



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., 10:45-13:00, Hotel Prishtina

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

2 Sep., 14-16:00, Hotel Prishtina

KWN Retreat (members only)

3-6 Oct., Durres, Albania

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Men Join KWN as Individual Members

KWN recently launched its new Individual Membership Program. We're pleased that three men already have joined as individual members! We want to take a moment to recognize individually each of these men who also have been great supporters of KWN's work!

The first man to join KWN, Arber Sylejmani, developed our website, including creating our new membership form virtually overnight. He's always around when we need him, responding quickly and supporting our work.

Second, Hajrullahu Ceku has collaborated closely with KWN in several actions, from street performances to protests to petitions. We feel his solidarity as an activist.

Then there's Krenar Basha from *Night Design* who has played a vital role in developing KWN's public relations materials. He too is always accessible, assisting with whatever we need, often under time restraints. An activist at heart, he promotes several causes through his talents as a designer and publisher. This includes printing on recycled paper with recycled ink and offering discounts to women's organizations.

We welcome other men and women to join KWN as individual members. As a KWN admirer, friend or supporter, no longer do you need to have your own organisation to become a member. You only need to feel a desire to be part of our work. Please join us by writing to info@womensnetwork.org or filling out the application on our [website](http://www.womensnetwork.org). KWN members can feel proud that they are part of a worldwide network of people committed to supporting, protecting and promoting the rights and interests of women and girls in Kosovo.

Transparent Financial Management: Putting It to Practice

With few exceptions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kosovo tend not to be very transparent with how they manage their finances. This is problematic for several reasons. First, NGOs work towards the *public good*. Since we serve the public, we have a responsibility to be transparent about what we do, how we are funded and how

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we spend our funds. Second, our financial resources often come originally from taxpayers (in Kosovo or abroad), or from individuals who give money to support us. We have a responsibility to report how their money was spent and what was achieved with their money. Otherwise, they may not feel like funding our work again. Third, for organizations seeking to hold the government accountable, their own house must first be in order. Fourth, our latest research on "Where's the Money for Women's Rights?" suggests that several donors in Kosovo are becoming hesitant to fund NGOs because organizations have not shown clearly where the money went in the past and what they have achieved with that money. This does not mean that organizations have not achieved important results, but perhaps organizations could do a better job of showing how money was spent and what results were achieved. NGOs' future funding depends on how transparent they are with their finances and... **Continued on p. 4.**

Retreat Energizes KWN Staff, Motivates Future Work

Work combined with fun was the formula for an invigorating and productive KWN staff retreat, held on Aug. 1-2 in the beautiful mountains of Prevalle.

The personality profiles test was perhaps the most memorable activity. During this exercise, everyone took a quick, fun test to determine whether they were a mastermind, romantic, warrior and/or expert. Then the team discussed at length their and others' personalities, identifying ways for improved interactions among colleagues, considering each person's unique personality.

"This exercise was very helpful for me," a KWN staff member said. "Now I understand even better my colleagues' personalities, and I will know better how to act in different circumstances at work."

Free time, games and meals together also provided open spaces for meaningful discussions among colleagues. Several [photographs](#) marked their journey. On the second day, staff members discussed KWN's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats during a "SWOT" analysis session. Several ideas arose from this reflective brainstorming session. The discussion focused not only on the needs of KWN staff, but also on what initiatives might contribute to strengthening the network and women's organizing more broadly.

"Whatever we brainstorm and write, we should always remember the needs and challenges of our member organizations since we are here to serve our members," said a staff member.

During this session, staff noted that while KWN has a mission statement, the network does not yet have a vision statement in writing. Team members collaborated to draft a vision statement, which will be proposed to KWN members for approval. Other issues identified at the retreat will also be provided to KWN members.

KWN staff members agreed that the retreat was relaxing, energizing and very productive in identifying key steps forward. On the way back to Prishtina, KWN staff felt they knew each other better and were energized for future joint actions together, as colleagues and friends.



Energized and motivated, KWN staff depart for Prishtina after the two-day retreat in Prevalle.

New Association Empowers Deaf Women in Prizren

Krenare Ajdini found her beginnings as a women's rights activist while working as a sign language interpreter during KWN meetings. She attended her first KWN meeting in 2012 as an interpreter for the Association of Deaf People (ADP).

