



Kosova Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

KWN STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2014

Introduction

The Kosova Women's Network (KWN) **mission** is to support, protect and promote the rights and the interests of women and girls throughout Kosova, regardless of their political beliefs, religion, age, level of education, sexual orientation and ability. KWN fulfills its mission through the exchange of experience and information, partnership and networking, research, advocacy, and service.

Towards achieving its mission, KWN has compiled a Strategic Plan for 2011 through 2014. The purpose of this strategy is to guide KWN's work during this period. The strategy was compiled with input from KWN's membership, Board of Directors, and other key partners and stakeholders. It details KWN's strategy in five programmatic areas: I) Building the capacity of KWN; II) Women in politics and decision-making; III) Women's health; IV) Domestic violence and trafficking; and V) Women's economic empowerment. These were identified by KWN members as crucial areas where KWN needed to focus its attentions in the coming years.

In each of these areas, a section of the following report provides a brief overview of the present situation; some of the key challenges; KWN's long-term goal; the outcomes KWN strives to achieve within this timeframe; the expected results towards these outcomes; and the activities that will lead to the achievement of these results.

Building the Capacity of KWN Program

The Situation

Established in 2000, KWN was originally an informal network of women's groups and organizations from various regions in Kosova. Since its inception, KWN has developed into a network that advocates on behalf of Kosovar women, at the local, regional and international level. Representing the interests of women's organizations of all ethnic groups from throughout Kosova, KWN is a leader among civil society organizations in Kosova and the region. KWN cooperates regularly with other women's groups in the region both informally and formally through groups such as the Regional Women's Lobby for Justice, Peace, and Security in South East Europe and previously through the Women's Peace Coalition. In 2006, KWN became the first network of not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations in Kosova to adopt a code of conduct, setting an example of transparency and accountability. While considering these accomplishments, as donors have begun to withdraw from Kosova, decrease their support, or allocate support to other issues, women's organizations are facing challenges in securing funding to continue their work. Many lack skills in fundraising within this new, more competitive context, English writing, and public relations. Much work remains towards fully implementing the KWN Code of Conduct.

KWN's Strategy

Towards the long-term sustainability of KWN and its members, as well as the implementation of its Code of Conduct, the long-term **goal** of this program is: **Women's groups and organisations in Kosova, the region, and internationally cooperate and communicate regularly, as well as organize around issues of joint concern.** The expected outcome in 2011-2014, expected results, and activities contributing to these results are detailed in the following table.

Outcome	Expected Results	Activities
Ensure regular, continued communication and cooperation among KWN members and other stakeholders	KWN members informed of other members' initiatives, KWN activities, funding opportunities, and other useful information	Bimonthly membership meetings
		Distribute information via email
		Annual membership meeting
		Prepare and distribute KWN annual report
		Coordinate activities between members
	KWN, members and their work more visible to potential partners, women activists internationally, and potential supporters	Prepare and distribute monthly electronic newsletter
		Update website and Facebook
		Publish brochure with profiles of KWN members
		Distribute brochure to stakeholders
		KWN Book (2000-2010)
Improve the institutional capacity of KWN and its members towards greater advocacy capacity, and long-term sustainability of the network	More members more able to fundraise, plan effectively, and undertake effective advocacy initiatives	Launch brochure and book with 10 year anniversary cocktail involving members and stakeholders, donors, partners
		Visit members to identify their needs
		Make Membership Services Plan
		Implement membership services plan, including: fundraising, translation, training
		Support members advocacy efforts
	Increased implementation of the Code of Conduct among members	Support the functioning of Serb women's organizations in Kosova
		Annual monitoring of the implementation of the Code of Conduct
		Hands-on individual mentoring and group training to further Code implementation
	Expert Working and Advocacy Groups within KWN (Health, Domestic Violence &	Coordinate their regular meetings

	Trafficking, Politics) establish strategies for the future	
		Support them in identifying need (problem and stakeholder analyses)
		Support them in developing strategies
		Fundraising to support their strategies
	Involve more young women activists in KWN	Meet groups of girls and youth organizations to collect ideas and push for activities they can do
Increase cooperation among women in the region towards transitional justice, peace and security	Cooperation increased among women in the region and identification of common issues	Networking and cooperation with women's organizations in the region; Sharing experiences, supporting each other, and building coalitions
	Kosovar women's participation ensured in supporting the establishment of the Balkan Women's Court	Two regional meetings towards the establishment of the Balkan Women's Court
		Regular communication and meetings with stakeholders to establish

Stakeholders, Partners and Supporters

Towards achieving these strategic aims, KWN foresees continued cooperation with its member organizations, Kvinna till Kvinna, the Mott Foundation, and UNIFEM. KWN members will be the primary beneficiaries of this program. Other women's groups in the region and citizens in general will be secondary beneficiaries.

