Upcoming Elections

STAR Network of World Learning/Kosova; the United States National Democratic Institute, and Kosova Women's Lobby organized a conference entitled "Women's Leadership - Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-making" in Prishtina on June 18-19. The conference resulted in an action plan for Women's Political Participation in Kosova, which includes concrete recommendations that the Kosova Women's Lobby, political parties, parliament and women's NGOs can use in their efforts to involve more women in all levels of political decision-making. UNIFEM, the Swiss Cooperation Office and Fridrich Ebert Stiftung co-financed the conference.

In fall 2004, Kosova's general elections will take place according to the current regulation that provides for a 30% quota for women. Currently, women make up 30% of Kosova's parliament. However, there is only one female minister in the current government and not one woman heads a municipal assembly or acts as a Chief Executive in a municipal government. Women are also largely missing from the political party leadership at both the central and the local level.

The "Women's Leadership" conference aimed to address these issues by focusing on increasing women's participation

in political decision-making by:

1. Bringing more women into governmental decision-making (locally and centrally);
2. Strengthening political parties;
3. Promoting women's participation in decision-making through NGOs and the media; and

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Igballe Rogova gave opening remarks on behalf of Kosova Women's Lobby and U.S. Missouri State Senator Jean Carnahan gave the key note speech, describing her own experience and that of other women in politics.

*"If not now, when?
If not here, where?
If not me, who?"*

KWN Discusses Gender Issues with Political Parties

KWN representatives met with leaders from the main political parties during April and May 2004. The representatives, including Naxhije Buqinca - Board President, Flora Macula - Board Member, Igballe Rogova - Executive Director and Shqipe Pantina - Campaign Coordinator, informed party representatives about KWN's four-month campaign "Political Parties Work for Women."

KWN meets with KPC
General Agim Çeku welcomed and thanked KWN for having the willingness to visit the Kosova Protection Corps (KPC). The 74 women in KPC make up only 3-4% of the force. Though small in number, they have equal positions

and are treated equally, he said. Among them are women ranking from officer up to colonel, according to Çeku.

LDK Criticizes NGOs Supporting Open Lists

While meeting with KWN representatives, Mr. Agim Krasniqi from the Democratic League

of Kosovo (LDK) criticized those members of civil society and women's NGOs that supported changing the electoral system from closed lists to open lists.

"They have wasted time and energy," Krasniqi said. LDK

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A KWN delegation met with General Agim Çeku and other KPC members to discuss increasing women's involvement in politics.

About Kosova Women's Lobby

Kosova Women's Lobby is a group of women leaders from politics, civil society and the private sector. They undertake and support critical - constructive attitudes and strategic and progressive actions on important issues for political, social and economic development in Kosovo that affect the whole society and especially women.

Kosova Women's Lobby has been actively involved as a co-organizer of the open lists for elections campaign as well as the conference "Women's Leadership - Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-making".

July Coordination Meeting Notes

- "Women's Leadership" Conference: Work groups met twice. Recommendations will be discussed at a roundtable on July 13 at the Grand Hotel.
- "Women Propose": The next phase will use information-sharing to increase women's involvement in the elections.
- "Lilja 4-Ever": The film was shown in five municipalities. Starting in Sept., DVDs will be widely distributed.
- Kosovo National Action Plan (NAP) for Gender Equality: The Prime Minister signed NAP. It will be published, distributed and explained through a media campaign. A conference in Sept. will discuss mechanisms for gender equality.
- Kosova Women's Fund: Discussions on creating one are underway.
- Turkish Women's NGO Hanemeli celebrated their first anniversary.
- UNDP announced a new project, "Online Donations in Kosova": www.prokos.org.

Next KWN meeting: Sept. 3

www.womensnetwork.org

Women in Decision-making Conference Cont'd

Flora Macula listens while Magbule Çeço, Vice President of Albania's Parliament provides recommendations for bringing more women into governmental decision-making.



