



May 2014

Kosovar Women's Voice

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

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Ministry of Finance References Gender in Budget Circulars

The Ministry of Finance published recently the Municipality Budget Circular 2015/1 and Budget Circular 2014/1 – preliminary preparations and initial ceilings of the Budget 2015 from Central Budget Organizations. Meetings between the Ministry of Finance, Kosova Women's Network (KWN) and *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH paid off; for the first time, the Ministry decided to include reference to gender responsive budgeting within the Budget Circulars.

The Municipality Budget Circular 2015/1 expresses the need to work on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) based on international practices. GRB helps make visible the effects of public expenditures on the equality of women and men, boys and girls. This can contribute to the effectiveness and transparency of public finance management. The Circular expresses intent to extend GRB into other municipalities in the Republic of Kosovo based on a pilot project currently underway in the Municipality of Kamenica. The Circular encourages municipalities to begin to reflect gender sensitivity in their budgets.

The Budget Circular 2014/1 reflects preliminary preparations and initial ceilings of the 2015 Budget for Central Budget Organizations, including more detail on GRB. Circular 2014/1 encourages increased effectiveness and transparency of public spending by providing more specific performance indicators. The circular suggests disaggregating indicators and measuring by gender wherever meaningful and possible, explaining that such indicators are IIF and EC requirements for measuring overall performance of the budget process.

KWN, New School Launch Kosova Oral History Website

The Kosova Oral History Initiative (OHI) is a collective of activists, scholars and students inclusive of different generations, nationalities and competences. Born from collaboration between KWN and The New School for Public Engagement (NY), their shared aim is to record life stories. The OHI's dream is to rescue from oblivion the voices of people leaders and those less known – whom Kosova's history has condemned to amnesia. These stories go beyond narratives of victimization or war stories, recovering the whole life experiences of individuals. Using a feminist oral history methodology, the OHI has filmed women and men, sharing their life stories. These have been transcribed and translated for use by scholars and activists outside Kosova (in Albanian, English and Serbian). The website was launched on 30 May at the Femmes Fatales Festival.

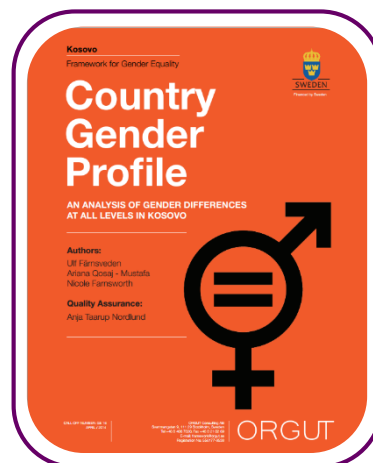


Report Provides Fresh Data on Gender Equality

A comprehensive profile of the state of gender differences in Kosovo at all levels was published in May. Commissioned by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the report includes unprecedented and essential research and will serve as a guide for stakeholders, including the EU, in future programs.

The research involves insight from 197 diverse representatives of government institutions at municipal and national levels, civil society organizations, international actors, academia, media and the private sector. The report investigates the state of gender with regard to the national framework, key actors, rule of law, justice, human rights, politics, the socio-economic situation, gender-based violence and the private sector. It provides the most up-to-date statistics available in each of these areas and thus serves as a useful resource.

Kosovo has made progress in many areas, including instituting a participation quota at national and municipal levels, working to transform gender roles and appointing a National Coordinator against Domestic Violence. However, the report provides evidence of the challenges that abound in the fight for gender equality in Kosovo. This includes discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT persons), persons with disabilities, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women. The [report](#) is available online in three languages.



Young Women Mobilize Solidarity Beyond Borders

Saddened by the flooding affecting people's lives throughout the region, Blerta Avdili and Venera Çoçaj initiated an ad-hoc apolitical coalition called [Solidarity Beyond Borders](#). With support from KWN, they mobilized various actors in a public display of support in the center of Prishtina and are collecting assistance to help people affected by this natural disaster in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

"I read a quote by Howard Zinn that 'the cry of the poor is not always just, but if you do not listen to it you will never know what justice is,'" Blerta said. "The ad hoc coalition Solidarity beyond Borders is showing that civil society and many individuals from Kosovo do listen to these cries and are willing to stand together in the name of humanity."