Women in Politics and Decision-making Program

The Situation

With regard to **politics**, until 2008, internationals from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovar government were responsible for governing Kosovo together. This made it difficult for KWN to hold either accountable to meeting women's needs. Further, despite the existence of UNSCR 1325 of Women, Peace and Security, neither international nor Kosovar institutions ensured women's participation in the negotiations over Kosovo's political status. KWN cooperated with women leaders and NGOs in the region to advocate for women's involvement, unfortunately to no avail.

After the declaration of independence of Kosovo on 17 February 2008, circumstances have changed and KWN has slowly gained more access to institutions through its advocacy initiatives. This is evidenced by institutions regularly including KWN in the drafting of key legislation affecting women (e.g., the Labour Law, the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings; the new Law on Protection against Domestic Violence; and the National Action Plan and Strategy on Protection against Domestic Violence). KWN's advocacy efforts, which have involved NGOs and citizens at both the municipal and national levels, have also contributed to some progress regarding institutional response to citizens' demands, including access to water, canalization, education (e.g., the building of new schools in rural areas), and healthcare.

The recent appointments of Edita Tahiri as the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo and chief negotiator for the talks with Serbia; Mimoza Kusari-Lila as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade; and the election of Atifete Jahjaga as the President of Kosovo are further positive developments. All three leading women have long histories of cooperation with KWN.¹ While their appointments and elections are clearly due to broader political processes and these women's own performance/achievements, KWN's decade of ongoing advocacy and awareness-raising efforts may have contributed to the appointment/election of women to such positions.

Despite these accomplishments, much work remains to further women's participation in politics and decision-making processes, particularly hitherto vulnerable and marginalized women outside Prishtina. Indeed, this has been identified by KWN members as one of KWN's priorities for the coming years (see the KWN strategic plan).

Currently, women hold 32% of the seats in the Kosovo Assembly (38 of 120 seats).² Of the 13 Assembly of Kosovo committees, women chair only two (Budget and Finances and Human Rights and Gender Equality). In the prior government, women led only two ministries: public administration and energy and mining. Two women were appointed as deputy ministers. Now, two of the five Deputy Prime Ministers and two of the 17 ministers are women. Within ministries, women have tended to hold at least 30 percent of the positions, though they have been sorely under-represented in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (previously only 12%). Considering the numerous women involved in the agriculture sector, particularly women heads of households in rural areas, this is a crucial issue in need of address.

¹ Edita Tahiri and Igballe Rogova, KWN Executive Director, are both members of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe. Through this and other efforts they have cooperated on joint advocacy for women's participation in the negotiations and for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Mimoza Kusari-Lila has also had positive cooperation with the KWN Executive Director, dating back to the 90s where they both were involved in *Femisfera*. KWN has cooperated with Atifete Jahjaga in her capacities within the police; she dually served as a KWN Board member from December 2010 until her presidential election.

² The quota calling for at least 30 percent of both genders to be on each party's candidate list has contributed to this (Law on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo, No. 03/L-07, Art. 27). At: http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L073_en.pdf.

Overall, Kosovo politics remain largely controlled by political party leaders, and all parties are led primarily by men. The lack of democratization within parties and women's insufficient participation there translates into minimal impact on decisions made in the Assembly. Women are also disadvantaged in terms of political parties' resources. Recent proposals to do away with the quota mean that enhancing women's public image as political leaders is all the more important towards ensuring they have seats in the Assembly in the future.

A women's caucus was established, in which all women deputies were to participate. The group was renamed the Women's Informal Group (WIG) in February 2008. It has a strategic plan, as well as a seven-member board with a representative from each of seven political parties. Besides meetings, they began monitoring the Law on Gender Equality, but the results of this effort are unclear. With support from KWN, they have advocated jointly on a few issues, such as maternity leave within the Labour Law and for the appointment of women ambassadors by the Assembly. However, by and large WIG has faced numerous issues, the greatest of which has been politicization. Women from the ruling party, PDK, in particular have attempted to control decisions made within WIG.

