



Kosovar Women's Voice

Supporting, protecting, and promoting the rights and interests of women and girls in Kosovo

Join Us!

Donate bloodon International Women's Day! 8 Mar 2013, 12:00 Mother Teresa square, Prishtina

Submit applications to the Kosovo Women's Fund, Due: 15 Mar 2013

KWN Bimonthly Meeting: 8 Apr 2013, 11:00, Hotel Prishtina

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Kosovo Joins One Billion Rising



On 14 Feb., Kosovo joined 207 countries, marking V-day in the largest global action to end violence against women and girls in history.

To mark the 15th Anniversary of V-Day, organizers launched V-Day's most ambitious campaign to date, *One Billion Rising*. "One Billion" derives from the statistic that one in three women experience violence in their lifetimes, and thus more than one billion women around the world have been impacted by violence. The 2013 worldwide V-Day campaign encouraged one billion women and the people who love them to "Walk out, Dance, Rise up and Demand" an end to violence.

"It is one of the most attractive campaigns I have seen so far," said Fitore, a participant in Kosovo's One Billion Rising Event, "and I think that it has had a great impact."

Volunteers ages 15 to 17 organized Kosovo's event. The organizing committee involved members of media group *Kosovo 2.0* and the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN). They created a *One Billion Rising Kosovo Facebook page*, and *Kosovo 2.0* covered the event. Albulena Shabani, an Albanian artist from Macedonia produced a *promotional video*. Two young organizers, Lindi and Andrea, performed a cover of Rita Ora's song "Shine Ya Light" with a special shout out to One Billion Rising.

One Billion Rising Kosovo gathered men and women in Striking, Dancing and Rising at an outdoor street party on the platform of Pristina's Youth Palace, DJ'd by Oda Haliti. Young and old joined the party, demonstrating their resistance to violence against women.

"Why don't we have events like this more often?" A ten-year-old girl exclaimed. "Dancing in the streets is an excellent way to raise our voices about big issues like," other participants agreed.

V-Day, held on Valentine's Day, is a global activist movement that aims to end violence against women and girls. It involves different events aimed at increasing awareness, securing funds and supporting the work of anti-violence organizations. Through V-Day campaigns, volunteers and students have produced performances such as *The Vagina Monologues*, *A Memory*, *A Monologue*, *A Rant* and *A Prayer*, and other documentaries.



Youth in Prishtina join the One Billion Rising global campaign to end violence against women and girls.

Municipality of Dragash Establishes Mechanism against Domestic Violence

Civil society representatives, the local gender equality officer and police in the Municipality of Dragash knew they needed a mechanism for reporting domestic violence. Domestic violence exists within their municipality, but people hesitate to denounce it. Due to Dragash's high mountain location, far from opportunities for higher education, women there tend to have lower levels of education. This limits their economic and thus social freedom. They feel "controlled and managed" by the unwritten social rules that preside there, said women's rights activist Gjejrane Lokaj from the Women's Initiative Association, a KWN member organization. She and other civil society representatives, the gender equality officer and police decided to bring these issues to the attention of local and international institutions.

They found support from UN agencies, which piloted a project on gender-based violence in Dragash. The UNDP-supported Municipal Coordinator against Domestic Violence organized regular meetings among civil society, international organizations, police, judicial institutions, municipal directors of different departments, decision making bodies and other actors dealing with this issue. These meetings resulted in the establishment of a Mechanism against Domestic Violence, involving the aforementioned actors. The mechanism has elected its leadership, and is creating its own official documents, which will make the mechanism official and enable it to continue its work on a legal basis.

Potential victims of domestic violence can contact the Mechanism's members. "Our names are public and we are close to citizens, in order to make reporting violence easier," Gjejrane said, as one of the mechanism's founders. "One of our mottos is: it's not a shame to be a victim of violence; it's a shame to be a perpetrator, so please denounce violence."