4. Mobilizing citizens and voters to support women.

The conference provided a forum for women to analyze and discuss these topics. They also drafted a long-term strategy to help Kosovar women and society create equal opportunities for women's participation in political decision-making.

"When more women are present in decision-making, they are more likely to speak out," Yvana Enzler, Head of the Swiss Liaison Office in Prishtina said. "We need more women present; women are powerful as groups," she continued. There is also a need to closely examine existing barriers to women's political participation within Kosovar politi-

cal parties.

Edita Tahiri, Member of Parliament, also stressed the need for a "critical mass" of women to enter politics. She suggested that women overcome their differences and support each other.

"I knew I had to either give up or step up."

- Jean Carnahan

Lesley Abdela, Senior Partner at Shevolutin in the United Kingdom, provided concrete steps women could take to bring more women into governmental decision-making. She said women should: consider candidacy; write a let-

ter to the Prime Minister demanding 40% of the cabinet be women in a cabinet reshuffle and providing names of strong candidates; and, advocate for more transparency within the parties.

In the key note speech, Jean Carnahan, former Senator of Missouri, provided examples of women who had struggled for greater involvement in decision-making. "They knew they were not working for themselves, but for the future," she said, describing women's work today as part of a long-term process.

Conference recommendations will be discussed at a roundtable on July 13 at the Grand Hotel. The action plan will be published and distributed soon after.

The "Women's Leadership" conference targeted political party leaders, government officials, women's NGOs, the media and donors who are engaged in or support programs for women's involvement in decision-making.

Conference speakers included leading politicians, women's NGO representatives and journalists from Kosova, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania.

"Lilja 4-Ever" Screened throughout Kosova

"Lilja 4-Ever", a powerful film detailing one young woman's struggle to escape the sex trafficking business, has been shown throughout Kosova as part of an anti-trafficking cam-



Lilja 4-Ever, a film by Swedish Director Lukas Moodysson focusing on sex trafficking began its tour in Kosova.

campaign that began in February. KWN has screened the film in Prishtina, Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjakova and Gjilan.

The Swedish Liaison Office in Prishtina organized the "Lilja 4-Ever" campaign in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo; Kosova Police Service School; International Organization for Migration; Center for the Protection of Women and Children; KWN; Serbian Women's Network; Center to Protect Victims and Prevent Trafficking of Human Beings; and Kvinnoforum.

Working Groups were established in each municipality for implementing the project. KWN appreciates their hard work on this project.

A debate followed each screening, and participants discussed trafficking related issues,

such as: building cooperation between citizens and local police; giving more authority to local police to combat trafficking; supporting local NGOs that work on anti-trafficking projects; and, needs for a larger, Kosova-wide campaign to raise anti-trafficking awareness.

Despite multiple anti-trafficking efforts by local and international bodies, the trafficking of human beings, especially women, is growing in Kosova. A recent Amnesty International report detailed the problem, highlighting in particular abuses by some members of the international community who seem to be supporting trafficking rather than fighting it. The report is available online at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR700102004>.

Liria and Local Government Cooperate, Open Women's Center

Liria, a women's NGO and KWN member from Gjilan, received support from the Gjilan Municipal Government to open a regional Center for Women.

Following two years of active lobbying, Liria persuaded the Gjilan Municipal Assembly to donate €50,000, land and a recently renovated school building to create the center. The donation was made after the Exterior Ministry of Austria agreed to support the center's future projects. Throughout the lobbying process, Kvinna till Kvinna provided legal assistance and pushed for cooperation between the government and Liria.

Now the Center for Women serves approximately 480 women each week with initiatives that empower women, health education, capacity-building, societal integration programs, discussion roundtables, counseling, free legal aid, information sharing, child and spouse relationship building, help to other women's groups, computer access and training, English lessons and social issues workshops.

In order to persuade the government that a regional multi-ethnic women's center was needed, Liria representatives showed statistics of the number of cases asking for help.