The Agency for Gender Equality, gender focal points, and municipal gender officers have lacked sufficient financial and human resources. The people appointed to these positions, often by male political party leaders, have tended to lack motivation in pushing gender issues at the municipal level and within the ministries. Insufficient political will at the municipal level has often meant insufficient budget allocations for fulfilling action plans. Further, there has been minimal political will to include them in decision-making processes, or for them to ensure women's voices were heard.³

Decentralization has meant the transfer of responsibilities from the national to the municipal level. With decentralization municipalities gradually are gaining greater authority over the services provided to citizens. Further work is needed to build the capacities of people at the municipal level. Decentralization may impact the quality of services provided through the Centers for Social Work (CSWs), responsible for assisting with domestic violence and child custody. Health and education will both be municipal responsibilities. Considering that women have typically had little voice in municipal decision-making, empowering their voice within the municipality is crucial for ensuring that women have equal opportunities and rights.

The quota is also applicable within the municipal assemblies. Only a couple municipal assemblies are led by women. At present, the newly elected women in municipalities have minimal support or experience. While there was an attempt to establish women's Caucuses at the municipal level by OSCE two years ago, it has not been successful or sustained. This may be due in part to a lack of ownership on behalf of local women, particularly after funding ran out.

Political parties still hold great power at the municipal level as well. As few women hold leadership positions in parties and women politicians seldom consult with their constituencies, the extent to which women citizens or politicians have been able to participate in democratic decision-making has been minimal. More work is needed both to empower women's participation and to encourage political parties to make space for women's involvement in decision-making processes.

In order to address these issues, KWN has undertaken a number of prior efforts, including campaigns towards electing more women into decision-making positions; collecting women's input for political parties' programs; and involving voters in advocating for the authorities to

³ See KWN, *Monitoring the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security in Kosova*.

address their priorities at the municipal and national levels. While these prior campaigns contributed to some successes (see below), they also facilitated institutional learning. Based on these experiences, its research,⁴ and conversations with stakeholders at the municipal and national levels (e.g., women and men assembly members, NGOs and citizens), KWN identified the need to establish more sustainable mechanisms through which women could become active participants in decision-making processes. This was included as a priority in the KWN Strategic Plan for 2011-2014.

Institutional Mechanisms

Numerous institutional and legal mechanisms exist towards increasing women's participation in politics and decision-making:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Kosova: Article 7.2 states that "the republic of Kosova ensures gender equality as a basic value for democratic development of the society, equal possibilities for the participation of women and men in political, economic, social, cultural, and other areas of social life."
- The Law on Gender Equality (2004) upholds the policy expressed in the Constitution and prohibits all direct and indirect forms of gender discrimination. In 2005, the law established the Office for Gender Equality as a specific government institution. Municipal Gender Officers have been appointed in municipalities and Gender Focal Points within ministries.
- The electoral law requires a 30 percent quota for women's participation in national and municipal assemblies.
- Towards implementing UNSCR 1325, KFOR and EULEX are required to train all personnel on issues related to gender, ensuring women's participation in decision-making positions, and ensuring that women's rights are respected and upheld in all of its work. The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2004) promotes the prevention of gender discrimination in political, military, economic, environmental, and human fields of governance. UNMIK Office of Gender Affairs (OGA), established in 2000, seeks to integrate gender issues within UNMIK pillars and related offices and to monitor gender equality provisions.

Key Challenges

Although women in Kosova have achieved some rights and political standing in the last 10 years, there are still three main obstacles preventing further progress: cultural norms on female and male societal roles, low levels of education, and lack of economic security (including property ownership).

One of the obstacles keeping women from participating equally and effectively in politics and decision-making is low level of education. Girls have a higher drop-out rate than boys after the first nine years of schooling.⁵ This rate increases with girls who live in rural areas and girls of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) communities. Reasons attributed to the high dropout rate are: insufficient financial resources, a need to work, long distance to school, and insufficient number of schools.⁶ Consequently, women are three times more likely to be illiterate than men and more likely to be unemployed. In 2007, the unemployment for women was 55.2% compared to 38.5% for men.⁷ Looking at more recent statistics from the World Bank's World Development Index (WDI), only 26.1% of the overall labor force in Kosova were women in 2008.⁸ Women are employed primarily in agriculture, wholesale/retail

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ KWN, *Monitoring Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kosova (2nd Ed.)*, Prishtina: 2009, p. 54.

⁶ KWN, *Security Begins at Home*, p. 71.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.55.

⁸ World Bank, *World Development Index*.

trade, education, health, and social work. Without economic security and financial independence, decision-making power is limited.