With support from artists, the organizers will auction art and give the money raised to people affected by the disaster. They also plan to open a bank account where people can donate money. NGO [Artopolis](#) has put out a box during the [Femmes Fatales](#) festival where people can make donations.



Prishtina Hosts First March in Support of LGBT Rights

Citizens marched from Mother Teresa square to the Newborn monument to mark the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO-T) on 17 May. The motto was "Homosexuality is not a disease. Hate is." The Center for Social Emancipation and the Center for Equality and Liberty organized the march, which also involved the Minister for European Integration, Vlora Citaku, Deputy Minister Petrit Selimi, British Ambassador Ian Cliff, U.S. Ambassador Tracy Jacobson, as well as other NGOs and individuals.



Participants release balloons in front of Prishtina's Newborn statue on May 17.

NATO, KWN Collaborate in Implementing UNSCR 1325

NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security Mari Skåre and her team visited KWN on 28 May. We discussed political developments in Kosovo, KWN's collaboration with the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) and future cooperation towards implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security at the international level. KWN provided information regarding recent legal and policy developments, including for the protection and dignity of women who suffered sexual violence during the war.

"You are doing a great work," Special Representative Skåre said. "It is good to see you're making so much progress."

KWN and KFOR representative Lotta Ekvall briefed Special Representative Skåre on KWN's role in the KFOR "Key Leader Training," which includes training on the position of women and gender equality in Kosovo. KWN will be providing this training again to newly arrived commanders on 13 June.



NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security Mari Skåre and her team visited KWN on 28 May.

"This is something we would like to see become more systematic," said Special Representative Skåre. "We would like to see more of a dialogue with civil society." She said that the cooperation between KWN and KFOR in providing "Key Leader Training" could serve as a best practice for NATO missions elsewhere, so long as the local context is considered.

NATO is seeking to involve women in civil society more, via consultations. KWN Executive Director Igballe Rogova will be taking part in a consultation on the implementation of the revised NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) policy on UNSCR 1325 in Brussels on 2 June 2014.

Women's Chamber Recognizes Women Entrepreneurs

In an effort to promote and increase women's entrepreneurship in Kosovo, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Women's Economic Chamber of the Kosovo-G7 recognized Kosovo's most successful women entrepreneurs. The main prize, the "Successful Businesswoman" award, was given to Fatmire Maliqi, Sevdije Hajrullahu, Zamire Hyseni-Duraku, Vjollca Birinxhiku and Blerina Rugova were all honored with awards in the fields of production, services, trade and creativity in business.

The President of Kosova, Atifete Jahjaga, was also present and confirmed her faith in the Women's Economic Chamber. She said, "[The Chamber], with its new office and strategy already approved, will offer the best possible services to all women and girls through support, trainings, coordination, continuous mentoring, in order to stand by them, for open new businesses and support business growth. You do not only empower an individual. You are empowering a family, and through these projects, we influence the empowerment of our society. We influence the continuous progress and economic sustainability of our state."

Pensioners Advocate for Improved Healthcare

Approximately 150 women squeezed inside NGO Vita Jeta's office to hear a lecture on osteoporosis on 27 May.

"Osteoporosis is a progressive bone disease that is characterized by a decrease in bone mass and density, which can lead to an increased risk of fracture," said Ajshe Nuhiu, Executive Director of Vita Jeta. "It's important for all women to have information about this disease. We also are planning to bring a device next week to examine whether women are suffering from this disease."

The Vita Jeta office was full of women curious to learn more about this disease.

"We received such valuable information that we didn't know. The doctor was very clear," a participant said.

Vita Jeta aims to assist as many women as possible in identifying whether they suffer from osteoporosis and to ensure treatment for them. Since most of this association's 1,000-some members are pensioners, they are at risk of this disease. Few can afford regular checkups that will enable them to detect it early on.

Considering this issue, Vita Jeta has initiated a petition requesting that the Ministry of Health provide free medical exams to diagnose potential cases of osteoporosis, that the Law on Health Insurance be implemented in the future and that the law for pensioners be approved. More than 60 women signed this petition during the lecture. In this way, Vita Jeta is seeking to involve more women in expressing their needs and demanding their rights.

