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Kosovar Women's Voice

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

Join Us!

2013 Regional Young Feminists Forum 13-14 Nov., Hotel Sirius, Prishtina (*invitation only*)

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Jeta-Vita Marches to Raise Awareness about Breast Cancer

Prishtina's city square was covered in pink. Pink ribbons wrapped around trees and hundreds of citizens wore pink ribbons and scarves, supporting women who suffer from breast cancer. Together, they sent a strong message: they are not alone.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Kosovo Centre for Fighting Breast Cancer [Jeta-Vita](#) gathered citizens in front of the National Theatre on 12 October. Following an informative and cultural program, they marched together with the motto: "Early Detection Equals Survival".

This Jeta-Vita built on prior successes, seeking better cooperation with Kosovo institutions in diagnosing and treating breast cancer.

"We are not asking for mercy," said Nafije Latifi, Executive Director of Jeta-Vita. "We are not requesting something impossible. We are only requesting quality treatment and early detection of breast cancer. This disease doesn't affect only women, but the entire family and society."

President of Kosova Atifete Jahjaga [supported](#) the initiative. "I ask all mothers, women, sisters and daughters to have regular medical check-ups because early detection means victory over breast cancer," she said. "Through our symbolical walk we prove our kindness and solidarity as individuals, as a society and as institutions for all who suffer from breast cancer. Only together can we win this battle."

Other high level state representatives also expressed their solidarity with people who suffer from breast cancer, offering their support.

President of Kosova Atifete Jahjaga marches with NGO Jeta-Vita, promoting early detection of breast cancer.



Annual Retreat Energizes, Empowers KWN Members

More than 100 KWN members gathered in Durres, Albania from 3-6 October for a weekend of recuperation, debate, entertainment and learning. Despite the dense agenda, participants energetically continued discussions outside organized activities. Diverse members readily shared their knowledge and life experiences, motivating and inspiring each other.

“One strength of KWN is its diversity,” observed Lina Andeer from [Kvinna till Kvinna](#), the Swedish organization that supported the retreat. “You have young women and older women. You have women from cities and from rural areas, from different ethnic communities and women with disabilities.”

Indeed the diversity of participating KWN members was inspiring. Throughout the weekend, they supported each other: KWN had ongoing interpretation in Albanian, Serbian and English, as well as sign language. And when the party started, all members took to the floor, including blind women and persons with special physical needs, dancing in their wheelchairs.

During an all-day workshop on conflict resolution, the world-renowned inspirational speaker Shqipe Malushi supported members with strategies for transforming negative energy to positive energy. Fearing that she might open the wounds that many women still suffer from the war, she carefully conveyed how positive thinking can support women in dealing with their everyday realities. Positive thinking can enable activists to overcome various forms of conflict, from inter-personal to organizational to societal. Participants welcomed her unique approach and effective communication strategies.

“It was a very positive and inspiring workshop,” a participant said.

Meanwhile, in the room next door, KWN Program Manager Nicole Farnsworth facilitated a discussion on concrete steps in planning effective advocacy initiatives. Members discussed tools and “tricks” in planning related to the advocacy cycle. Then, they divided into groups where they planned advocacy initiatives to address real issues within their communities, such as physical access to public buildings for persons in wheelchairs, mothers with strollers and the elderly; health insurance for all; and sufficient pensions for retirees.

“The workshop about advocacy was very productive, especially working in groups where we had the chance to create concrete advocacy strategies,” an activist said. “Most of us plan to use these strategies when we go back to Kosovo.”

In addition to all-day workshops, the retreat involved events each evening. NGO [“Artpolis”](#) facilitated a discussion on “Women’s Empowerment.” Members viewed a series of photographs that triggered different emotions, which members then discussed together. KWN members also welcomed guests from the Albanian NGO [“Gruaja tek Gruaja”](#) (Women to Women) who amused members with a powerful and humorous monologue: “Sex. Thank you, Just to Try It.”