More specifically, additional problems contributing to **women's unequal participation in political decision-making in Kosova** include:

- Women are virtually absent from decision-making positions within political parties, and political parties continue to have great control over all decisions that are made at the municipal and national levels. A **cause** is the unwillingness of many political party leaders to share power. As a **result**, women lack financial resources within their parties, as well as political support from party leadership. Women seldom dare to challenge the powerful party leaders, particularly within the leading political parties (PDK, LDK, AAK). At the same time, firm party alliances mean that women have faced difficulties in advocating for issues impacting women.
- Women politicians rarely meet with or collect feedback from their constituencies. A potential **cause** is that the women assembly members are often appointed by political leaders and they do not consider it their priority; rather many believe that only political party leaders have the right to meet with voters. Women assembly members also lack knowledge regarding what mechanisms could be used to gather input from constituencies. As a **result**, women and men voters tend to feel that politicians do not care about them or represent their interests.⁹ This contributes to citizen apathy and may impact citizens' willingness to vote for women (or men). There is a need to improve and increase interactions between women politicians and voters/constituencies.
- Women politicians rarely have succeeded in pushing issues within the national or municipal assemblies, particularly issues that women would consider priorities. A crucial **causal factor** is the aforementioned lack of democratization within political parties. As a **result** of the current situation within political parties, women often lack courage and cannot influence the decisions made within parties. A further result is that women's priorities more generally tend not to be voiced within decision-making processes.
- No gender audit of the budget of Kosova has ever occurred. Ensuring finances are allocated to the issues that women consider most important is a crucial part of participating in the decision-making process. Why it has never been done is unclear, but a **result** is that women lack evidence and knowledge about how their taxes are being spent and whether it is on issues that positively impact their lives.
- To date women have been largely excluded from negotiations concerning Kosova's political status, future, and other major peace and security issues. Kosova does not have a strategy for implementing UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, though its application is critical for Kosova. A **causal factor**, again, is the patriarchal culture that does not see women as political decision-makers, let alone as leaders in discussing security issues or issues of national importance. As a **consequence**, women have been denied a seat at the table in crucial negotiations regarding Kosova's political status. Thus, the special needs of women following the war have been largely ignored, particularly of those who suffered rape, the loss of loved ones, and significant financial losses. The issue of missing persons that has dire consequences for women also was not adequately addressed.
- Women do not comprise 40% of appointed decision-making positions in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality. Further women still depend largely on the quota in securing 30% of the seats in the Parliament and municipal assemblies. As the debates over amending the new Electoral Law illustrated, there is growing pressure from some political parties and the EU to do away with the quota. There is a need to encourage voting for women candidates, as well as appointing more women to decision-making positions. The **causes** of this problem are social norms in which women are seen as

⁹ KWN and its members' conversations with rural women.

housewives and mothers rather than political leaders.¹⁰ **Consequences** include that women do not participate equally in decision-making processes and the Law on Gender Equality has not been implemented. As a result of the male-dominated government, there are few women in decision making positions at the municipal and national levels. Therefore, women’s interests are seldom considered in the decisions being made.

KWN’s Strategy

Considering these challenges, the long-term **goal** is: **Women participate actively in politics and decision-making at the municipal and national levels.** The expected outcome in 2011-2014, expected results, and activities contributing to these results are detailed in the following table.

Outcome	Expected Results	Activities
Women’s participation in politics and decision-making in municipal and national levels increased and improved.	Gender Equality Advocacy Groups established and functioning in 5 pilot municipalities and at the national level.	Meetings with women politicians and political parties at the municipal level
		Meetings every two months with the Gender Equality Advocacy Groups
		Support for the Gender Equality Advocacy Groups to advocate for at least 1 priority for women at the municipal level.
	Women in politics, women's NGOs, and women voters communicate and cooperate more regularly around issues women consider priorities.	Meetings between women in politics, NGOs, and women voters at municipal and national level
	Public policies changed to reflect women voters’ priorities	Research on women’s priorities to inform public policy proposals to municipal/national gov.
		Meetings between women politicians and women voters to discuss women’s priorities and plan advocacy strategies
		Joint advocacy involving women politicians, women's NGOs, and women voters
	Kosova Budget reflects more priorities advocated by women.	Gender Audit of Kosova Budget
		Advocacy based on gender audit of budget
	Women participate more in decision-making processes related to peace and security, as per UNSCR 1325	Advocacy for NAP on UNSCR 1325
Monitoring NAP on UNSCR 1325		
Advocate for UNSCR 1325 implementation by international institutions in Kosova		
More women elected and	Meetings between with women	