"During this meeting I learnt a lot of new information about NGOs and their work," she said. "When I saw the possibilities that the network offers for women, I decided to start a new NGO for deaf women. I want them to have more space, since this space wasn't provided in the other NGO so far."

In July 2013, Krenare formed the Association of Deaf Women in Prizren, an NGO aiming to empower deaf women. She is aware of the many issues deaf women face, including insufficient interpreters. For example, if a woman would like to receive a medical check-up, without an interpreter it is very hard for her to explain her needs to the doctor. Nor can she understand the doctor's diagnosis or treatment. The Association for Deaf Women seeks to help women resolve these issues.

Krenare admits that creating a new organization is no easy task: compiling a statute, forming a board and other administrative issues. However, "KWN staff were always there to help me with documents, procedures and any other issue," she said.

"So far, I am really satisfied with the interest and cooperation shown by our NGO members," Krenare said. "Together we're working on finding ways to fund our ideas. In this way we will be able to empower deaf women in our municipality."



Krenare Ajdini interprets in sign language at the KWN Annual Meeting in 2012.



The logo of the Association for Deaf Women symbolizes sign language in Kosovo.

"Prehja" Encourages Check-ups to Prevent Breast Cancer

Regular medical check-ups are crucial for identifying signs of cancer early on so that it can be treated in time. This was among the points emphasized by Dr. Mejreme Maloku-Krasniqi, an oncologist at the Public Health Centre of Kosova (PHCK) during lectures that she delivered in four villages of Skenderaj.

Women's Centre "Prehja" organized lectures to raise awareness about breast cancer in four Skenderaj villages, where around 200 women participated.

"It's of vital importance that you have regular medical check-ups," Dr. Maloku-Krasniqi said. "Only in this way can we take preventive steps and fight breast cancer."

Dr. Maloku-Krasniqi inspired 30 women of Skenderaj Municipality to receive check-ups at PHCK's Oncological Institute. Women who have participated in lectures can receive check-ups from Dr. Maloku-Krasniqi the very same day, and NGO "Mundesia" from Mitrovica is providing transportation for women from their villages to Prishtina.

"Just last year we lost six women in our municipality to breast cancer," said Jeton Rushit, Project Coordinator at NGO Prehja. "They didn't have good economic conditions to carry out regular medical examinations. Our project aims to raise awareness among women to prevent breast cancer. We think that such initiatives have a vital role in making women aware of breast cancer, as well as enabling them to receive medical examinations free of charge."

This initiative has received support from the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund since April 2013.

In the past, Women's Centre "Prehja" has assisted women suffering from breast cancer by organizing self-support discussions, where women could speak with psychologists and receive advice on how to cope with cancer emotionally.



Women in Skenderaj Municipality attend lectures organized by NGO Prehja regarding breast cancer.

New "Piazza" Raises Awareness about Women's Rights

The new "Women's Piazza" on Prishtina's Mother Teresa Boulevard innovatively sells women's products while simultaneously organizing street events to raise awareness about women's rights.

The Women's Piazza, run by NGO Rikotta, sells baked goods everyday on this busy pedestrian square. In addition to helping their women members earn some extra income, they plan to use this public space to organize four street campaigns on topics including women's right to education; participation in decision-making; breast cancer; and people who suffered domestic violence and trafficking. NGO Rikotta opened the Piazza because they were concerned by the lack of citizen initiatives to further women's rights and participation in public life.

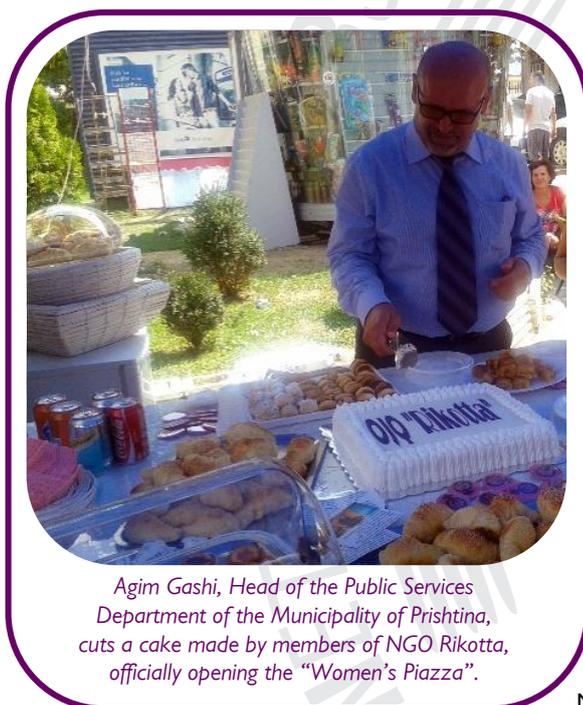
"Citizen initiatives are very good tools for promoting solidarity among women's organizations, as well as gender equality," said Pranvera Bullaku, Rikotta's Executive Director. She hopes that the Piazza will raise by-passers' awareness about issues that women face in everyday life.

