



April 2013

Kosovar Women's Voice

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

Kosova Women's Fund Awards Eight Grants

The Kosova Women's Network (KWN) awarded grants to eight member organizations through the Kosova Women's Fund in April. Altogether, 29 organizations applied for grants. Funding decisions were made by the Kosova Women's Fund Grant Review Committee, elected by KWN members last year. The organizations awarded grants include:

1. The Association of the Deaf in Prizren, which will organize systematic gynaecological visits and health training for deaf women.
2. Women's Centre "Prehja" will organize trainings, meetings and public discussions for women suffering from breast cancer in Skenderaj.
3. The Centre for Economic Development of Women in Shtirpce "Ikebana" will involve women in processing and producing medicinal herbs.
4. The Foundation for Education and Development will seek to economically empower women in Novo Brdo Municipality by building their business skills and providing equipment for drying and processing fruits, pastries and sweets.
5. Gruaja Hyjnore (Divine Women) will empower women in Gjilan through workshops on gender equality, women's rights to property inheritance and advanced techniques in the art of handmade crafts.
6. Parajsa Jonë (Our Paradise) will train women in rural areas of Lipjan Municipality in horticulture and entrepreneurship.
7. The Association of Women Farmers "Krusha e Vogel" will economically empower women in rural areas in villages of Krusha e Vogel and Has through seminars in business management, marketing and milk hygiene, including sharing experiences with farmers from other NGOs.
8. Lulebora will provide counselling and support gynaecological visits for women and girls living in the Roma neighbourhood of Mitrovica.

"I was very happy to learn that our NGO was awarded a grant. This grant means support for women who always have been left aside."

**- Krenare Hajredini,
Association of Deaf People**

Join Us!

**KWN Bimonthly Meeting
on 3 Jun. 2013**

**Festival of Art, organized
by NGO Artpolis, 27-30
May 2013 at Oda Theatre**

Inside this Issue

**Women Strategize for
Municipal Elections.....2**

**Women Entrepreneurs
Create Platform.....2**

**Rural Development
Program Supports
Women3**

**KWN Members Hold
Meeting in Gjakova.....4**

 **Facebook Page
Facebook Group**

 **E-News Mailing List**



Eight KWN members receive grants from the KWN Kosova Women's Fund in April.

Women Strategize for Municipal Elections

KWN organized a discussion on 29 Mar., during which 27 women from seven municipal assemblies and KWN member organizations strategized for women's greater participation in the upcoming municipal elections. Vjosa Dobruna, a Human Rights Activist and member of KWN's Advisory Board led the discussion. Participants sought to generate ideas for increasing the number of women in municipal assemblies and in leadership positions at the municipal level.



Vjosa Dobruna, a Human Right Activist and member of KWN's Advisory Board discusses strategies for increasing women's participation in politics.

"This meeting opened discussions about empowering women, an obligation and mandate for KWN," said Vjosa Dobruna.

The meeting also served to encourage more women to run for mayor. Participants discussed which qualities women candidates should have: they should be feminists, have a different approach than men, be active in society and have the political will to promote gender equality.

"I appreciate this bold initiative, and I think we can all contribute continuously in this area," said Violeta Dema, a representative from the Gjakova Municipal Assembly.

The discussion also encouraged cooperation among diverse women and emphasized the important role that civil society can play.

"This meeting provided us with the opportunity to talk about what we as civil society can do to help," said Drita Vukshinaj from NGO Women for Women with Disabilities in Prizren.

Some conclusions that resulted from the meeting included:

- Work with women candidates and political parties so that parties winning seats in municipal assemblies ensure that women receive decision-making positions.
- Create an enabling environment for more women to enter politics by going door-to-door to advocate for citizens to vote for women candidates.
- Encourage political parties to nominate unanimously a woman candidate for the position of mayor in upcoming elections and create a suitable environment for her campaign.
- Organize media campaigns to present accurately women's campaign platforms.
- Create a new section on KWN's website and/or a Facebook forum where women can share ideas and discuss strategies for furthering women's participation in municipal governance.
- Encourage continued involvement of women in municipal assemblies even after retirement so that they can share their experience and knowledge.

"There was fear among women due to their previous experiences because women lacked support," Vjosa Dobruna concluded. "But from their fear and prior obstacles we will learn and know better how to address these issues in the future."

Women Entrepreneurs Create Platform

On 8 Apr., 40 entities signed the *National Platform of Women Entrepreneurs in the Republic of Kosova*. Signatories included NGOs, women's associations, business associations, networks, education and training institutions and media.

The signing followed a prior workshop in which they developed the platform, held on 22 Mar. The main strategies for economic growth identified in the Platform include public-private partnership, gender equality and creating networks of entrepreneurs and business associations. A voluntary, informal group working for the development and promotion of women entrepreneurs in Kosova, as well as the elimination of all kinds of gender discrimination leads the implementation of the Platform.

Continued on p. 3.

“This is the first time such a Platform has been created in Kosova,” said a representative from Women’s Business Association SHE-ERA. “It’s all based directly on the needs of women entrepreneurs and conforms with EU laws and regulations.”

The Platform was created based on the *Small Business Act for Europe* (derived from Women Entrepreneurs Indicators of Istanbul), the *Pristina Principles* (the Women’s Economic Empowerment section, from the Presidential Summit of the Republic of Kosova), the *National Strategy for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (2012-2020)*, the *Law on Gender Equality*, the *Kosovo Program for Gender Equality*, the *Kosovo Action Plan for the Economic Empowerment of Women 2011-2013*, as well as the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*.

The Platform aims to promote women entrepreneurs in the Republic of Kosova through public and private partnerships. It seeks to help women overcome barriers to entrepreneurship and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination.