¹⁰ For example, during a recent meeting with political leaders in one municipality, they told KWN, “yes, we need to work with the future mothers of our children.” KWN had to correct them, noting that women play additional roles besides that of mother sand not all women are mothers.

	appointed at municipal and national levels.	voters and women candidates for municipal elections
		Local media coverage of women candidates and politicians
		Meetings with political party leaders to advocate for more women to be appointed to decision-making positions

Stakeholders, Partners and Supporters

The target group and primary beneficiaries will be women politicians at the municipal and national levels. Women voters in these municipalities will also be primary beneficiaries, as KWN will support politicians in meeting with women voters and advocating for women voters’ priorities to be addressed. Secondary beneficiaries will include political parties who may experience party reform towards greater democratization within their parties, particularly at the municipal level; and men in politics who will learn more about the priorities of women and how these impact the society as a whole.

KWN’s member organizations will continue to be key partners towards this long-term goal. This will decrease overlap in activities and strengthen women’s voice; many organizations are often stronger than one advocating alone. Similarly KWN will also continue to communicate with other organizations that have similar aims. Towards achieving its strategic aims, continued cooperation with women politicians at the national level, namely the informal women’s group, and at the municipal level will be crucial. KWN will also seek to cooperate with other key stakeholders like the UNIFEM, the National Democratic Institute, and the National Endowment for Democracy. Further support will be sought from UNDEF.

Women's Right to Healthcare Program

The Situation

Even though women make up half of Kosova's population, access to quality reproductive and gynecological healthcare is very limited. The public health system, financed by the Kosova Consolidated Budget, accounts for only 9.2% of government expenditures.¹¹ The annual per capita government expenditure in health is only 35 Euros, the lowest in Europe.¹² Women living in rural areas have also cited travel costs as a barrier to receiving gynecological and antenatal treatment. There is no budget for research and development.

The **under-funded healthcare sector** has a profound negative impact on women's health, resulting in a lack of general awareness regarding gynecological health, prenatal care, and breast cancer prevention. For example, 65% of women interviewed by UNICEF said they do not believe that any special food diet is necessary during pregnancy and 12.9% of respondents confirmed that they smoke during pregnancy.¹³ This can have serious repercussions both for women and children as Raka reported in 2009:

Kosovo has one of the highest perinatal mortality (23 per 1,000 live births) and maternal deaths (7 per 100,000 live births) in Europe. It is of great concern that 40% of hospital mortality is among infants [...] Life expectancy at birth is the lowest in the region, with 69 years of expected life. The majority of deaths (53%) among population are from noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers), followed by neonatal deaths (28%) and deaths from communicable diseases (12%).¹⁴

Between 2000 and 2007, 24 maternal deaths were reported by emergency obstetrics care facilities.¹⁵ Deaths were attributed to pregnancy-induced hypertension, hemorrhage, obstructed labor, abortion-related complications, and other indirect causes.¹⁶ These cases and statistics only confirm the urgent need for improving women's health in Kosova.

In addition to an under-funded health sector, traditional socio-cultural norms impact women's health in Kosova. Although abortion (and sometimes even gender selection)¹⁷ is acceptable among married women, premarital sex and abortion among unmarried women are taboo topics. This has resulted in unsafe abortions and child abandonment by young mothers. Although values and opinions regarding premarital sex are undergoing a transformation, especially in large cities such as Prishtina, more attention is needed to sexual education and family planning.

The Institutional Framework

There are several institutional mechanisms in place to help improve and strengthen Kosova's health sector overall, thereby improving women's health:

- The Committee for Health, Work, and Social Welfare in the Assembly of Kosova is the parliamentary committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of health related legislation and policies by the Government of Kosova.

¹¹ Lul Raka, *National Background Report on Health Research for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)*, Prishtina: 2009, p. 10.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 10

¹³ UNICEF, *Antenatal Care in Kosovo: Quality and Access*, Prishtina: 2009, p. 7.

¹⁴ Raka, p. 11.

¹⁵ Tengiz Asatiani, *Assessment of Emergency Obstetric Care in Kosovo*, Prishtina: 2008, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁷ Discussions among KWN member organizations assisting women.