The next evening, activists from Albania, Delina Fico and Xheni Karaj, joined members in discussing the meanings, concepts and practices of feminism in Kosovo and Albania.

“There are many people who don’t have knowledge about feminism,” Delina Fico said. “They say that feminists hate men, but feminism has never seen men as enemies. Instead, it has seen them as part of the problem and the solution. This is obvious from the fact that throughout the world, and in Kosovo, there are men feminists who are part of the project of reviewing and reforming gender relations.” KWN members discussed the importance of feminism as part of activism towards furthering women’s rights.

KWN marked the end of this unforgettable weekend with a party filled with music, fun and dancing.

“The party was the best way to end this meeting. We really had fun,” an activist said.

The dancing continued on the bus, all the way back to Kosovo. The retreat had served its purpose: transforming negative energy into positive energy, motivating activists, fostering collaboration among members and providing activists with new strategies for their future work.



KWN members, staff gather at the end of the retreat held in Durres, Albania on 3-6 Oct.

Advocacy Plays a Key Role in Young Women's Empowerment

The Young Women's Empowerment Initiative (YWEI) supports young women in developing their skills and taking the lead on issues that concern them.

The initiative engages young women throughout Kosovo in becoming catalysts of change and mobilizing their peers to do the same.

In Gjakova, young women shared the challenges they face on 24 Sep.: struggles over limited resources, insufficient job opportunities and systematic discrimination simply because they are young women.

"As [young] women we have limited options for expressing ourselves without being judged," said a young woman from Gjakova.

Towards addressing these challenges, young women from Gjakova are developing innovative, effective ways to improve their lives.

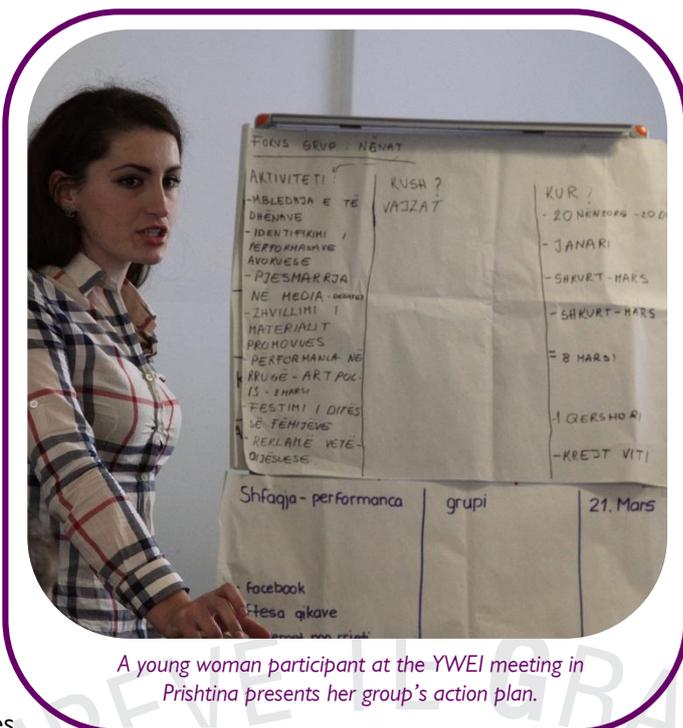
"We can empower each other through street actions and art," a young woman said. "We will bring together young and old women to express their talents."

YWEI also held meetings in Prishtina and Mitrovica in Oct. They created action plans for addressing the issues they face. Young women from Prishtina decided to prepare a theatre play, raising awareness about the importance of education for young women. They also plan to hold a peaceful march in Mother Theresa Square.

In Mitrovica, young women plan to hold meetings with young women in primary schools and high schools, raising awareness about the importance of education. By meeting directly with them, they believe that they will have great impact.

"Besides having a good time, we also have learned a lot of new things," a young woman activist said. "These kinds of meetings are very necessary for us."

