



# Kosovo Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

Press Release

## **New Research, Funding Seek to Expand Childcare Availability in Kosovo**

On 1 Nov. from 11:00 to 14:00, at Hotel Emerald, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) and Promoting Private Sector Employment (PPSE) Project will launch a new report entitled: *Who Cares? Demand, Supply, and Options for Expanding Childcare Availability in Kosovo*. This research examines the level of demand for childcare in Kosovo, current supply by public and private service providers, and the still unmet demand for childcare in Kosovo. The paper contains specific recommendations for officials, donors and other actors.

In Kosovo, women's labour force participation rate is among the lowest in the world: 18.1%. Several studies have shown that care responsibilities at home contribute to women's low participation. Traditional gender roles and responsibilities in most cultures have assigned unpaid care work to women. Unpaid care work can impact negatively women's education levels, labour force participation, political involvement, and poverty levels later in life.

In this new paper, KWN argues that Kosovo needs to recognize publicly the value of care work performed by women; reduce the time women spend on care work by expanding the availability of care services; and encourage redistribution of care work to men, communities, and the state. Transforming currently unpaid care work into paid labour can contribute to improving children's educational performance, creating new jobs, increasing women's labour market participation, decreasing unemployment and potentially decreasing poverty among retired women in the future.

As detailed in this paper, KWN has estimated that investing in care facilities in accordance with the European Commission's (EC) Barcelona Objectives could create at least 9,989 new teaching jobs. At minimum, this could contribute to €50.6 million in new earnings and €2 million in taxes paid annually. These figures do not consider additional new jobs that would be created related to care centres or new earnings for currently unpaid parents who would be able to enter the workforce.

Kosovo's legal framework clearly sets the stage for expanding childcare availability. Further, in the context of European Union (EU) Accession, Kosovo must take steps to decrease women's unemployment, improve preschool attendance, decrease informality, and combat discrimination against women, all of which are intertwined with increasing childcare availability.

Several potential models for expanding childcare availability exist, described in this paper: state-funded public care; public-private partnerships (PPPs); community-based centres; and, in the future, social enterprises. KWN discusses different options for expanding care availability in different geographic areas.

The research is based on a random household survey of 491 unemployed women with children, a survey of 519 employed women and men, interviews with 61 employers, interviews with 51 public and private childcare centres, and interviews with public officials.

Following the presentation of findings, participants will have the opportunity to discuss first-hand with practitioners different models of public-private partnerships, private co-financing, and community-based childcare centres.

Finally, since PPSE and KWN strongly believe that evidence can inform action, these presentations will be followed by PPSE's call for applications for its Opportunity Fund, towards expanding childcare availability. PPSE will provide grants to private businesses, community-based initiatives, public administrative units, and CSOs that are interested in investing in sustainable solutions for expanding childcare in Kosovo.