"The government did not understand that violence against women exists," Nazife Jonuzi, the center's Executive Director said. "But we presented real cases to them. We showed that women's issues don't belong just to NGO's. They are society's problem as well," she continued.

Jonuzi advised other NGOs interested in lobbying for government support to first assess local women's needs. Then, present these needs, including concrete cases, to the local government. Gain the community's support by showing them what services a women's center would provide, she said.



Women received certificates after completing a training at the Center for Women in Gjilan. The center was donated by the local government, following lobbying efforts by NGO Liria.

By building a cooperative relationship with the local government, the Center for Women has increased its chances for long-term sustainability. As international donors leave Kosovo, the center will be able to involve the local government and community's support. The center continues to build these relationships by inviting government representatives to campaigns and roundtables and by constantly distributing information about the center's work through the media or leaflets.

Women Discuss Kosovar Women's Fund

Following three years of discussions, a group of women including KWN board members and representatives from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI), met at the KWN office on June 21 to discuss establishing a Kosovar Women's Fund. The fund would prioritize under-funded or overlooked women's issues.

Some issues discussed at the meeting included what should the fund do; where should the funds come from; what expertise is necessary to set up the

fund; and, what is other countries' experience?

The group agreed to establish three task forces that will be responsible for: 1) Fundraising; 2) Organizing processes (administrative functions, legal issues); and, 3) Deciding Programmatic Priorities.

Each task force will be composed of a few experts as well as a couple energetic youth. All will work on a volunteer basis.

At the next meeting, which is planned for mid-September, participants will nominate people for these task forces. At that time the group will devise more concrete steps towards establishing the Kosovar Women's Fund.

In the meantime, women's funds can be researched online, according to some resources provided by Leal Stegall, a visiting expert and the



Leal Stegall provided outside experience, examples and advice on how to establish a women's fund at the KWN meeting.

founder of STAR Network of World Learning who provided advice and expertise at the meeting: the international independent women's fund network - www.iiwfn.org, the U.S.A. women's funds network - www.wfnnet.org, and www.globalfundforwomen.org.

Women's funds already exist in the Netherlands, Slovakia, Mongolia, Mexico, Nepal, South Africa, Ukraine and the United States. If Kosovo succeeds in establishing a women's fund, it would be the first in the Balkans.

"We can't wait for the patriarchal male institutions in the world to be sweet and give us a little money; we have to organize money on our own behalf."

KWN Strategic Planning

KWN's members and partners held a workshop in Gjakova on April 9th - 10th to draft KWN's first 3 year Strategic Plan. At the planning session, future KWN programs were identified. KWN's objectives for the next three years include:

- Increase women's and men's awareness of women's rights and the possibilities of achieving gender equality in Kosovo;
- Increase women's equal and effective participation in politics at all levels;
- Increase the effectiveness of legislation, government programs and policies for achieving gender equality in Kosovo;
- Increase women's contribution towards achieving peace and stability in Kosovo and region; and,
- Empower the women's movement in Kosovo and increase women's role in the region and the world.

May Coordination Meeting Notes

KWN held its regular bi-monthly network meeting on May 3rd in Prishtina at the Humanitarian Community Information Center (HCIC). Some of the topics discussed included:

- Campaign "Women Propose": Achievements and plans for May - October 2004;
- National Action Plan: The Prime minister signed his approval;
- Conference: "The Mechanisms of Gender Equality in Kosovo"
- "Lilja 4-Ever": Presentation of the anti-trafficking movie in five Kosovar municipalities;
- KWN Strategic Planning: in Gjakovë on April 9 - 10; and
- Kosova Business Women's Network: Institution-building.

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Fundraising for Families

KWN members and friends raised and donated €1000 and \$350 to families affected by the March violence in Kosova. Beneficiaries included the one family in Qabër/Mitrovicë whose child drowned in the Ibër River preceding the violence and Nevenka Rikalo's family in Fushe Kosova, whose house was burnt down on March 18th. Ms. Rikalo is an activist in the Serbian women's non-governmental organization "Ruka Ruci", which is a KWN member.