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In November-December 2012, the Mechanism's members carried out an awareness-raising campaign against domestic violence, targeting students from 6th grade to high school, school directors and women's groups. They have since seen shifts within their society.

"The motivation and will to end violence was extensive," Gjejrane said. "Reporting of domestic violence has increased, as has the awareness of potential victims and of people who assist potential victims. This topic is no longer taboo. People no longer have prejudices, and they often have concrete ideas on how to prevent it."

The Mechanism's members also have advocated successfully for a comfortable interview room at the municipality's police station, as well as a room with toys for children for when they meet parents who do not possess child custody.

In the future, they plan to address gender-based psychological violence, particularly in the workplace; advocate for more women to join the police force in Dragash municipality (the only police women travels daily and thus is not always available to respond to violence); and contribute to creating a police database for recording cases of violence in the municipality.

Kosovo Women's Fund Grants Available

On 15 Feb. 2013, KWN announced the opening of the Kosovo Women's Fund's second grant round. KWN has invited its member organizations to submit applications that will contribute to realizing the Strategic Goals identified by KWN members in the KWN Strategic Plan for 2012-2014. This grant round has received funding from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) with additional support from Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK). The deadline for submitting applications is 15 Mar. 2013. KWN will announce grant recipients by 15 Apr. 2013. The maximum grant award possible is €3,000, and KWN expects to provide up to €20,000 in grants this round. The duration of projects should not exceed six months. Funding decisions will be made by the Kosovo Women's Fund Grant Review Committee, elected by KWN members. KWN will accept applications in Albanian and Serbian languages. For more information, visit the KWN website at: <http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqelID=33>. KWN staff are available to provide further information to members as needed; appointments can be made by contacting info@womensnetwork.org or calling KWN at 038 245 850.

KWN Elects New Board Chair

KWN held its first board meeting for 2013 on 15 Jan., during which board members elected the new KWN Board Chair: Ariana Qosaj Mustafa. Elmaze Gashi was elected Deputy Chair. They will serve two-year terms.

Board members also discussed installing membership fees for network members in order to support KWN's numerous initiatives, members' activities and services provided to members. The Board decided that KWN could start collecting membership fees in the amount of €20 per year.

After this, Nicole Farnsworth, KWN Program Manager, informed the board about recent changes made to the KWN Policy Manual as per the Kosovo Labor Law.

Board members also discussed the KWN Conflict of Interest Policy. They agreed that if KWN partners with organizations led by members of the Board or if other potential areas of conflict of interest arise (as defined by this policy), such issues must be discussed and approved by the Board. Based on this decision, Elmaze Gashi presented the project that Alter Habitus, an organization she leads, plans to undertake together with KWN. It involves research entitled "Where is the Money for Women's Human Rights". Since the research will contribute to the KWN Strategy, the Board decided that KWN and Alter Habitus could move forward with this collaboration.

Finally the Board discussed and agreed that KWN could open a new bank account for KWN's sustainable, unrestricted fund. Towards KWN's sustainability, the account will hold financial resources that are not already supported by donors. KWN will raise funds for this account through membership fees, fundraising events and individual donors (e.g., in the United States through the East-West Management Institute). For more information, contact: info@womensnetwork.org.



Ariana Qosaj Mustafa, recently elected KWN Board Chair, attends the KWN

Members Gather for Bimonthly Meeting

Approximately 75 people attended the KWN bimonthly meeting on 4 Feb. 2013. Participants included KWN member organizations, donors, board members and other supporters.

The meeting began with a greeting from the newly elected KWN Board Chair, Ariana Qosaj Mustafa. "Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the women's movement," she said. She thanked Elmaze Gashi for her contribution as the prior Board Chair, from 2011 to 2012.

Then Aida Dërguti from the Vetëvendosje Movement shared information about Women's Week, organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Approximately 100 women representing political parties, institutions and NGOs attended. NDI also plans to organize a Women's Leadership Academy in 2013; 30 participants will be selected to attend the Academy.