Vita Jeta has received support for this work from the Kosova Women's Fund, supported by Kvinna till Kvinna.



A doctor at Vita Jeta provides information about osteoporosis to the organization's members on 27 May.

Members Gain Improved Understanding of Kosovo Tax System

Following KWN members' requests KWN in cooperation with the Tax Administration of Kosovo organized an interactive workshop on "Financial Management: Abiding by the Legal Framework" on Apr. 30.

Approximately 26 members gathered at Hotel Prishtina to learn more about financial management in accordance with the Laws of Kosovo. The expert from the Tax Administration office who led the workshop focused on Kosovo's Tax system, which is extremely important for an organization to function properly. He also provided space for participants to ask questions about the problems that they face in their everyday work. Through concrete examples, they gained a better understanding of Kosovo tax law.

"I don't usually do this work in my organization because another person is responsible," a participant said. "But because I saw how important it is in every day work, from now on I will pay more attention."

Kosovo Welcomes Femmes Fatale Regional Festival

Artpolis organized the second annual [Femmes Fatale Festival](#) in Kosovo from 27 to 31 May at the National Theatre in Prishtina. The regional festival involved diverse women artists in raising human rights issues by using their many talents. [Events](#) have involved exhibitions, performances, theatre, documentaries, short films, book promotions, readings, workshops and discussions by women from Kosovo and the region (Macedonia, Serbia, Albania). KWN is a proud sponsor of this important event.

Eight CSOs Receive Kosova Women's Fund Grants

Eight KWN member organizations received grants from the Kosova Women's Fund on 12 May, totaling €22,416. Kvinna till Kvinna (KtK) financed these grants. This round encouraged initiatives involving advocacy towards achieving KWN's Strategic Goals, identified by members in the KWN Strategic Plan for 2011-2014. KWN members proposed several advocacy initiatives targeting local and national institutions. Following an orientation session, members signed contracts to begin their initiatives.

"The orientation session is very valuable because the reporting forms have changed compared to previous years. Therefore it is important that we have continuous information regarding the format of reporting," a grant recipient said.

The grant recipients included:

- **Active Women of Gjakova** (AWG) will organize information sessions for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Gjakova about the law on domestic violence and how they can use this law for their protection. AWG also will monitor the implementation of this law and organize a debate where findings will be presented. (€2,780)
- **Vita-Jeta** will advocate for 600 women pensioners at health institutions to receive free check-ups for osteoporosis. Meanwhile, they will prepare women pensioners for advocacy related to the implementation of the law on retirement and the law on healthcare and health insurance, set to be adopted in 2015. It should provide free check-ups for osteoporosis in the future. (€2,812)
- **The Foundation for Education and Development** will teach and involve women of Novobrdó in advocating for the municipality of Novobrdó to provide free transportation for its residents. (€2,665)
- **Violete** will promote Roma girls from Prugovc village in Prishtina Municipality who are successful in school, making them leaders and role models, and motivating other girls to continue their education. Leaders will be part of an advocacy initiative, "Balkan Spring," where they will present handcrafts made by girls' parents to raise funds that support girls' education and improved integration into the Kosovo educational system. (€2,780)
- **Shqiponjat e Dardanës** (Eagles of Dardana) will organize women of Gracanica to be politically active by informing them about their political rights, creating women's village councils, organizing meetings between them and all political parties, and creating a clear strategy for the functioning of the village council for one year. (€2,804)
- **Visionary Woman of the XXI Century** - will raise awareness in Has of Prizren Municipality and Has of Gjakova Municipality about breast and cervical cancer using local media. They will also advocate for mobile health units to visit these two regions and organize support for 10 women from the region who are suffering from cancerous diseases. (€2,885)
- **Partners Kosova** - will organize meetings between women and men, gender equality officers, and representatives from local judicial institutions in Skenderaj, Drenas, Lypjan and Ferizaj to discuss women's right to property inheritance. (€2,880)
- **Norma** - will conduct research in five municipalities, monitoring the implementation of the law on contentious procedure in 2013. (€2,810)