- The Millennium Development Goals in health, agreed to by the Kosova government for 2005-2015 include: 1) Healthy start in life; 2) Improving the health of young people; 3) Improving mental health; 4) Developing human resources for health; 5) Reducing communicable and non-communicable diseases; 6) Institutional reforms; 7) Improvement of management in healthcare.
- The Reproductive Health Strategy and the Reproductive Health Law

Key Challenges

- Some women, particularly those in rural areas, hesitate to receive annual obstetric gynecological exams because most gynecologists are male. Culturally, many women and men consider shameful allowing a man who is not her husband see a woman naked.
- The embarrassment surrounding gynecological exams holds true in receiving antenatal care.
- Because premarital sex is taboo, especially with girls, parents do not talk to their children about practicing safe sex. There is an absence of sexual education in schools for the same reason. Further, sometimes youth do not heed warnings from educators. Peer-to-peer sexual education and discussion groups have proven to be most successful.¹⁸
- There is a lack of breast and ovarian cancer awareness and education.
- The health sector is immensely under-financed, resulting in lack of medical equipment, scarcity of medical specialists, poor quality healthcare providers, and poor infrastructure of healthcare facilities (such as no elevators or heating).
- Limited access to family planning assistance and free/low-cost contraceptives.
- Women's health and access to healthcare is also impacted by domestic violence.¹⁹

KWN's Strategy

Considering these challenges, the long-term **goal** is: **Women have access to and are accessing affordable, quality healthcare.** Kosovar women's organizations can and have helped this process by facilitating discussions surrounding the challenges discussed in the previous section. KWN and its members are committed to continuing to be proactively involved in researching issues preventing women from realizing their right to access healthcare; promoting public awareness about these issues; and advocating for an improved institutional response, namely an increased budget. The expected outcome in 2011-2014, expected results, and activities contributing to these results are detailed in the following table.

Outcome	Expected Results	Activities
Improve women's access to quality healthcare	Research completed on the situation for women in public health institutions	Realize research in partnership with organizations carrying out research
	More women and girls are aware of their right and the importance of accessing healthcare; More women aware of how to detect signs of cancer	Health education meetings with women
		Media campaign
	The quality of health services improved	Support the KWN health working group to advocate for improving the quality of health services (e.g., budget)

¹⁸ According to Caritas Luxembourg in Montenegro.

¹⁹ KWN, *Exploratory Research on the Extent of Gender-Based Violence in Kosova and Its Impact on Women's Reproductive Health*, Prishtina: Kosova, 2008.

Stakeholders, Partners and Supporters

The target group and primary beneficiaries will be Kosovar women, particularly those with limited access to quality healthcare services. Secondary beneficiaries will include citizens in general as society as a whole can benefit from improvements to the healthcare system in Kosova.

Again, KWN's member organizations will be key partners in carrying out these efforts. Considering UNFPA's mandate as the "lead agency in reproductive health in Kosova," it may also support KWN's efforts. Other potential supporters and stakeholders is the World Health Organization, American International Health Alliance (AIHA), Kosova's public health institutions, healthcare workers, and citizens who may support KWN's advocacy efforts in this area.

Program against Domestic Violence and Trafficking

The Situation

In KWN's Kosova-wide survey in 2008, approximately 43% of respondents had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives.²⁰ Women were more likely to have suffered domestic violence: more than 46% of all women suffered domestic violence compared to 39.6% of all men. Domestic violence was attributed to the poor economic situation, high unemployment, alcohol, trauma from war, and a lack of education.

The Institutional Framework

Multiple agencies, organizations, and legislation exist towards promoting the reporting of domestic violence cases, preventing domestic violence, and assisting victims of domestic violence:

- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with Recommendation 19 on Violence Against Women establishes principles of state responsibility to undertake adequate measures to combat domestic violence.
- The UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power sets basis of intervention and standards for authorities in responding to domestic violence cases. These measures provide the following to victims: judicial representation; information on the judicial process; judicial redress from the acts suffered; psychological and medical support; and shelter and assistance.
- The Criminal Code of Kosova (CCK) and Criminal Procedure Code of Kosova (CPCCK) both define a number of criminal offences committed in a domestic relationship that may be considered domestic violence.
- The Kosova Police have a special unit against domestic violence. Domestic Violence Police Units (DVU) requires each station to have two trained domestic violence officers (usually a woman and a man) on-call 24/7.
- A new Law against Domestic Violence and National Action Plan against Domestic Violence have been approved in Kosova.

