



July 2013

Kosovar Women's Voice

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

Join Us!

KWN Bimonthly Meeting

2 Sep., 10-16, Hotel Prishtina

Initial Findings: "Where's the Money for Women's Rights?"

2 Sep., 14-16, Hotel Prishtina

KWN Retreat (members only)

3-6 Oct., Durres, Albania

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E-News Mailing List

in Prishtina, selling women's products and organizing street events to raise awareness about women's rights; **5) Foleja** will educate Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women and girls in Prizren, Landovic, Piran, South Serbica and Mamushe about their health and rights; **6) Rona** will economically empower women, supporting their participation in tourism by producing handcrafts and promoting cultural heritage in Gora and Opoja; and **7) The Centre for Promotion of Women's Rights** will identify cases of sexual violence committed during the war in 17 villages of Drenas Municipality. Kvinna till Kvinna provided financial support, making these grants possible. The next grant round will open 15 August and close 15 September 2013. KWF Coordinator [Mimoza Paçuku](#) remains available to provide mentoring to KWN members regarding their proposals.

KWN Welcomes Individual Members!

Are you an admirer, friend or supporter of the Kosova Women's Network (KWN)? Perhaps you do not have your own organization or you do not live in Kosovo, but you feel connected to our work and want to support us? We have a new program for you! KWN is proud to announce our Individual Membership Program. The program offers individuals the opportunity to become part of our network!

To become a KWN member, we kindly request a donation of €50 per year (that's less than €5 per month). Of course we appreciate any additional donation that you are willing to make! For people residing in the U.S., your donation is tax deductible. All proceeds will go to the KWN Sustainability Fund, covering crucial costs and supporting important programs. As a member, you will receive updates about KWN's work and how we have put our members' funds to good use. This includes our monthly E-newsletter and annual report with audited financial statements. We'll also publish your name on our list of members (unless you prefer we do not).

As a KWN member, you can feel proud that you are part of a worldwide network of people committed to supporting, protecting and promoting the rights and interests of women and girls in Kosovo. To become a member, please write to info@womensnetwork.org or visit our [website](#). P.S. You don't have to be a woman to be a member. We welcome men who support our cause!



On 30 July, KWN welcomed our first individual member, long-time supporter of furthering women's rights in Kosovo, Elizabeth Kaestli.

KWF Supports 7 Members' Initiatives

KWN awarded seven [Kosova Women's Fund](#) (KWF) grants to member organizations in July. In this round, 29 organizations applied, and KWF's Grant Review Committee (GRC), elected by KWN members, selected the following: **1) Venera** will help women in Peja prepare legal documents and offer advice for completing procedures to open their own businesses; **2) Bliri** will raise awareness about reproductive health among girls in Drenas; **3) The Committee of Blind Women of Kosova** will work on integrating blind children into public schools in Prishtina; **4) Rikotta** will launch its "Women's Piazza" on *Nena Tereze*

IPKO Foundation Donates €5000, Becomes KWN Partner

The [IPKO Foundation \(IF\)](#) has donated €5000 to KWN's programs and initiatives. On 23 July, the two organizations signed a memorandum.

"IF thought that donating money to KWN's Kosovo Women's Fund would be a very good opportunity for philanthropy," said Teresa Crawford, IF Founding Board Member. "Since these funds have been given for KWN's general purposes, KWN also can use them for other projects and activities."

KWN plans to use the funds for advocacy and promoting women's rights. IF and KWN also discussed various potential areas for future cooperation, including possible IF support for the Foundation for the Education of Girls "Çifti Buçinca" through its [Next Generation Scholarships](#) program.

"KWN also is working on empowering young women through the Young Women's Empowerment Initiative," KWN Executive Director Igballe Rogova said. "In order to empower youth, we must find ways to support their education. More networking can contribute to this."

IF also offered to engage its scholars in assisting KWN members, such as by providing technology workshops. "Some of our scholars could hold informative sessions about technology and using social media for promoting work and activities," said IF Program Manager Abetare Gojani.

"Social media can support KWN members' advocacy," Rogova agreed.

IF and KWN planned additional joint activities for promoting their work and finding additional financial support for KWN. Since IF is a member of the [American Chamber of Commerce \(AmCham\)](#) in Kosovo, it will look into hosting an event with other AmCham members, introducing them to KWN as potential future supporters.



The IPKO Foundation (IF) and KWN sign a memorandum for cooperation on 23 July.