This year, Young Women Empowerment Initiative has involved 146 young women throughout Kosovo. With KWN's support, they plan to implement their action plans in 2014. KWN seeks to empower more young women to become involved in organizing and advocacy for women's rights, strengthening the Kosovo women's movement. The initiative receives support from Kvinna till Kvinna.



A young woman participant at the YWEI meeting in Prishtina presents her group's action plan.

OPMDK Marks the Month of Equal Opportunities

The Organization of Persons with Muscular Dystrophy of Kosovo (OPMDK) launched an exhibition of photography created by persons with special needs on 22 Oct. in Prizren. The photographers included participants attend a professional photography course organized by OPMDK.

Through the exhibition, OPMDK marked the month of October as the Month of Equal Opportunities. OSCE and the Municipality of Prizren supported the exhibition. OPMDK also presented other work by persons with special needs.

Several officials from the municipality, government and international organizations who helped to organize this event spoke as well.

"By having them as guests, we intend to mark the importance of equal opportunities and rights for persons with special needs," an OPMDK organizer said.



Persons with special needs exhibit their photographs at the exhibition organized by OPMDK on 22 Oct. in Prizren.

NGO “Krusha e Vogël” Economically Empowers Rural Women

Members of NGO “Krusha e Vogël” expressed their interest in visiting organizations involved in agriculture in other municipalities.

They visited the “Centre of Seedlings (Qendra e Fidaneve)” in Koretin village in the Municipality of Kamënica. The visit took place on 23 Jul., with support from the Local Action Group (LAG).

“This visit aims to support the exchange of experiences and learning in the area of agriculture,” said a founder of NGO Krusha e Vogël.

Skender Dervishi and Ibrahim Bunjaki, the owners of the seedling company, welcomed the women. They explained how they run their business, which seedlings they cultivate and other details. They also organized a reception for the Krusha e Vogël delegation. Women in this way had the chance to see concrete work on how to organize better the planting of seedlings, as well as to see new kinds of seedlings that they hadn’t seen before.

After their visit, Krusha e Vogël members traveled home using a different route, passing through the beautiful mountains of Prevalle. For many women, it was the first time they had seen these mountains or even travelled alone with other women. The experience was not only educational, but empowering.

“The trainings have been very important for us,” a member said. “And this visit was something very good and new. We had a fantastic time; we got out of our daily routine and learnt a lot of new things.”

All women members of Krusha e Vogël NGO were involved in the “Women’s Economic Empowerment in Rural Areas” project supported by the KWN [Kosovo Women’s Fund](#) (financed by [Austrian Development Agency](#)). They came from various villages such as Hasi, Krusha e Vogël, Randobrave, Pirana and Serbica.



Women members of NGO “Krusha e Vogël” visit the “Centre of Seedlings (Qendra e Fidaneve)” in Koretin, Kamënica, 2013.

KRCT Marks the International Day of Mental Health

The Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims ([KRCT](#)) screened the documentary “The Call for Help”, a documentary prepared in close cooperation with persons with mental disabilities.

KRCT organized the screening to mark 10 Oct., the International Day of Mental Health. The documentary also relates to KRCT’s field of work: preventing torture and respecting human rights.

KRCT screened the documentary on 22 Oct. in Shtime Special Institute, demonstrating support for the residents of this mental health institution.

“The purpose of this activity is to promote and support the development of working skills of persons with mental disabilities, psychiatric disorders and mental retardation, as well as their desire and willingness to take part in free activities,” said Feride Rushiti, Executive Director of KRCT.

Distinctive representatives of local and international institutions, as well as civil society attended the event.

“It was a very good idea for this documentary to be screened at Shtime Special Institute, since in this way representatives of the government, international organizations and civil society had the chance to see the environment within the institution and the good conditions they offer for the residents of this institution,” said Igballe Rogova, Executive Director of KWN.

The documentary was made in cooperation with the Shtime Special Institute and supported by Civil Rights Defenders. KRCT is a KWN [member organization](#).

Share Why You’re a Feminist!

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



“I am a feminist because I want to fight against sexism and for freedom.”

- Fjolla Vukshinaj