Key Challenges

Most of the challenges in preventing domestic violence lie in societal norms and the implementation of the relevant legislation:

- Marriages usually end in divorce if violence is reported, especially if the reporting was done by the wife. Women often lack sufficient financial resources for supporting themselves following divorce.²¹
- Women's poor financial situation is a common reason for granting child custody to the male perpetrator; the perpetrator's economic status takes precedence over consideration for the physical and psychological well-being of the child(ren). Awarding child custody to perpetrators may place children at grave risk of violence and dissuade women from reporting domestic violence.
- Delays are common within the court system in handing down verdicts and issuance of protection orders within the legally required timeframe.
- Reconciliation is preferred by courts and lawyers, but the return of victims to their prior dwellings have often proven ineffective.

²⁰ KWN, *Security Begins at Home*, Prishtina: 2008, p. 2.

²¹ For more information about all of these issues, see KWN, *More Than "Words on Paper"? The Response of Justice Providers to Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, Prishtina, 2009.

- Patriarchal perceptions embedded in society run the risk of impacting judicial opinions and the course of proceedings.
- There is a lack of communication between courts and police. Courts rarely intervene when protection orders are violated and/or alimony is not paid. There are often delays, a lack of urgency, and insufficient follow up.
- Some prosecutors lack knowledge regarding domestic violence regulations.
- Protection orders are usually considered a substitute for initiation of criminal proceedings.

KWN's Strategy

Considering these challenges, the long-term **goal** is: **Women live a life free from trafficking and domestic violence.** The expected outcome in 2011-2014, expected results, and activities contributing to these results are detailed in the following table.

Outcome	Expected Results	Activities
Improve the implementation of the trafficking and domestic violence legislation.	Increased implementation of the Law and Strategy for trafficking and domestic violence	Monitoring implementation
		Awareness-raising regarding the extent to which it has been implemented
		Advocacy to further implement it
Increase public awareness about the legislation and how to seek assistance	More citizens informed about the legislation, including men	Awareness campaign

Stakeholders, Partners and Supporters

The primary beneficiaries will be women and girls experiencing or at risk of domestic violence or trafficking. Institutions responsible for implementing the existing legislation related to trafficking and domestic violence will be targeted, including: the Kosova Police, Centers for Social Work, judicial system, Victims' Advocacy and Assistance Division, the Agency for Gender Equality, Legal Aid Bureaus, the Kosova Judicial Council, and EULEX. Additionally, citizens in general will be targeted towards increasing public awareness about the existing legislation and ways to seek assistance.

One trafficking shelter and six domestic violence shelters are operated by KWN members in Prishtina, Mitrovica, Gjakova, Peja, Prizren, and Gjilan. Further, women's organizations, including KWN members, create public campaigns raising awareness and encouraging reporting of domestic violence. KWN will continue to involve actively these members in implementing its strategy. KWN will also continue its cooperation with the aforementioned institutions. Supporters of these efforts may include the UNDP Women's Safety and Security Initiative and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Women's Economic Empowerment Program

The Situation

The estimated unemployment rate among women in Kosova is 56.9 percent, compared to 40.7 percent among men.²² Only 35 percent of women actively participate in the job market.²³ Women's under-representation in the formal job market is due in part to women's unequal access to education.

Roughly 65 percent of women (compared to approximately 41 percent of men) have not completed a secondary education. This can be attributed in part to social norms whereby girls discontinue their schooling before boys; on average, women possess only 8.45 years compared to 10.35 years for men.²⁴ Women's unequal access to education is largely due to insufficient funding within the family to send girls to school.²⁵ The failure of the Government of Kosovo, specifically the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to ensure free of charge books and transportation for all youth through secondary education has contributed to girls' unequal access to education. Particularly in remote and some minority areas (e.g., Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani), social norms such as early marriage for women may also prevent women from attending higher education. Unequal access to education has consequences for women's access to employment, as they do not possess the same levels of education (and sometimes training) as men, and therefore lack the same employment and economic opportunities afforded to men.

Where women are employed, it tends to be in lesser paid positions (e.g., teachers, nurses, and service industries) making it much more difficult to gain and maintain economic independence. Rural women contribute significantly to their family budget through unpaid labor (e.g., care for animals, work in the fields, unpaid labor in family-owned shops). However, men traditionally market products and manage family finances. Therefore, few women reap the rewards of their hard work, and have little say in the financial decisions made within the family.