KWN: Calling All Young Women Activists, Feminists

Are you a young woman or do you know any young women with an activist spirit? Do you want to become involved in women's organizing? Or just demand your rights? If yes, KWN invites you to join the [Young Women's Empowerment Initiative \(YWEI\)](#).

Concerned by ageism and seeking to build a stronger women's movement in Kosovo, we initiated YWEI in 2012 with support from Kvinna till Kvinna. Through it, we want to help more young women enter into politics, decision-making and organizing to demand their rights.

Last week, young women activists and leaders from several organizations, as well as activist and artist groups gathered in Prishtina to strategize for YWEI's future. They discussed drawing from their existing networks to involve more young women, as well as organizing social events that can bring people together. Maybe you have some ideas to share? Join the discussion on our Facebook [group](#)!

Just to fill you in on what we've done so far: 87 young women have gathered in Kosovo's five regions (Prishtina, Prizren, Gjakova, Gjilan and Mitrovica) to discuss concerns and share strategies. It seems young women face similar problems: gender-based discrimination, sexism, religious extremism, insufficient access to higher education and

unemployment. YWEI activists also mentioned issues with NGO leaders and politicians (some don't consider young women experienced enough for decision-making positions). Are you facing any additional issues? [Check-in](#) and tell us about it!

So, what's next? Well we don't want to just talk about problems. We want to solve them! So YWEI activists have been brainstorming ideas. Join us this fall when we'll identify advocacy strategies and take some action! We'll be coming to cities near you to get organized and get stuff done. Let us know if you're "in". Write to us at info@womensnetwork.org and/or join our Facebook [group](#) to make sure that you're informed about upcoming events; become part of the movement!



Young women present their problems and needs, as well as strategies for addressing them at the YWEI meeting in Gjakova.

Women's, Men's Life Stories Enrich Kosovo's History

The [Oral History Initiative](#) seeks to broaden the narrow understanding(s) of history in Kosovo by providing details about Kosovars' everyday lives before, during and after the war. The initiative has recorded stories of everything from Turkish bath-houses to favourite childhood haunts to whirling dervishes to peaceful resistance to oppression during the 1990s. Such memories, captured on film, transcribed and translated, play a crucial role in preserving Kosovo's modern-day history.

The Oral History Initiative is a joint venture by KWN and The New School in New York. Since it was established in 2012, the Initiative has documented the personal life histories of 11 courageous figures, including Naxhije Bućinca, Vjosa Dobruna, Marte Prenkpalaj, Drita Vukshinaj, Safete Rogova, Shqipe Malushi, Sevdije Ahmeti, Nazlije Bala, Vehap Shita, Pajazit Nushi and Antonella Giorgioni. This fall, theirs and others' stories will be made publicly available via a searchable, interactive, multi-media website. The website will contain raw footage of their interviews, transcripts in Albanian and English, historical photographs and eventually short films.

The Initiative is led by an Oral History Collective involving KWN, Dr. Anna Di Lellio and her students from The New School and several independent researchers, academics, filmmakers and interns. We would like to thank Catherine McGahan, Jung Chao, Kaltrina Krasniqi, Eda Shehu, Donjeta Berisha, Emine Berisha and Erla Gjinishi for volunteering their time this summer to build the Oral History archive.

If you would like to support this unique initiative, donations can be made through our fiscal sponsor, [East-West Management Institute](#) in New York, where individuals living in the U.S. can now make tax-deductible donations by check (info [here](#)) or [credit card](#) (just mention in the notes line "for KWN Oral History Initiative"). A generous anonymous supporter has agreed to match dollar-for-dollar every donation made to this Initiative. Therefore, your donation will be worth double! No extra cash but you want to help out? We are still seeking filmmakers, film editors, interviewers (in Albanian) and translators who want to volunteer part-time or full-time. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Oral History Initiative as a volunteer, please email us at: info@womensnetwork.org.



One oral history narrative documents the life of human rights activist and pediatrician Vjosa Dobruna. Graduating in Pediatrics in Zagreb, Croatia in 1981, her story is one of success and mobility in the former Yugoslavia, followed by activism and resistance to Serbian government oppression during the 1990s.

Municipality Supports Gruaja Hyjnore to Empower Women

The Municipality of Gjilan has provided NGO *Gruaja Hyjnore (Divine Women)* with a free venue for their activities. Cooperation with the Municipality has enabled *Gruaja Hyjnore* to cut back on operational costs, contributing substantially to the organization's sustainability.