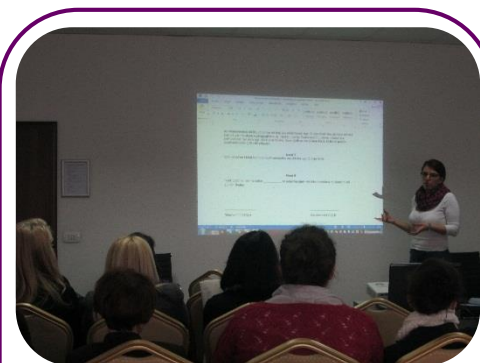
The Kosova Women's Fund enables rural and/or marginalized organizations to access funds for important initiatives at the local level. Meanwhile, KWN offers its member organizations new skills and experience from which they can draw in applying to new funders in the future.

"After we received a grant from KWF, we received other grants," another grant recipient said. "I believe that KWN's project has brought us luck and created new perspective for us."

KWN Presents New Grant Opportunities to Members

KWN members learned about new grant opportunities through the Kosova Women's Fund at an informational session held on 13 May. In the recently opened grant round, KWN members can apply either as single organizations or in partnership with another organization. Members can apply for the new Networking for Change grant, through which two organizations can receive up to €8,000 for a joint advocacy initiative.

While KWN members are very committed to their work, many lack sufficient financial resources for realizing their initiatives. At the same time, several organizations have common goals and/or expertise that they can share with each other. These grants offer organizations the opportunity to cooperate with each other towards realizing greater changes. The deadline to submit applications is 30 May. KWN remains at the ready to support our members with any questions or concerns that they may have. We are excited to see what advocacy initiatives members plan to undertake together. These grants were made possible through support from the Austrian Development Agency, and KWN anticipates granting approximately €40,000.



KWF Coordinator explains to members the memorandum of understanding in the Information Session. May 13.

Austrian Activists Exchange Experiences with KWN

In an effort to encourage camaraderie and share experiences with activists elsewhere, KWN hosted an Austrian delegation this month. In cooperation with the Austrian organization Sudwind and with support from the Austrian Development Agency, women activists from Austria spent five days in Kosovo, learning more about the position of women in Kosovo.

Their visit began in Prishtina, where they learned more about KWN's work and members. Discussions with the Agency for Gender Equality and the European Union Rule of Law mission enabled them to learn about Kosovo's legal framework. They then visited NGO Open Door, which works towards women's economic empowerment. The third day they traveled to Gjakova and met Mimoza Kusari-Lila, the first woman mayor elected in Kosovo. They also visited a women's shelter, sharing their own experiences working at shelters and learning about the situation of shelters in Kosovo.

"The women's shelter is doing a great job. We face similar problems and our work is so similar," a participant remarked.

On the way to Prizren, they visited Krusha e Vogel village and met Dile Prekpalaj from the Krusha e Vogel Women Farmers' Association. They learned more about milk production in this area. Then, upon arrival in Prizren, they met Xhejrane Lokaj from the Women's Initiative Association, which is working towards women's economic empowerment in Dragash.

On their final day, the group visited NGO Rikotta, which empowers women economically by producing and selling sweets. They sampled these treats: a wonderful way to end the visit!

Women activists from Austria were very impressed by the work of Kosovar women at all levels.

"You have so much energy to work," said a participant. "You changed so many things in a short time, even to amend a law or to push the government to create new ones. And this is amazing."

KWN Undergoes Evaluation of Kosova Women's Fund

An external evaluation of the Kosova Women's Fund (KWF), which began on 7 Feb., came to completion on 15 Apr. The evaluation assessed the KWF's impact, effectiveness and efficiency to date, and proposed concrete recommendations for strengthening the Fund and KWN capacities to manage it in the future. The evaluators found that KWN's mentoring and monitoring sessions, theory-based workshops and "learning by doing approach" has provided for effective learning. The evaluators, Margit Vaarala and Lesley Abdela of Shevolution & Heros International AB, respectively, also noted that members made significant gains by learning new skills. More findings and recommendations can be found in the [External Evaluation](#) report, which was supported by Kvinna till Kvinna.