Support for "Kosovar Women's Voice"

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) / Kosova Local Initiative Program (KLIP) financially supported the publishing of KWN's newsletter, "Kosovar Women's Voice", Spring 2004 and Summer 2004 issues.

Support for KWN

STAR Network World Learning; Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) / Kosova Local Initiative Program (KLIP) provide institutional support and capacity-building for KWN. UNIFEM provides technical assistance.

"Kosovar Women's Voice" is written by Elita Gota; edited and designed by Nicole Farnsworth.

www.womensnetwork.org

KWN Continues Women Propose Campaign

KWN will continue its efforts to promote greater and more effective participation of women in the fall 2004 elections, both as voters and as candidates.

KWN will address the need for mobilizing women's votes in support of women candidates by providing information and support to women candidates, as well as by providing opportunities for women candidates and women voters to meet and discuss issues of particular interest to women.

First, KWN will establish an Information Center that will provide information about women's candidates during the campaigns.

Second, KWN will promote women candidates by posting their profiles on KWN's web page, www.womensnetwork.org, (thus reaching out to more young voters). KWN will also publish and distribute a leaflet with women candidates' names, photos, and profiles.

Third, KWN will organize 30 public meetings with women candidates, which will be held in each municipality. This will allow women candidates to present their platform and will enable women voters to push candidates to

have a gender-sensitive platform. These meetings will be coupled with radio and TV debates that include women candidates. Through Women's Advocacy Groups, KWN will monitor the work of political parties in developing their electoral program and their election campaigns to ensure that they mainstream gender throughout the campaign.

KWN will continue to engage all communities in the "Women Propose!" campaign, including Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish, and Roma Ashkali Egyptian organizations that are part of the Kosova Women's Network, as well as other such organizations outside the network.

This campaign will be implemented from August through December 2004. The campaign is funded by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Swiss Corporation and Development Office (SCDO), with technical assistance by STAR Network and UNIFEM.

Campaign Coordinator Leaves KWN



On June 1st, the "Women Propose" Campaign Coordinator Shqipe Pantina ended her work with KWN. She has decided to join a newly formed political party - the Alternative Democratic Party of Kosova (ADK). KWN would like to thank Ms. Pantina for her hard work and dedication to the "Women Propose Campaign" and to wish her the best in her future plans.

Meetings with Political Parties, Continued

chose to support a closed list system, which they believe enables women's participation.

Krasniqi stressed that LDK has always worked to include women's participation in politics and in decision making processes.

On behalf of LDK and President Rugova, he said that they appreciated the campaign led by KWN. Krasniqi said that KWN has had and will continue to have the support of political parties, including LDK.

Mr. Hashim Thaçi, President of the Democratic Party of Kosova (PDK), said in a meeting with KWN representatives. Thaçi said that his party supported KWN's initiatives.

"We in politics are sometimes detached from the reality," he said. "You know the people's needs, women's in particular," he continued. Thaçi said that meetings with KWN help those in politics to better understand people's needs and requests. He strongly encouraged KWN to continue such efforts and promised that his party would always be open and offer support. He challenged women to do more to take the place they deserve.

AAK Calls for More Quality Female Politicians

"AAK is open to suggestions," Mr. Ramush Haradinaj, President of the Alliance for the Future of Kosova (AAK) said. AAK is in favor of having 50% women in parliament, but has not

been happy with the quality of women in the parliament so far, according to Haradinaj. "I believe that there are women with higher qualifications that are not in parliament or other institutions," he said.

"We in politics are sometimes detached from the reality."

PDK Encourages Women to Increase Public Presence

"You have done a great job, especially in towns outside of Prishtina and in rural areas,"



"Women Propose! Take part." The poster, hung throughout Kosova in three languages, challenges people to "campaign for including women's perspectives in the 2004 Electoral Program".