This initiative is being undertaken in nine EU pre-accession countries in South East Europe. It is supported by the Kingdom of Sweden and implemented by the South Eastern European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECEL), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Gender Task Force (GTF) for South East Europe. The partners implementing the project in Kosova are Women’s Business Association SHE-ERA and Network “Qeliza”.

Rural Development Program Supports Women

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) plans to offer financial assistance for women entrepreneurs working in various agricultural sectors. Its Rural Development Program will offer financial assistance amounting to approximately €27 million in 2013. Through this financial support, MAFRD aims to improve farms’ infrastructure, increase productivity, improve the quality of agricultural products, increase competitiveness among domestic producers, increase employment and income among farmers and rural populations and further the sustainable use of agricultural land. All Kosovar farmers in various agricultural sectors can benefit from this program, and women will be prioritized for support.

MAFRD has allocated €12 million in subsidies for wheat, corn, sunflowers, goats, cows and buffalo milk. The other €15 million has been allocated for investment grants for milk, meat, eggs, honey, vegetable, fruit, wine and herb production.

On 1 Mar., KWN’s member organization, Women’s Business Association “SHE-ERA” met with the Department of Agriculture in Gjakova to inform officials about the work of women entrepreneurs. SHE-ERA representatives presented business plans prepared by women from Gjakova and women’s requests for co-financing. Women’s initiatives have received support through the “Support for Women Entrepreneurs in Agriculture 2012-2015” project, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The project is being implemented in four regions of Kosova: Gjakova, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Peja.

“Since rural women are always the last to receive information about government grant schemes, SHE-ERA requested that Directorate of Agriculture officials meet with women entrepreneurs, as project beneficiaries, to inform them about opportunities for grants and subsidies provided by the Ministry,” a SHE-ERA representative said.

During the aforementioned meeting, women received information about subsidies and financial assistance provided by MAFRD to Kosovar farmers and the criteria women must meet to apply.

Since MAFRD’s first grant round has closed, KWN members interested in applying should follow media and MAFRD’s website for future Calls for Applications. Women also can visit Departments of Agriculture within their municipalities for further information regarding application criteria. SHE-ERA staff can assist women entrepreneurs in agriculture in meeting the application criteria. For assistance, please contact wsheera@gmail.com.

MAFRD also plans to support farmers in agricultural mechanization. They have also announced support for investment in less developed rural areas, watering agricultural lands, agro-processing equipment, storage, marketing, and public-private projects identified by [Local Action Groups](#).



The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development will offer approximately €27 million in financial assistance in 2013, prioritizing assistance for women farmers.

KWN Members Hold Meeting in Gjakova

Approximately 60 people attended the KWN Bimonthly Meeting on 8 Apr. 2013 in Gjakova. Participants included KWN member organizations, board members and other interested persons.

Besa Shehu, Finance & Administrative Manager at KWN, opened the meeting, announcing the names of eight organizations awarded grants through the Kosova Women's Fund (KWF). She also encouraged organizations that did not receive grants to apply again. The next grant round will open on 15 May 2013.

"NGOs will receive assistance and support from KWN staff in order to improve their applications," she said. KWN continues organizing capacity building opportunities for its members, so that they can benefit not only from the Kosova Women's Fund, but also from other funds.

Zana Rudi, Project Coordinator for KWN Members, presented the *KWN Code of Conduct Monitoring Report and Capacity Development Plan for Members* for 2013. The report resulted from interviews with 82 of KWN's 100 member organizations. The report presents members' strengths and areas where members could benefit from capacity development. Based on the findings, KWN plans to organize 12 trainings in 2013; two have been held so far. Since KWN's budget is limited, KWN staff and supporters have volunteered their time to provide training for members. KWN also is preparing an individual report for each member, outlining their strengths and areas where they could further develop their capacities.

Then, Mirlinda Kusari-Purrini, Executive Director of KWN member organization SHE-ERA, informed participants about the *National Platform for Women Entrepreneurs in the Republic of Kosovo*.

"The draft platform is supported by Atifete Jahjaga, President of Kosovo, who is willing to push it forward, and the group of women MPs in the Kosova parliament," she said. "An informal organization will advocate for creating a suitable environment and supporting women entrepreneurs."

She also informed participants about the *Ministry of Trade and Industry's* plans to support small and medium sized enterprises and *the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development's Rural Development Program*. These are two ways that KWN members may be able to receive funds towards women's economic empowerment.

Emine Berisha, a KWN and Alter Habitus researcher, provided information about the two organizations' joint research "Where's the Money for Women's Rights: a Case Study for Kosovo", supported by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). This research initiative will help identify funding trends related to supporting women's organizations and women's rights over the last decade in Kosovo. Emine is interviewing KWN members, and all information provided by members will remain confidential.

KWN members then shared the following information:

- o Dardana Mehmeti from NGO Artpolis provided information about a festival being held on 27-30 May in Oda Theatre, where women artists will present their work. The festival will focus on social aspects of life, particularly women's and girls' rights and the challenges they face in Kosovo and the region.
- o Veprora Shehu from NGO Medica Kosova said that 20 women and six staff members will visit Istanbul with support from the Turkish Embassy.

Finally, Nertila Qarri, KWN Coordinator for Public Relations, emphasized that KWN members can send information about their activities to info@womensnetwork.org for inclusion in KWN's monthly newsletter *Kosovar Women's Voice*.

The next KWN members' meeting will be held on 3 Jun. 2013.



During KWN's bimonthly meeting in Gjakova, Mirlinda Kusari-Purrini, Executive Director of SHE-ERA, informs KWN members about new opportunities from the Government of Kosovo towards empowering women economically.