Additionally, women tend to lack access to assets, including property; according to cultural norms such assets are managed by men within their families. In Kosovo, women possess only eight percent of immovable property and six percent of enterprises.²⁶ Despite the current laws in Kosovo that guarantee women's rights to inherit property,²⁷ many families continue applying traditions where property is given only to men. Experience suggests that women also forfeit their right to inherit family wealth, based on existing cultural norms and in order to maintain "good" relations within the family. Further, when women challenge their families and seek their legal right to property, judges tend not to respect the law or procedures. When family property is divided among siblings, judges may not ensure that all living inheritors are present, though they should according to law. Even when judges do respect the law, "many final decisions issued by the courts are not enforced or executed," according to research by the Kosovar Gender Studies Center.²⁸ Poor implementation of the existing law and "insufficient awareness amongst judges about how to treat cases relating to women's rights and property inheritance" are both crucial factors preventing women from realizing their property rights.²⁹ Without access to property, women do not possess their own

²² SOK, *Results of the Labour Force Survey 2009*, Prishtina: July 2010, p. 14.

²³ Kosovar Gender Studies Center, "Women's Property Inheritance Rights in Kosovo," 2011, p. 17.

²⁴ UNDP, *Human Development Report for Kosovo: The Rise of the Citizen: Challenges and Choices*, 2004, p. 119.

²⁵ KWN, *Security Begins at Home*, 2008 and discussions with women, particularly in rural areas.

²⁶ Kosovar Gender Studies Center, "Women's Property Inheritance Rights in Kosovo" 2011, p. 17.

²⁷ Assembly of Kosovo, Law No. 2004/26, "Law on Inheritance in Kosovo."

²⁸ Kosovar Gender Studies Center, "Women's Property Inheritance Rights in Kosovo" 2011, p. 24.

²⁹ Kosovar Gender Studies Center, "Women's Property Inheritance Rights in Kosovo" 2011, p. 45.

capital for investments or loans. This contributes to poverty among women, as well as dependency within the family.

Women heads of households face particularly difficult conditions as they often lack access to both assets for developing their businesses and markets for selling their products (a task previously undertaken by their husbands). Without assets, they possess no guarantee for loans and thus lack access to capital for developing their businesses. Even if women access capital to develop their businesses, limited markets exist for sustaining their businesses. Perhaps unsurprisingly, women heads of households are among the most impoverished in Kosovo.

Insufficient access to employment, property and family finances places women in a precarious position. Women may lack decision-making power within their families. Those experiencing domestic violence lack opportunities for leaving violent situations and fear losing custody over their children, as judges may not consider them financially fit to care for children.³⁰ Without education and job skills, women who have suffered domestic violence and/or been trafficked also struggle to secure employment and re-integrate into society. Supporting women’s access to education, job skills, employment and capital are all crucial for empowering women economically.

KWN’s Strategy

The long-term **goal** of this program is: **Women have an equal economic position to men at home and in society.** The expected outcome in 2011-2014, expected results, and activities are presented below.

Outcome	Expected Results	Activities	
Improve the economic position of women in Kosovo	Working Group within KWN strengthened and establishes future strategy	Coordinate regular Working Group meetings	
		Support the Working Group to identify needs (problem/stakeholder analyses)	
		Support the Working Group in developing a strategy	
		Fundraise to support the strategy	
	More women able to develop and manage successful businesses	More women able to develop and manage successful businesses	Assess women’s needs towards developing their businesses
			Ensure women’s access to capacity development opportunities tailored to their needs for further developing their businesses and job skills
			Support women’s access to capital via discussions with banks, donors, and potential investors
			Raise women’s awareness of opportunities to access capital
			Assist women in identifying new markets for their products and building their marketing skills
			Advocate for public policies that will benefit women (e.g., trade)
More girls attend higher levels of education	More girls attend higher levels of education	Meet with women, men and girls, particularly in rural areas, to	

³⁰ KWN, *Security Begins at Home and More than “Words on Paper”?*, 2009.

		encourage continuation of education
		Advocate for the Government of Kosovo to provide free of charge books and transportation for all students through secondary school
More women access their right to inheritance and property	More citizens aware of women's right to inheritance and property	Campaign to raise awareness of families (especially fathers and brothers) regarding the importance of women and men having equal shares of property and inheritance
	More women seek to secure their right to inheritance and property	Raise women's awareness regarding their legal inheritance and property rights
		Monitor judicial sessions and report any violations of women's right to property and inheritance

Stakeholders, Partners and Supporters

Towards achieving these strategic aims, KWN foresees continued cooperation with its member organizations, particularly those cooperating with women towards their economic empowerment. KWN and its members will also cooperate with local businesses towards identifying employment opportunities for women and with its international partners towards helping women find markets abroad for their products. KWN will also seek to empower women-led businesses. Women will be the primary beneficiaries of this program, particularly hitherto ignored women and those involved in micro-businesses. Their families will be secondary beneficiaries as they will be in a better economic position.