The Women's Piazza is a collaborative initiative undertaken with the Municipality of Prishtina, which provided the venue. Agim Gashi, the Head of the Public Services Department at the Municipality of Prishtina, officially opened "Women's Piazza" on Aug. 12, 2013.

"We intend to support all positive initiatives of Prishtina citizens, particularly those focusing on supporting women's rights and women's hard work," said Agim Gashi, Head of the Public Services Department.

This initiative also received support from the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund, from which Rikotta received a grant for €2,990 in July 2013.

You can drop by any day to learn more about this initiative and/or purchase some products made by women: the Piazza is located on Mother Teresa Boulevard in Prishtina, next to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.



Agim Gashi, Head of the Public Services Department of the Municipality of Prishtina, cuts a cake made by members of NGO Rikotta, officially opening the "Women's Piazza".

Women's Choir "Lira" Sings at International Festival

For the first time, 16 members of "Lira" Women's Choir attended the International Choir Festival, held in Nikoileka, Greece on Aug. 3-5. Their program involved ten songs, including primarily traditional Albanian songs, adapted for the women's choir by the composer Tomor Berisha. The festival, held for the tenth time since 2003, welcomed choirs from several countries, including Lithuania, Italy, Turkey, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Greece, among others.

Representing Kosovo abroad is very important, said Valira Spahija-Buza who leads Lira. "It gives us the opportunity to create friendships, identify possibilities for cooperation and have the extraordinary experience of getting to know other nations and cultures," she said.

Practicing Transparent Financial Management (Continued from, p. 1)

...how well they show their results to donors and community members (as potential future supporters).

"Wait a minute. I'm transparent. I'm not one of *those* organizations," you're thinking. Okay, here are a few important questions for you:

- Do you make an annual report with information about your activities, results, income and expenditures available to the *public* (not only to your donors)?
- Are *two* people in your organization responsible for reviewing and approving how money is spent?
- Do you have your organization's finances audited every year?
- Does your board meet every three months to review and approve your organization's income and expenditures?

If you answered "no" to any of these, you could improve your organization's financial management and transparency. Here are a few things that you can and should do. They cost little to nothing and can help you improve the image of your organization and, in doing so, the image of NGOs and civil society more broadly:

1. Prepare an annual report with information about your activities, results, income and expenditures. Make it available to the public. You can put it on your free Facebook page; make inexpensive black and white copies; and/or provide the information at a press conference. Annual reporting is crucial for showing your partners, members, media, donors and citizens how you use your funds and the results you achieve. (For an example of an annual report, see [KWN's website](#)).
2. Make sure that two different people review and approve your financial expenditures. This is important towards accountable and transparent financial management.
3. Ensure that you have an active board, board rotation policy (so members change every few years according to clear guidelines) and regular meetings every three months with board members. During meetings, board members can review and approve your organization's activities and finances.
4. If you receive funding, especially more than €100,000 per year, undergo an annual external audit. Report results to the public, tax administration and NGO registration office. In your budget proposals, ask donors to fund audits of project expenses. Most donors will. If not, or if you lack funds for an audit, involve (non-staff) members, beneficiaries and partners in voluntarily auditing your finances. They can review your budget, receipts and activities, writing a letter with their conclusions. Make the letter available to the public.
5. Start a log, recording 1) the date; 2) voluntary time, in-kind contributions and donations provided to your organization; and 3) from whom it was received. Based on market prices, estimate the worth of these contributions. Then, you will be able to show with evidence the in-kind contributions you receive.
6. Attend KWN workshops in financial management. Usually such training costs €250-300 per person, but KWN offers them free of charge to our members.

If you still have questions or want advice, email us at info@womensnetwork.org or call for an appointment.

Share Why You're a Feminist!

Post your photos & reasons [here](#).



"I am a feminist because I believe that my appearance doesn't define my worth."

– Donjeta Berisha