"The Municipality of Gjilan is trying to pay a lot of attention to women's rights and interests, as we know that the role of women in society is indisputable," said Omer Daku, Deputy Major of the Municipality of Gjilan. "We, as the Municipality, are trying to create more space for women to act and undertake more activities."

Gruaja Hyjnore has used their new space to empower women economically. With support from the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund, they have held workshops on gender equality, women's rights to property inheritance and advanced techniques in the art of handmade crafts.

"The NGO's activities have helped me, as a woman with no higher education, get out of my daily routine; meet other

women; exchange experiences; attend trainings about new techniques for handmade products; receive certificates; showcase my work in different exhibitions; and, above all, feel more valuable," said Alije Ajeti, a participant. "Another very important thing is that I've been able to sell my handmade crafts. In this way, I have supported my family economically. Now, even my husband's support has grown stronger."



Members and supporters of NGO Gruaja Hyjnore in Gjilan gather at the official opening of their office, provided free of charge by the Municipality of Gjilan.

1100 Leaders Discuss Women's Economic Empowerment

A delegation led by President of the Republic of Kosova Atifete Jahjaga represented Kosovo at the [Global Summit of Women 2013](#). The delegation also included KWN representative Mirlinda Kusari-Purrini, Executive Director of [SHE-ERA](#), and Afërdita Saraqini Kelemndi, President of the Women's Economic Chamber of Kosovo. The summit, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Jun. 6-8, gathered approximately 1100 global leaders from around 70 countries to discuss the theme: Creating New Economies. The event served to create linkages between public, private and non-profit sectors.

"We had the opportunity to meet and share experiences with women leaders from governments and businesses," said Mrs. Kusari-Purrini. "We also learned about the status of women globally."

The Summit aimed to promote and inform women entrepreneurs through an annual forum, research, roundtables and other programs.



1100 global leaders from around 70 countries discuss "Creating New Economies" at the [Global Summit of Women 2013](#), on Jun. 6-8 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

12,764 Citizens, CSOs Petition against Kosovo Amnesty Law

The Draft Law on Amnesty in Kosovo derived from the agreement for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. It was intended to support the integration of Serbs in Kosovo's north by providing protection from legal action following Serb resistance to Kosovo's Constitution since the declaration of independence in 2008. However, the [initial draft law](#), according to some parliamentarians, "exceeds the amnesty deal and tries to provide amnesty for ordinary crimes that have been committed throughout the territory of Kosovo." Despite concerns, the parliament used an accelerated procedure without any public discussion, holding the first reading of the Draft Law on Jul. 4.

KWN [reacted](#) against the Draft Law on Amnesty and urged parliamentarians not to vote for it because it would provide amnesty for numerous criminal offenses, including violence against women. Diverse citizens also protested outside the parliament, dispersing only after the Draft Law did not pass. On its first reading, the Draft Law received only 70 votes in favour, falling short of the necessary 80 votes.

Concerns over the controversial Article 3 led the Government to add a clause stating that offenses resulting from murder or bodily harm would not be subject to amnesty.

When the second reading of the Draft Law was announced for Jul. 11, Kosovo citizens organized another protest in front of the parliament. It lasted six days and five nights. Protestors made clear that they did not represent any institution or political party. Further, in addition to several individual reactions, 34 civil society organizations (CSOs) wrote a [joint letter](#) to the EU Office in Kosovo, EULEX and Quint Embassies demanding that the Amnesty Draft Law be reconsidered. They also initiated a citizens' petition, requesting amendment of the law. Citizens protested again outside as the parliament held its second reading of the law.

Despite citizens' protests, on Jul. 11 the Law on Amnesty passed with 91 votes in favour and 17 against.

Citizens continued protesting through Jul. 19 by signing the aforementioned petition. In total, CSOs gathered 12,764 signatures. The Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, Group for Legal and Political Studies, KWN,

Community Building Mitrovica, *Syri i Vizionit*, *EC Ma Ndryshe* and INPO submitted the petition to the Presidency, requesting that the Draft Law be returned to the Assembly ([see their letter](#)).

President Jahjaga praised civil society's commitment and role in Kosovo's democratization. "Communication between institutions and civil society is needed and contributes to the overall improvement of processes," she said.

As the Law has been held up by the Constitutional Court prior to the President's signature, KWN and other CSOs continue advocating for its revision.



CSO representatives deliver a petition requesting amendment of the Law on Amnesty to President of Kosova Atifete Jahjaga on Jul. 19.