KWN Executive Director Igballe Rogova thanked Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK) for their trust and support for KWN to establish the Kosovo Women's Fund and for continuing their support in 2013. "I would also like to thank the KWN members who were awarded grants and brought successful results; and the KWN members who did not receive grants, but who understood," she said. She emphasized that through the Kosovo Women's Fund KWN "not only helps member organizations financially, but also offers training for them to build their capacities, based on their needs."

KWN Project Coordinator Albertina Binaku provided detailed information about the Kosovo Women's Fund's planned grant rounds for 2013. "All members received support in project proposal writing through workshops, and this support will continue in 2013 so that they can write better projects," she said.

KWN Public Relations Coordinator Nertila Qarri then announced changes to the KWN website, which now includes a section with information about our members and the Kosovo Women's Fund. She emphasized that KWN continues to use its [Facebook Page](#), [Facebook Group](#), and new [website \(www.womensnetwork.org\)](http://www.womensnetwork.org) to share information about the women's fund.

Since KWN and its members have established an annual tradition of organizing a protest marking 8 Mar., International Women's Day, Igballe Rogova opened a discussion on how to mark this day in 2013. Participants decided that the advocacy theme this year will be women's access to quality healthcare, and that citizens will be invited to donate blood, assisting Kosovo's weak healthcare system. This action will be held on 8 Mar. at 12:00 at Mother Teresa square in Prishtina. Other information shared at the KWN bimonthly meeting included:

- KWN will organize a Gala Event involving famous actresses and singers where people will be invited to support KWN's work. KWN member LIRA women's choir will also perform.
- Through the Regional Women's Court, a feminist approach to justice, women activists in Kosovo and the region continue to raise their voices, demanding justice for women raped during the war. As part of this regional initiative, an unofficial Women's Court was established as a form of tribunal where women have space to tell their personal stories.
- The Kosovar Center for Fighting Breast Cancer JETA/VITA in Pristina continues to organize activities to raise awareness among women and institutions about this issue.
- Women's Center Liria in cooperation with the Mayor of Gjilan and the Women's Caucus has established a coordinating mechanism related to domestic violence. The group has started drafting a strategy to financially support the shelter in the Municipality of Gjilan, so that it will have a sustainable fund for providing services to domestic violence victims by 2014.
- The Women's Initiative Association, in cooperation with the Mayor of Dragash and the Women's Caucus, has established a mechanism against domestic violence in the Municipality of Dragash.
- The Association for Women with Disabilities Women for Womeninformed members that the Action Plan for Gender Equality has been approved in Prizren. They are forming a monitoring group to follow its implementation.
- The Foundation for Development and Education implemented a project in the Municipality of Novoberdo in 2012, through which they opened a store where women work and sell their products, including handcrafts and jams. She requested that members with sewing machines that they are not using donate these for women in need.
- "ATO" in Vushtrri implemented two successful projects in 2012, one about education and the other about health, including reproductive health.
- "Hendifer" offers services for women. They work on a voluntary basis and have more than 1,600 members, as well as 45 volunteers.
- Kosova's Alive Alliance said that their work in 2012 concentrated on health education. They will continue this work in 2013. They also started a new initiative to improve health, called "Health Game"; a women's group and children's group have been formed.

KWN also informed members that they will need to begin paying a €20 annual membership fee. Beginning in 2013, KWN will only pay transportation costs for one person per organization and only for organizations in poor financial conditions. This is because with 100 members, transportation costs have risen substantially and are difficult for KWN to continue to cover for all of its members. KWN requests members' understanding in contributing to the network by helping to support these costs.

The next KWN members' meeting will be held on 8 Apr. 2013. Members can send information about their activities to info@womensnetwork.org for inclusion in the KWN monthly newsletter, *Kosovar Women's Voice*.



Igballe Rogova, KWN Executive Director, shares information with network members.